

CHAPTER FIVE

INSTRUCTION ON THE TEACHING OF WRITING

This chapter examines the instruction given to the teacher trainees for three hours a week over a period of seven weeks on teaching ESL writing. This chapter answers Research Question Two, given below.

- 2 (a) What were the approaches and techniques in teaching ESL writing advocated by the lecturer of the teaching of writing course? How were they presented and explained to the teacher trainees?
- (b) What were the teacher trainees' responses to these writing approaches and techniques?

Data used to answer Research Question Two comprised observations of lectures and interviews with the lecturer, whom I shall refer to as Mr. Lopez (not his real name), and the five teacher trainees (see chapter three for methodological details of data collection). I shall first consider the background and philosophy of Mr. Lopez to throw light on the techniques he advocated for teaching ESL writing.

Background and Philosophy of the Lecturer of the Teaching of Writing Course

Mr. Lopez has vast English Language teaching experience, held prominent positions in the Ministry of Education and initiated and influenced various changes and developments in the English Language curriculum for schools in Malaysia. He often

conducts courses and workshops for TESL teachers in Malaysia. The following are details of his qualifications and experience, which explain the high esteem he holds among TESL circles in Malaysia.

Mr. Lopez holds an Honours degree in English Literature, a Diploma in Education obtained from the University of Malaya and a Master of Science degree in Applied Linguistics obtained from the University of Edinburgh. He started teaching English in 1964 and taught English for 15 years before being appointed language officer with "The Schools Division" of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia in 1978. In 1982, he was appointed head of the curriculum unit of the Kedah State Education Department and after five years he was promoted to the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), Malaysia, as head of the English Language Unit. In 1988, he was again promoted as head of special projects in the CDC. He retired in 1995 and was reemployed as language officer in the Ministry of Education until he retired in 1997. In 1997, after leaving the Ministry of Education, he was employed as a part time lecturer at the University of Malaya. In 1998, he taught the methods course on ESL writing for seven weeks (beginning on 5 January 1998) which is examined in this chapter.

Mr. Lopez is a strong advocate of the process writing approach to teaching writing. He stressed that adherence to the theoretical principles behind process writing rather than rigid adherence to the procedures of process writing should be promoted in Malaysian schools. Mr. Lopez said that it was obvious that if he insisted on process writing procedures in entirety without adaptation to the Malaysian classroom, the teacher trainees would not accept them. Mr. Lopez said, "I have been trying to find ways in which I am true to the principles yet also accommodating and compromising." It was

clear to me that Mr. Lopez was emphasising the realities of the Malaysian classroom and the need to understand fully theoretical principles and then adapt procedures to suit the Malaysian setting. The following is a list of what Mr. Lopez described as the basic principles of teaching writing. This list was given to the teacher trainees on a handout early in the course.

1. The aim of writing is **not** to display your language competency but to communicate your ideas, opinion, attitudes and feelings.
2. You do not need others to tell you what to say. You are fully capable of acquiring and creating your own knowledge (student-centred learning).
3. You should not be afraid of making mistakes. Mistakes are friends. Growth is made possible through apparent failures.
4. In real life, writing is not one smooth linear process. It involves writing down rough ideas, arranging and rearranging, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Learning to write involves these processes. (So why not teach the students these processes!)
5. The teacher is an interested party at every stage of the process as a facilitator.
6. Freedom to choose what to write is an important aspect.
7. Your ideas do not present themselves in an orderly fashion.
8. Students not only need to experience success but also 100 percent success.

These principles that he advocated were starkly different from what the teacher trainees had previously experienced. For instance, the ideas that mistakes are friends, that communication overshadows competency and student-centred learning were not brought up by any of the five teacher trainees while discussing their teaching techniques prior to enrolling in the B.Ed. (TESL) programme (see chapter four).

Mr. Lopez quickly won the hearts of the teacher trainees with his charisma, his jokes, his use of anecdotes from his teaching experience and his obvious interest in his work. For instance, to drive home the point that communication is more important

than competence, Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees a true story which explained that it was only after a student committed suicide that his teachers realised he had been crying out for help in his written work.

Mr. Lopez explained to me that he would be using a workshop approach for the course. According to Mr. Lopez, "Theory delivered in lecture form is not conducive to actual assimilation so that it can be transferred into practical procedures." He explained that he would instead be trying a hands-on approach with a number of carefully selected exercises and activities with the hope that the teacher trainees would then be able to create their own exercises and activities after understanding the theoretical principles behind the techniques. He believes very strongly that the teacher trainees should have a strong grasp of the theory behind the techniques so that they will be flexible enough to adapt principles to the realities of Malaysian classrooms. Mr. Lopez said, "I will be trying to communicate theory in a way that it comes alive in the classroom. I have been struggling with this for a long time and I don't think I am fully successful. I am still exploring different ways to encourage the teacher trainees to go beyond teacher talk and make students more active." The exercises described in this chapter illustrate how he attempts to make students more active while changing the role of the teacher to that of facilitator.

Introduction to the Course

Mr. Lopez began the course with a brief overview of the historical development of English language teaching and attempted to locate the development in the teaching of writing within this larger field of English language teaching. He explained that for centuries, basically, two approaches dominated English language teaching. The first was

the grammar translation method where the first language was used to teach the second language. The priorities of this approach were using contrastive analysis and learning of dialogue and texts by heart. Emphasis was on correctness at the sentence level. The second approach was the audio-lingual method; the main features of which were speaking with correct pronunciation and grammatically correct sentences. In both approaches, Mr. Lopez explained that the overall impression one gets is grammar is all-important. The relevance of these two approaches today, according to Mr. Lopez, is based on the belief that English language requires “good” grammar and that students need to write grammatically correct sentences for examinations. The focus in Malaysia is still on grammatical accuracy in examinations, although Malaysia was one of the first countries to implement the communicative syllabus. World-wide observations indicate that language-focussed activities in the teaching of writing are very much in vogue. Thus, Mr. Lopez made language-focussed writing activities one of the areas he examined in his course.

Mr. Lopez explained that a parallel development for writing instruction was product-focussed writing. Students were trained to recognise the examples of organisational patterns of different text-types or genres. The main characteristics of product-focussed teaching of writing according to Mr. Lopez, was benchmarking from models (imitating good models) and intra and inter-sentential correctness. Mr. Lopez explained to the teacher trainees that inter-sentential correctness refers to correctness between sentences while intra-sentential correctness refers to correctness within a sentence. In product-focussed teaching of writing, the emphasis is on guided and controlled composition and students’ ideas tend to be de-emphasised. Product-focussed

teaching of writing is seen as still very much in vogue and genre or text types are taught to ensure that students pass examinations. Mr. Lopez interpreted “genre” in the traditional sense of the term. What he termed as the “genre-based approach” has little to do with the genre approaches currently being developed, particularly in North American and Australia (discussed in chapter two, pp. 27-32). However, since he used the term “genre-based approach” throughout his course to explain what was more the current-traditional approach (defined in chapter two, p. 25), his interpretation is maintained in this study.

Mr. Lopez explained that critics of the language-focussed and genre-based approach to teaching of writing argued against the prefabricated content of the approaches and felt that the teaching was merely instruction and not education. However, Mr. Lopez did see the value of both the language-focussed and genre-based approach for the Malaysian setting. According to Mr. Lopez, the feelings that the teaching was not education, gave rise to the communicative approaches and other humanistic theories that aimed at education for personal growth and holistic development. Theories of writing that focussed on the processes of writing, reflecting real-world writing, developed. Revisions and changes are constantly made even towards the end of a piece of writing, in real life. Therefore, there is a need to teach students principles of planning, drafting and exchanging of ideas. The processes of writing should be seen as a learner-training tool and the emphasis should be on exploration of ideas, with the belief that no one gets it right the first time. Drafts may be necessary and mistakes should be seen as learning opportunities. These ideas, according to Mr. Lopez, led to the development of the process writing approach.

Mr. Lopez explained to the teacher trainees that teachers had major difficulties with process writing in schools in Malaysia. Teachers complained of having no time to go through many drafts because of large classes and because of problems of language proficiency and time constraints. Mr. Lopez felt that these complaints arose out of rigid adherence to fixed procedures, for example, that every cycle should involve writing drafts. The principles of the process approach, he felt, could be adapted to the Malaysian situation (see p. 119 for the principles). He stressed that all three approaches, language-focussed writing activities, genre-based writing and process writing have a place in the Malaysian system today and so he included all three approaches in his course.

Objectives of the Course

The basic principles of teaching writing, as given by Mr. Lopez (see p. 75), epitomises his instruction and forms the theoretical basis of his course objectives. In designing his course objectives, Mr. Lopez took into consideration the value of different approaches to language teaching. Although he planned his course to fall under four categories, language-focussed activities, genre-based approach, process writing and error correction, his basic principles of teaching writing, underpins his instruction. Mr. Lopez gave the teacher trainees the following list of objectives for his course.

1. To understand in-depth the relationship between goals/objectives and the types of writing to be taught.
2. To analyse and apply language-focussed writing activities.
3. To analyse and apply the genre or text type based approach.
4. To analyse and apply the process-based approach to writing.

5. To gain an in-depth understanding of feedback techniques for written work which can be applied in the classroom.

Mr. Lopez explained to the teacher trainees that he designed his instruction to meet the special needs of Malaysian teachers of ESL writing. The stance taken is that theories are spoken in ideal terms but the classroom is not ideal. To quote Mr. Lopez, "Applying theories in a messy situation gets the theories messed up. Theories need to be adapted and adjusted to the actual situation in the classroom." Features of typical Malaysian classrooms, such as the large number of students in classrooms and the generally low language proficiency levels, were concerns at the forefront in the development of his instruction. While showing the manner in which each of these three approaches (language-focussed, genre-based and process writing) could be used in the Malaysian classroom, he maintained his underlying basic principles of teaching writing (see p. 75). The teacher trainees generally responded eagerly and enthusiastically to exercises he tried out with them and seemed to enjoy playing the role of students while Mr. Lopez, as role model, played the part of teacher.

Since the course falls into four sections, language-focussed writing activities, genre based approach, process writing and error correction, I have reserved the responses of the five teacher trainees to the approaches to the end of each of the four sections of the course. Mr. Lopez sequenced the three major approaches, language-focussed activities, genre-based approach and process writing, in line with the historical development he had explained. The genre-based approach actually developed out of dissatisfaction with process writing (see p. 29). However, Mr. Lopez interpreted "genre" in the traditional sense and therefore explained it before process writing. At times there was much

overlapping and intermingling of these approaches in the exercises advocated by Mr. Lopez. For instance, some of the genre-based exercises were also language-focussed with process writing principles underpinning the exercises. This explains Mr. Lopez's comment that in a messy classroom situation the theories get messed up.

By showing the teacher trainees how to implement these exercises through his hands-on approach, Mr. Lopez was striving to change the usual "teacher-in-charge" and "students-in-fear" atmosphere commonly found in Malaysian classrooms. In the words of Fullan (1991), "...changing the culture of institutions is the real agenda, not implementing single innovations" (p. 107). Students in these exercises are encouraged to do most of the talking and the classroom is noisy with fun-filled activities. There is always a game-like atmosphere and the teacher is more of a facilitator or organiser.

Language-Focussed Activities

In these language-focussed activities, the aim is grammatical correctness at sentence level because grammar accuracy is seen as essential for examinations. Mr. Lopez made the teacher trainees try out for themselves nine language-focussed exercises that could be used in the classroom and then explained how students would benefit from these exercises. He also consistently pointed out to the teacher trainees the ways in which these exercises could be adapted to suit the different levels of language ability among students. The following is a detailed description of four of the more significant exercises given to the teacher trainees by Mr. Lopez when elaborating upon this approach. (The full list of exercises is given in Appendix K).

Mutual Dictation: An Ideal Interactive Technique for Students Weak in English

The following is a passage given to the teacher trainees for this exercise.

Mutual dictation is a fairly simple technique to ensure maximum use of English during student interaction. First, select a relevant passage of about 150 words. Then copy the passage on to two worksheets. Worksheet A will have about half the words and phrases of each sentence missing. Worksheet B contains these missing sections but does not have what is on worksheet A. The class is divided into pairs facing each other. Worksheet A is supplied to one while the other is given Worksheet B. Each pair help each other obtain the full passage. They take turns to impart orally their information with the listener, copying down on to the worksheet what the partner dictates. They ask each other for help in spelling and to repeat if necessary. When they have completed the task, the students take turns to read the passage aloud to each other so that they can check on the accuracy of the text they have copied. The teacher can then use the completed passage for further language work.

For this exercise, the teacher trainees, acting as students, were grouped in pairs. One student in each pair is given worksheet A and the other worksheet B. In the passage above, which was used as an example, the words underlined were left blank in worksheet A. These words were given in worksheet B. All words not underlined in the passage above were left blank in worksheet B. The students, in pairs, dictated to each other the words of the passage that they had.

Because students dictate to each other, the exercise is named “mutual dictation”. The passage itself that Mr. Lopez used as an example (shown above) had content relevant for the teacher trainees. They were in fact instructions on how the exercise should be administered in class. This was to illustrate the point that content of passages chosen for this exercise should be relevant and comprehensible.

Mr. Lopez quickly organised the seating positions by telling the teacher trainees (52 of them) who were sitting in alternate rows to turn their chairs around so that pairs

were facing each other. This quick organisation of the classroom was important because it showed the teacher trainees that activities like this could be carried out successfully with large number of students in the classroom (class sizes of 40-50 students are the norm in Malaysia). From my observation, the teacher trainees were clearly enjoying trying out this exercise in pairs in a game-like atmosphere. There was much laughter and noise in the “classroom”. This was exactly the intention of Mr. Lopez. So that they would experience the fun, understand the benefits and use such game-like activities in their classrooms. This is in line with Fullan’s statement, “Most students will not or cannot change simply by being lectured to or ordered to, any more that the rest of us would” (Fullan, 1991, p. 189). In the discussion that followed the exercise, Mr. Lopez elicited from the teacher trainees the advantages of mutual dictation. These advantages are listed below.

1. The exercise is a 100% student-centred activity.
2. It involves active participation.
3. It is a non-threatening activity.
4. It is a language-based activity in which students will get 100% success.
5. It is motivating.
6. The writing skill is not taught in isolation because this activity integrates listening, speaking and reading.
7. The exercise uses communicative methodology using information gap.

These advantages elicited from the teacher trainees reflect Mr. Lopez’s underlining principles of teaching writing (see p. 75). Mr. Lopez warned that it is possible for students not to understand the meaning of what they are writing. As a solution, he introduced the concept of pre-teaching during which the meaning of difficult

words are explained. He suggested that the teacher trainees carry out a general discussion on what the topic is about to make students familiar with the topic.

Mr. Lopez explained that the exercise is useful only with weak students and stressed that the primary aim is to allow weak students not only to experience success but also to experience 100 percent success. He told the teacher trainees that a good educator will seek to discover the characteristics of his students so that lessons will be designed to cater to needs. He stressed that in a weak class, it is important to start off with language-focussed activities like mutual dictation, so that students experience success. This, according to Mr. Lopez, will motivate their interest in the language. The exercise, mutual dictation, was specifically designed by Mr. Lopez to allow most students to experience 100 percent success. I noted that Mr. Lopez repeatedly emphasised creating exercises to allow students to experience 100 percent success. It was clear that Mr. Lopez felt that experiencing 100 percent success was a powerful motivating tool.

Word Order Exercise

In this exercise, the teacher takes a single sentence and jumbles the word order in the sentence. Students have to reconstruct the sentence in the correct word order. Mr. Lopez explained to the teacher trainees that this exercise aims at grammatical correctness within a sentence, which he termed as “intra-sentential correctness”. He stressed that this exercise is suitable for weaker students and can be used when the class needs massive exposure to the target language. He recommended that word order exercises be used for the first five minutes of a lesson and can be used as often as three times a week. He suggested that sentences be selected based on the topic that the teacher is going to do

during the week and he stressed that students must be made to understand the meaning of the sentence. These sentences could also be messages, instructions or reprimands for students (Mr. Lopez pointed out that this is effective for a scolding in a mild way as it is important, in keeping with his principles of teaching writing, that students do not fear the teacher). The advantages of this exercise are that students enjoy the exercise because of its game-like features and students become good at sensing what is a good sentence and what is not. The following are three examples of jumbled words that Mr. Lopez used to allow the teacher trainees to try for themselves.

1. Exercises correctness word aim order grammatical at sentence within the.
(Word order exercises aim at grammatical correctness within the sentence.)
2. Use they class easy are in construct to and
(They are easy to use and construct in class.)
3. Only not teaching they also but can for be testing for used.
(They can be used not only for teaching but also for testing.)

The content of the sentences used in the exercise actually explained the benefits of the exercise. Once again, Mr. Lopez was pointing out that sentences selected for the exercise needed to be relevant and comprehensible for the students. There was obvious excitement and enjoyment as the teacher trainees competed to be the first to get the correct order. Throughout his instruction, Mr. Lopez made the teacher trainees experience for themselves the joy and excitement that students would feel with the game-like exercises he was advocating, with the hope that they would create and use similar exercises in their classrooms.

Reformulation

The significance of this exercise is that it involves exploiting to the maximum the teaching and learning potential of a passage. Mr. Lopez was showing the teacher trainees that they could effectively use easily available material like newspaper articles or passages from textbooks without having to spend too much time creating or looking for material to use in the classroom. He used the following passage.

It's morning in Southern Park. A young man is walking his dog. Everyday he buys a newspaper at the newsstand. The newspaper dealer greets him. The young man takes his newspaper to a nearby bench. He sits by himself and reads. His dog runs among the trees.

Mr. Lopez suggested that in a very weak class, the most basic thing is to get students to simply copy the passage. According to Mr. Lopez, weak students may not copy it correctly and will make mistakes. Once students have acquired the art of copying, the teacher must help the students understand the passage before getting them to do reformulation exercises. Mr. Lopez suggested that reformulation exercises might be carried out in the following ways:

1. Copy the entire passage
2. Select certain adjectives and get students to rewrite the passage using these words. For example, replace "young" with "old" (sentence two of the passage given above); "nearby" with "empty" (sentence five).
3. Rewrite but change "a young man" to "a young woman" (sentence one). Structural changes are then required throughout the passage.
4. Rewrite but change "morning" to "yesterday morning" in sentence one and take out "everyday" in sentence three. Tense changes are then required throughout the passage.

Mr. Lopez recommended that the teacher trainees prepare a number of passages of varying difficulty and gradually increase the level of difficulty as students progressed. According to Mr. Lopez, this is a highly successful exercise which can be used with mixed ability classes. For example, he suggested that students be made to copy the first passage. If they can do so without mistakes, the teacher should give them the next passage which is a little more difficult to copy. If, by the fourth passage, students have mastered the art of copying correctly, then the teacher should go on to exercise two (replacing words). Mr. Lopez stressed that students make significant progress if they did these exercises fairly regularly.

Memory Game

In this fun-filled exercise, the teacher trainees were given a worksheet with a picture showing people doing various activities in an office. They were asked to memorise the activities the people in the picture were doing. The first worksheet was taken away and they were then given a second worksheet to complete, which required recalling what the different people in the previous worksheet (picture) were doing. This exercise is given in Appendix K (No. 1). The funny drawings and clear, easy to manage instructions make this an enjoyable exercise, which gives students practice in writing basic sentences with particular emphasis in using the past continuous tense in context. It also allows for exciting group discussion, peer teaching and immediate feedback.

Other language-focussed exercises discussed by Mr. Lopez also involved active participation of students such as sequencing of pictures according to a story read out in a poem, arranging jumbled up phrases and scrambled sentences and using key words given

in a skeleton text. All the exercises used had easy to manage instructions. The teacher trainees were told to pre-teach verbs (present tense, past tense and irregular verbs) and meanings of vocabulary used for comprehensibility. Different strategies were discussed for students of different language ability. For example, in very weak classes, Mr. Lopez suggested discussing the order of the pictures and giving jumbled words and phrases before they write. They were all enjoyable exercises that usually provided the content and guidance as students attempted to write a story. The exercises usually incorporated listening, speaking and reading skills to achieve a consolidated piece of writing.

All the exercises encouraged peer interaction, peer teaching and a focus on sentence level grammar, in a relaxed atmosphere in keeping with Mr. Lopez's underlining principles of teaching writing (see p. 75).

Concluding Discussion on Language-Focussed Activities

To help the teacher trainees review, decide and organise their lessons, Mr. Lopez gave out the chart displayed in Table 2. This table was given to each teacher trainee to help them decide firstly, whether they were going to use a particular exercise (yes/no), secondly, what writing product they expect, thirdly, what preparations they need for pre-teaching the exercise and finally, administrative matters concerning the exercises.

Mr. Lopez explained to the teacher trainees that the relevance of these activities hinged on their answer to the question, "Should grammar, vocabulary and text cohesion (inter-sentential connections) be taught?" He explained that language acquisition and natural language exponents say "No" to the question because they believe that very little

Table 2

Chart Used to Review Language Focussed Writing Activities

Activity	Yes/No	Writing product	Pre-teaching	Administrative
Mutual Dictation				What passage? How to make worksheets?
Word Order				How to determine choice sentences? Frequency?
A Bad Day				Prepared worksheets? Reusable?
Memory Game				Worksheets reusable?
Skeleton Text				Reusable?
Verb Game				
Reformulation				Frequency?
Piecing It Together				
Grammar Dictation				Frequency?

true language is acquired in grammar lessons and students learn about the target language but no transfer into language use takes place. However, Mr. Lopez stated that at present, there is increasing support for language-focussed activities for writing because of the belief that there is no one true infallible method of language teaching. These language-focussed activities, according to Mr. Lopez, result in partially assimilated knowledge

which is stored in long-term memory and this is capable of becoming fully assimilated through use when opportunity presents itself.

These language-focussed activities differ from traditional tasks in a number of ways. Mr. Lopez elicited the following differences from the teacher trainees.

1. Rote learning is downplayed. (Asian cultures have a tradition for rote learning).
2. These activities integrate the learning of other skills (listening, speaking and reading) with writing as the end product.
3. The exercises are not dull or routine.
4. These exercises can be used as individual work or pair/group work.
5. Written product can be self-corrected.
6. Feedback is immediate.

These differences between Mr. Lopez's activities and traditional tasks reflect the Mr. Lopez's basic principles of writing (see p. 75). Mr. Lopez stressed that it is important that impetus is not lost. A basic rule in these exercises is to give feedback as quickly as possible. Ideally, the teacher should give feedback immediately in all these language-focussed writing exercises.

Mr. Lopez discussed with the teacher trainees the question, "Why being able to produce intra and inter-sententially correct language is considered an important aspect of proficiency in English?" The following are the conclusions arrived at, after the discussion with the teacher trainees.

1. Wrong use of grammar can lead to miscommunication.
2. Imperfect command of discourse features of text can be a sign of fuzzy thinking.
3. Non-standard writing in English has socially negative consequences.
4. The policy in Malaysia is to train students in Standard English.

Responses of the Five Teacher Trainees to Language-Focussed Activities

Amreet and Chee Leng felt that these activities are most appropriate for the students they have been dealing with. To quote Amreet, "I will mostly use these language-focussed activities in my lessons. The students I taught before in primary and lower secondary schools had low proficiency in English and needed lots of practice with grammar and sentence structure." Chee Leng, while reflecting on her primary level students, said, "I think these language-focussed activities are interesting and suitable. Especially the younger students will enjoy these activities. Yes, I will use these activities."

Depat and Siti had reservations about using language-focussed activities. Depat said,

If students are very weak then these language-focussed activities are useful. But I do not think these activities are suitable for students with average or high language proficiency. Whether I use these activities will depend on the proficiency of the students.

However, Depat added, "I liked the memory game because students learn the use of the past tense in context. Although the focus is on language, the situation, a boss suddenly appearing to spy on his workers, makes the lesson interesting and enjoyable."

Siti stated bluntly that she did not like the focus on grammar. Siti said, "Grammar should not be taught in isolation. I prefer to teach grammar in context of the topic being taught."

Laura was the only one of the five teacher trainees to say that she was not confident using these activities. Laura said,

We need more practice with these activities. I think Mr. Lopez should teach us more of these activities and how to create our own activities. During our training at the teacher training college for our teaching diploma, I remember that more work was done in creating activities and in designing teaching aids. As it is, I do not feel very confident and I think those teacher trainees with no teaching experience will face problems because more practice is needed.

However, Mr. Lopez explained to me that he felt the exercises were taught with sufficient depth and hands-on practice to motivate the teacher trainees to create similar exercises. With the focus now on communication and the processes of writing, grammar is being seen as less important. This is reflected in the comments of Depat and Siti. However, Mr. Lopez did find a place for grammar and language-focussed activities especially among weak students and both Amreet and Chee Leng saw the relevance and usefulness of language-focussed activities for their students.

Genre-Based Approach to the Teaching of Writing

Mr. Lopez interpreted the term “genre” in its traditional sense and used it interchangeable with “text-types”. He maintained the traditional taxonomies of narratives, descriptions, instructions, compare and contrast and so on and focussed on form and format, the three-paragraph essay, topics sentences and linking words. He made no mention of “discourse communities”, “text exemplars”, “moves”, and “social and cultural”, terms associated with genre theory. Neither did he mention any of the leading proponents of genre theory (see p. 27). His genre-based approach actually neatly falls into the category of the current-traditional approach (see p. 25) for description of current traditional approach). Devitt (1998) states that genre theorists have worked to define the

new conception of genre in contrast to the traditional view of genre as a taxonomy of literary texts.

Mr. Lopez started this area by explaining that genre-based activities rely on the fact that every piece of writing has a structure and if teachers teach this structure, then writing comes almost immediately. These activities are based on the perception that there are many types or genres of writing and each type has a clear function. A narrative, for example, tells a story and a description gives details as clearly as possible. Each type or genre demands its own specific writing capability. Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees that since structure of each genre is more or less typical, then teaching should focus on the organisational structure of the genre. This is best done through the use of good models which Mr. Lopez called "benchmarking". He explained that with weak students, these models are first examined and analysed and then students are required to imitate the structure while adding their own details. For advanced students, he recommended giving the structure first. Teachers should then examine the students' response and progress and finally read the model.

According to Mr. Lopez, the genre-based approach has often been accused of being non-creative. Other negative comments often voiced are that the structure is fixed, it encourages students to give prefabricated writing that is not educational and creativity is constrained by the structure. This, Mr. Lopez feels is not true because of the following reasons. Creativity is at work when, for example, one gets 40 different pieces of writing from the same given structure. Students do develop their own style and there is creativity in showing one's own individuality. There is wide scope in examining how students write

when given the structures. Mr. Lopez presented the following categories of genres to the teacher trainees.

1. Narrative – This involves somebody telling a story using fiction.
2. Description – This involves describing a person, place or scenery. (For example, putting into words everything about a picture or photograph or painting.)
3. Instructions – This involves giving directions.
4. Biography – This is a historical narrative about a person that is true.
5. Argument – This involves putting forward ideas and persuading others to agree with the writer.
6. Process – An account of how to make something.
7. Compare and contrast – Dealing with people, situations or ideas and comparing it with others to point out differences.

Mr. Lopez explained that letters were deliberately left out here because in a letter, a person is doing any of the above. Mr. Lopez asked the teacher trainees to classify the above different types of genre into two categories. The teacher trainees decided after much discussion that the various genres could be neatly classified under the headings “chronologically sequenced text” and “non-chronologically sequenced text” as shown in the Table 3. Mr. Lopez felt that the teacher trainees should be aware of these categories as it aids in organising material under the particular genre being studied

Table 3
Two Categories of Genre

Chronologically sequenced texts	Non-chronologically sequenced texts
Narrative	Description
Biography	Argument
Instructions	Compare and contrast
Process	

Mr. Lopez went through each of the different genres with exercises for the teacher trainees to try out. I will discuss in detail the manner in which Mr. Lopez presented the genre-based approach for teaching three of these genres: narrative, description and argument.

Teaching of Narrative Writing

Mr. Lopez explained to the teacher trainees that since the narrative has to be chronologically sequenced, the teacher needs to describe and discuss the main cohesive features of inter-sentential discourse that students need to master, for example, “One day”, “After that”, “Next” and so on. He added that the main grammatical structure that needs to be mastered by students for the narrative is the past tense and the main punctuation feature of inter-sentential discourse that students need to master is direct speech. Characteristics of improved ability in this genre is shown when students are better able to provide details regarding character, better able to provide pertinent details about location, better able to accurately reflect real-life interpersonal communication through dialogue and there is logical cause and effect connection between events.

According to Mr. Lopez, the use of notes in the production of texts is important. Mr. Lopez explained that there are two aspects of the use of notes, taking notes and making notes. Taking notes involves abstracting points from an already existing text. Making notes refers to putting on paper, ideas of one’s own, which will be expanded into a text.

Mr. Lopez discussed two types of note making. The first are notes of a highly structured nature. An example, given on the following page, was discussed.

A funny thing happened to me last week...

- got up late
- didn't have time for breakfast
- went to a coffee shop
- bought a cake
- the dog ate the cake

The advantage of having such notes is that the students can now concentrate on language when it comes to writing. They do not need to worry about the content. Another advantage of the notes in the example above is that, although the student has written down the principle events, there is still plenty of scope to add details later. Mr. Lopez stressed that the main advantage is that the students can concentrate on language because the content is already there.

The second type of note making is what Mr. Lopez called "A free plan". Below is the example that Mr. Lopez discussed with the teacher trainees.

Topic: A mysterious tale

Introduction – How I got there and why the house is haunted? (Student may not know yet).

Body – What happened? (Student may not know yet).

Conclusion - How I got away /end of story.

Such notes, according to Mr. Lopez, improve the quality of writing and he stressed that those who make plans almost without exception write better compositions than those who do not.

In order to get students to sense the rhetorical demands of narrative writing, Mr. Lopez discussed two approaches, the holistic or deep-end approach where students

internalise the whole structure of a narrative and the analytical procedure or the segmental approach where close study is done on segments.

The holistic approach.

In order to explain the holistic approach, Mr. Lopez used an exercise “Do it yourself comprehension” given in Appendix K (No. 7). Here students first use their imagination to answer the questions given which results in composing a story. The teacher then reads his own version of the story. According to Mr. Lopez, students will listen attentively because they will be curious to hear how the teacher has written the story since they will have already written their own version of the story. Students will learn direct speech, past tense and inter-sentential connections during this exercise. For weaker students, Mr. Lopez suggested giving jumbled sentences. An exercise on using jumbled sentences, given by Mr. Lopez, is shown in Appendix K (No. 8). This exercise, according to Mr. Lopez, helps students to get a hang of the narrative. He told the teacher trainees not to use more than 11 or 12 sentences in a paragraph, so that it is more manageable. Students must be made to focus on the linkage between sentences.

Mr. Lopez pointed out that some of the earlier exercises used for language-focussed activities can be converted into genre-type activities. For example, he pointed out that:

“Mutual Dictation” (p. 82) can become an introduction to narrative or descriptive writing.

“Piecing it together” (Appendix K, No. 5) can be used to teach the narrative and past tense.

“Grammar dictation” (Appendix K, No. 6) helps note taking and the idea is to produce grammatically correct (intra-sentential) sentences.

Analytical procedure or segmental approach.

Mr. Lopez explained that this approach involves teaching the narrative in a step by step manner. To enable students to write a narrative, Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees to make students aware of certain discourse features such as linking words, phrases, dialogue and punctuation. An exercise in helping students select linking words and phrases was discussed with the teacher trainees. This exercise is given in Appendix L. Mr. Lopez felt that dialogue is often badly managed in student's writing and one of the main reasons is because students have difficulty with the punctuation necessary to display dialogue. Therefore, Mr. Lopez said it is necessary to teach punctuation to students. He provided an exercise on punctuation, which the teacher trainees tried out for themselves. This exercise is given in Appendix M.

Mr. Lopez provided the following exercise under this segmental approach to teach the narrative. Students listen to a tape and they have to write down the sounds they hear in sequence. They then have to build a story from the sequence of the sounds. The following are the sounds they hear:

Typing – normal, frenzied

Phone ringing

Door slams

Car engine

Glass breaking

Footsteps- slowly and deliberately getting louder

The tape is played a few times and the teacher helps students with vocabulary and sequence of events. As an example, Mr. Lopez suggested that the following phrases be written on the board after eliciting responses from the students:

someone is typing
 the phone rings
 a door slams
 motorcycle? car engine starts
 the window being smashed
 slow heavy footsteps
 the typist hesitates
 the typing gets frenzied
 paper is ripped out of the typewriter
 silence for a while creaking sound

The sequence will tell a story. The teacher trainees were told to get students to write a story following the sequence. According to Mr. Lopez, this exercise falls half way between a free plan and a structured plan. It enables the teaching of vocabulary and sequencing of events. The end product is narrative writing. Mr. Lopez stated that the above exercise works well with students in any level of language ability. The exercise allows for a variety of stories.

Guidelines for Teaching the Narrative

Mr. Lopez provided guidelines for teaching the narrative by focussing on the following areas.

Story / plot.

The teacher trainees were told to consider how credible the plot is in terms of cause and effect. The story must be made up of a number of events that are connected by cause and effect.

Characters.

Characters have to be well developed by providing rich details and descriptions.

Setting / location.

The reader must connect with the story through the credibility of a story. It must have relevant details to provide a physical sense of location.

Theme.

A narrative needs a central driving theme. Ideas that will drive the narrative through the characters must be realised fully through content, dialogue, emotions and feelings.

Improving the Narrative

Mr. Lopez discussed the following written work done by a student. He encouraged the teacher trainees to point out the flaws and provided advice on how to deal with such written work.

Event Description

One day a little boy was throwing his ball up and down when he lost his ball. He threw the ball too high.

Mr. Lopez elicited comments about the passage from the teacher trainees. These comments are given below.

1. Not a story, just talks about one event
2. No setting
3. No character development
4. No Dialogue
5. Emotion absent

The teacher trainees were told to get students to improve the story with the following questions.

1. What was the boy's name?
2. What happened to the ball when he threw it too high?

According to Mr. Lopez, such questions will help students fill in details to flesh out the narrative. Mr. Lopez also discussed the following narrative written by a student.

Undeveloped story

One time I went to the beach to get a suntan. I used the wrong suntan oil. I used Coppertone Suntan Oil. Do you know what? When I put it on and ... my feathers fell out! I went to the best duck doctor. He gave me some magic medicine. I poured the whole medicine on my body. In about 10 seconds my feathers grew back. Sure is a good thing I went there.

Mr. Lopez helped the teacher trainees come out with the following facts about this written piece.

1. Has a series of events connected by cause and effect
2. The plot is very thin, does not come through very convincingly
3. Cause and effect is not credible

4. No character development
5. Location too is not developed
6. No dialogue at all – there is a possibility of dialogue with the doctor
7. Flat characterisation – no emotion despite the fact that there are plenty of opportunities to develop emotions
8. No definite theme

Mr. Lopez next discussed the following narrative written by a student.

Basic story

Once upon a time there was a librarian named Lisa. She could put books away faster than anybody. One day she put books away and took them out again so fast. The children said, "Slow down so we can have a chance to look at the books in the library." So she slowed down for fifteen minutes. They thought of a cure so next time they would be able to look without books moving all the time. "Next time we go to the library, we will chain her to the seat for half hour or so until we're done." The children laughed! They chained her to the seat right when they arrived. Every time they went they chained her down. She was finally cured.

The following comments about this written piece were elicited from the teacher trainees.

1. Has a story line – a whole series of events.
2. But the story line is not convincing.
3. There is some sort of cause and effect of resolution in the end but it is very thin.
4. No character development.
5. Children all lumped together – not separated identities – one child talking collectively.
6. There is dialogue but they are not talking to each other.
7. No emotions.
8. Setting is a library but it can be expanded.
9. No central driving theme.

Mr. Lopez suggested that the teacher trainees could get students to:

1. Develop the undeveloped stories.

2. Write their own undeveloped story and then get them to develop it.
3. Give students one or two pictures and tell them to find a stand to develop the story.

Mr. Lopez then discussed the passage below as an example of a good model of a narrative.

Autobiography – In praise of teachers

In 1972, I returned to Miami Beach High School to speak to the drama class. Afterwards, I asked the drama teacher if any of my English teachers were still there. "Irene Roberts," he tells me, "is in class just down the hall."

I was no one special in Miss Roberts' class – just another jock who did okay work. I don't recall any one special bit of wisdom she passed on. Yet, I cannot forget her respect for language, for ideas and for her students. I realize now, many years later, that she is the quintessential selfless teacher. "I'd like to say something to her," I say, "but I don't want to pull her from a class." "Nonsense," he says, "She'll be delighted to see you."

The drama teacher brings Miss Roberts into the hallway where stands this 32-year-old man she last saw at 18. "I'm Mark Medoff," I tell her. You were my 12th grade English teacher in 1958." She cocks her head at me, as if this angle might conjure me in her memory. And then, though armed with a message I wanted to deliver in some perfect torrent of words, I couldn't think up anything more memorable than this: "I want you to know," I say, "you were important to me."

And there in the hallway, this slight and lovely woman, now nearing retirement age, this teacher who doesn't remember, begins to weep; and she encircles me in her arms.

Remembering this moment, I begin to sense that everything I will ever know, everything I will ever pass to my students, to my children, is an inseparable part of an ongoing legacy of our shared wonder and eternal hope that we can, must, make ourselves better.

Irene Roberts holds me briefly in her arms and through her tears, whispers against my cheek,

"Thank you". And then, with the briefest of looks into my forgotten face, she disappears back into her classroom, returns to what she has done thousands of days, through all the years of my absence.

On reflection, maybe those were, after all, just the right words to say to Irene Roberts. Maybe they are the very words I would like to speak to all those teachers I carry through my life as part of me, the very words I would like spoken to me one day by some returning student: "I want you to know you were important to me."

Mark Medoff

Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees that at the core or heart of the methodology for narrative writing is the use of models such as the one given above. He pointed out that the above model uses both direct and indirect speech and the story would be particularly interesting and relevant to students. According to Mr. Lopez, each text type has distinct characteristics. Therefore, examples or models are very important to show these characteristics. Models can be used either in an inductive or deductive manner. He explained that in the inductive manner, the teacher first asks questions, gives exercises and then gives the model, whereas in the deductive manner the teacher first gives the model and then gives exercises or questions. The deductive manner is suitable for weak students whereas the inductive manner is suitable for good students. The teacher trainees were told to help students select a topic which is personal, help students describe the event, help students to reflect on the event and help students tell the audience why the event is significant.

Teaching of Descriptive Writing

The teacher trainees were told that descriptive writing cannot be done in linear order. Descriptive writing, according to Mr. Lopez, is frozen in time and space. He suggested that students be helped to form a mind map because descriptive writing does not depend on chronological order. The teacher trainees were shown the mind map given in Figure 3, which was created to help students write on the topic "Myself."

Mr. Lopez explained that for descriptive writing, planning is much more ad hoc and not structured according to time sequence. He gave the teacher trainees the following suggestions about teaching descriptive writing in an inductive manner (i.e., model given

out last) using the mind map. Students should write after they have studied the mind map and they should be told to present an honest portrayal of themselves. They should read out aloud what they have written. After this the teacher should read the model. According to Mr. Lopez, mind maps of this nature are effective with good classes.

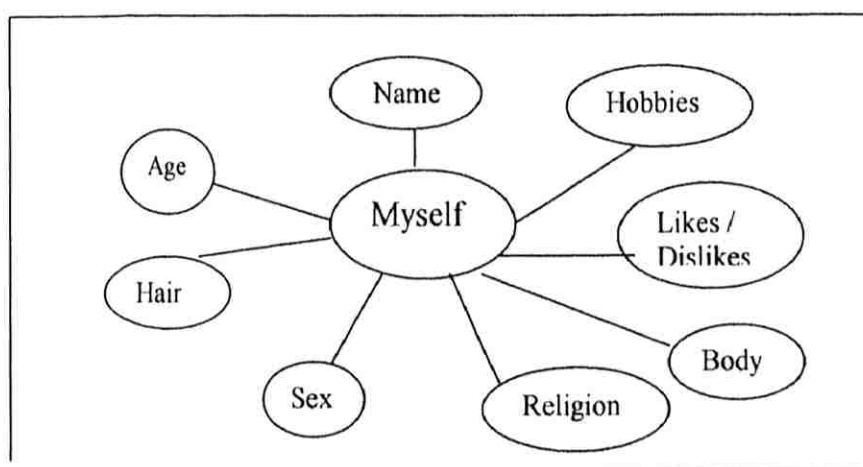


Figure 3. Mind Map

With weak students, the teacher trainees were told to give them a sense of structure. Mr. Lopez used Figure 4 shown on the following page to explain how a mind map is developed and how a “master brain pattern” is created for describing people.

From the first mind map about Bill shown at the top of Figure 4, a second, more elaborate mind map is developed shown below the first mind map. Then a “master brain pattern” is created for describing people from the second mind map, as shown at the bottom of Figure 4. The numbers 1, 2 and 3 in the developed mind map and the master brain pattern indicate the sentence order. The letters a, b and c indicate the order within a sentence.

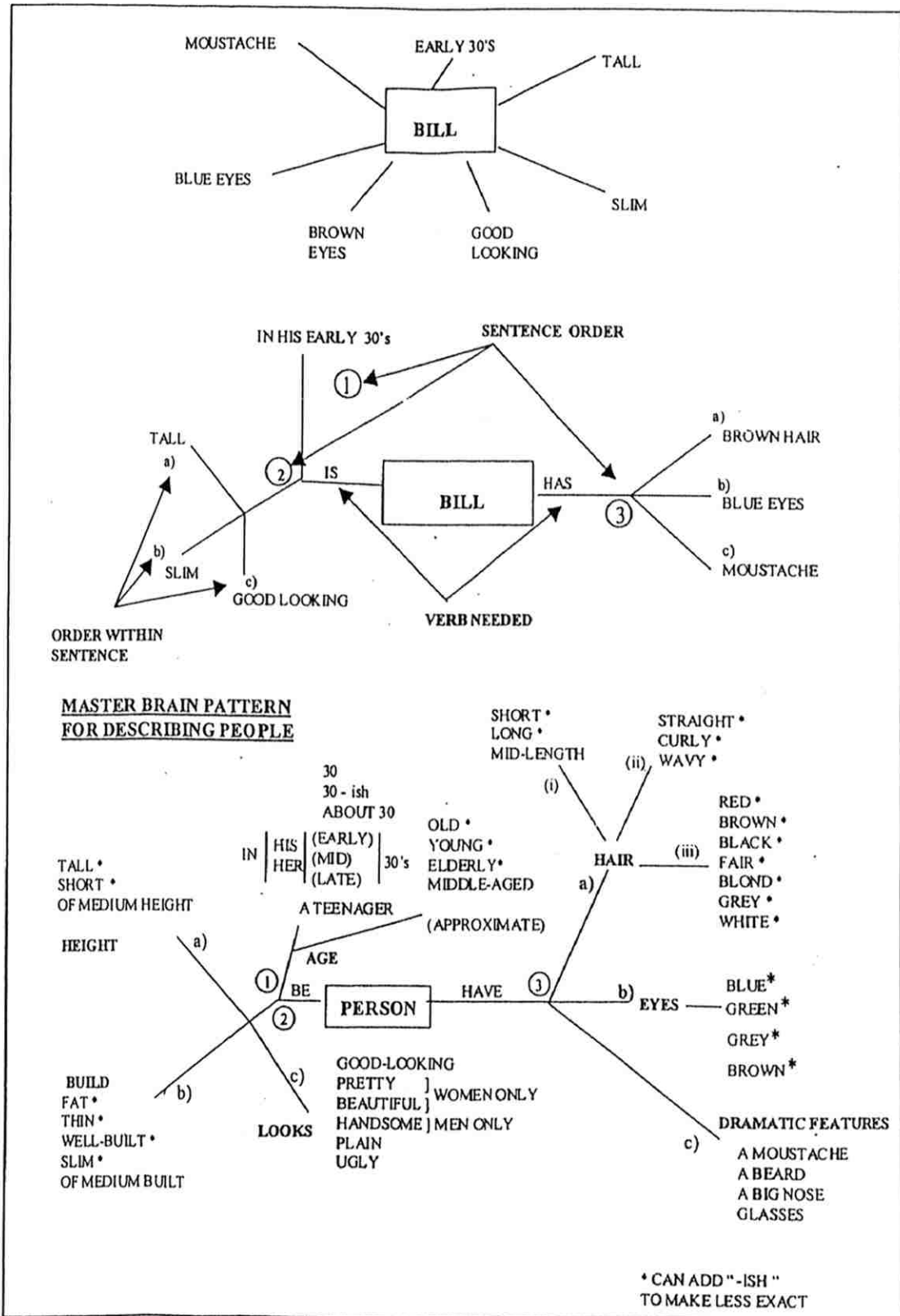


Figure 4. Development of Mind Map

According to Mr. Lopez, students would then find it easy to come up with the following sentences.

Bill is in his early 30's. He is tall, slim, and good looking.

He has brown hair and blue eyes and a moustache.

Mr. Lopez pointed out that the passage above is divided into two verb structures, "is" and "has." Students tend to say, "He has 30's years". Thus, Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees to teach students the difference between "is" and "has." The teacher trainees were told that in keeping with the principles of genre-based writing, after analysing the model, the teacher should help students generalise in the master brain pattern as given in Figure 4, and then write about other people. As an exercise, the teacher trainees were told to think of a person they know, look at the master brain pattern and write about that person. Mr. Lopez carried out another activity on descriptive writing with the teacher trainees using a non-verbal stimulus, Figure 5, shown on the following page, to teach the genre for descriptive writing.

Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees to ask students orally a number of questions to elicit information to describe what is going on in the picture. The following examples of such questions were given to the teacher trainees

1. What do you see?
2. Where is the incident taking place?
3. What do you mean by half-naked?
4. Is the weather warm or cold? Why do you say so?
5. Is the atmosphere tense? Why do you say so?

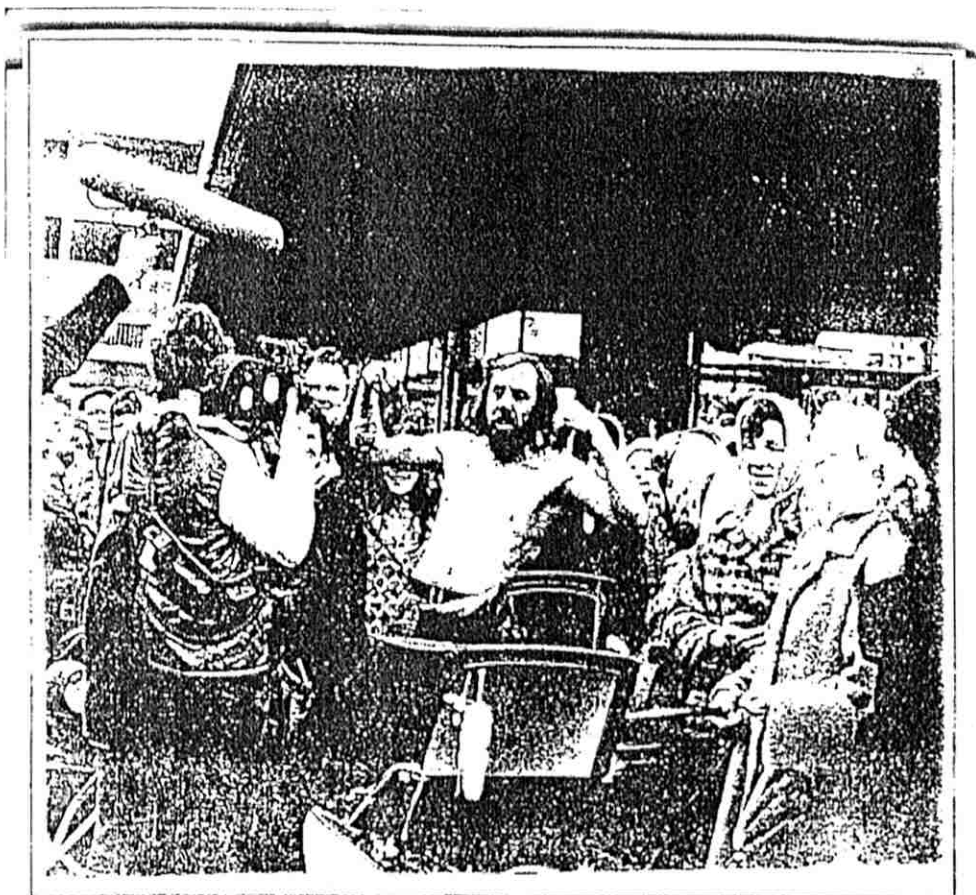


Figure 5. Picture Given by Mr. Lopez to Help Teach the Genre for Descriptive Writing

Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees to write the different vocabulary items on the board. After this discussion with students, the students will have the content to write a description of the picture. Mr. Lopez stressed that in genre writing, it is important to discuss organisation and to teach students to organise text. The main focus of the picture or human activity should be described first.

The following suggestions were given by Mr. Lopez on how to organise the material to describe the picture on Figure 5.

1. First suggest a title, for example, “Outside a department store” or “An Extraordinary Incident”
2. Paragraph One – Describe the focus, the man - his height, age, appearance, what he is saying.
3. Paragraph Two – Describe what is beyond the picture - the crowd, nearby women, character of people, clothes (wearing warm clothes), details (crowd seems amused; the man has attracted the attention of the mass media).

Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees that the teacher could then read his own piece of writing based on the picture, if he feels that it is necessary to give a model. This would depend on the language ability of the students.

Teaching the Genre – Argument

Mr. Lopez provided a topic “Advantages and disadvantages of television” to teach the genre for arguments. He provided the mind map shown on Figure 6 to illustrate the manner in which this genre should be taught. He gave the teacher trainees the following steps to teach this genre.

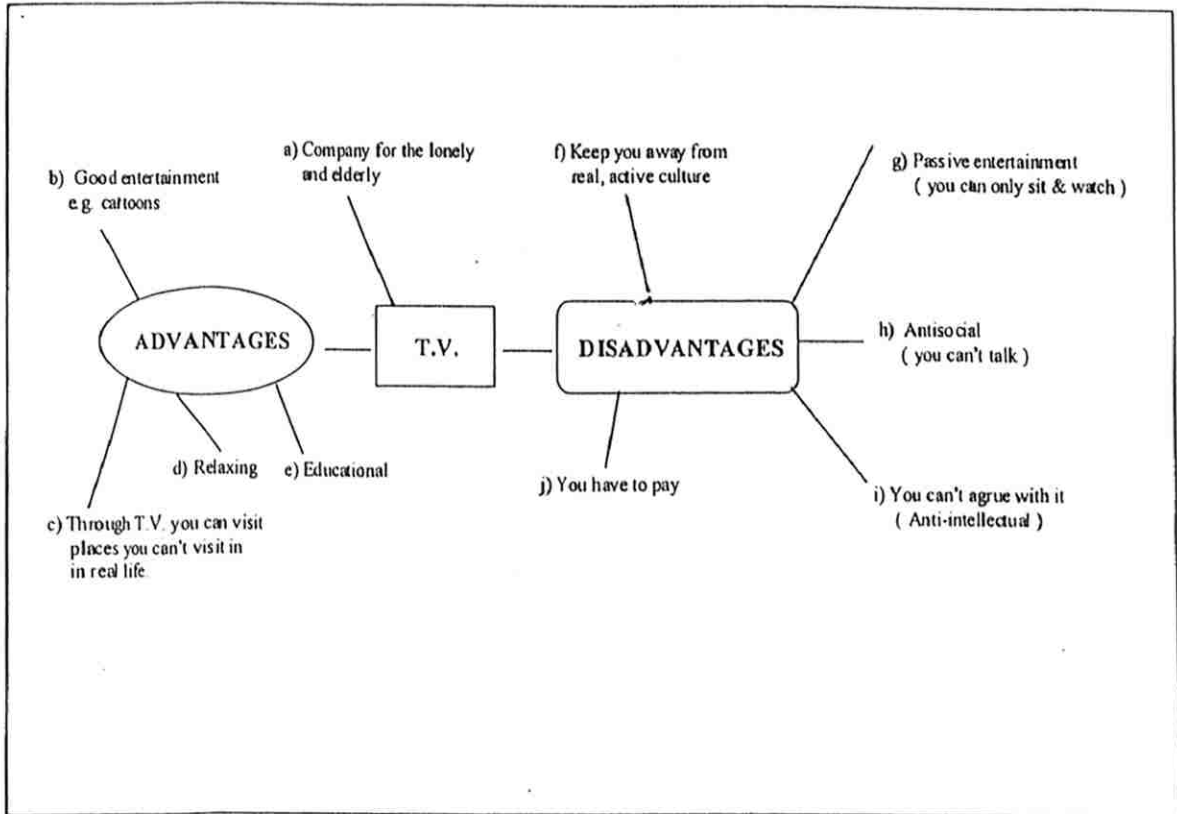


Figure 6. Mind Map on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Watching Television

Step one – Get students to write down their ideas or use whole class elicitation with ideas written on the board.

Step two – Lay out ideas in a mind map with two parts, one part for each side of the argument.

Step three – Link closely related ideas for example c & e, b & d, g & I, in Figure 6.

Step four – Decide on the order of presentation. The more important points should be first or last.

Step five – Add logical connectors such as – for instance, for example, in other words, that is to say, firstly, (in the first place) secondly (in the second place), in addition, not only that but, furthermore, above all, worst of all.

Step six – Prepare a topic sentence for each paragraph and write two paragraphs based on the mind maps.

Figure 7 was given to the teacher trainees to show how to develop the mind map.

Sentence linkers, “firstly”, “in addition” and so on were also provided in the mind map.

Mr. Lopez gave the teacher trainees the following model for the paragraphs.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Television

Television has a number of advantages (topic sentence). Firstly, it provides company for the lonely and elderly. Secondly, it is relaxing when there is good entertainment such as cartoons. Above all, through television you can visit places you cannot visit in real life – that is to say, it is educational.

There are also a number of disadvantages, however (topic sentence). In the first place it is passive entertainment – you can only sit and watch. Because of that, you cannot argue with it; in other words, it is anti-intellectual. Not only that, but it is anti-social – you cannot talk when it is on. In addition, it keeps you away from real, active culture. Worst of all, you have got to pay for it.

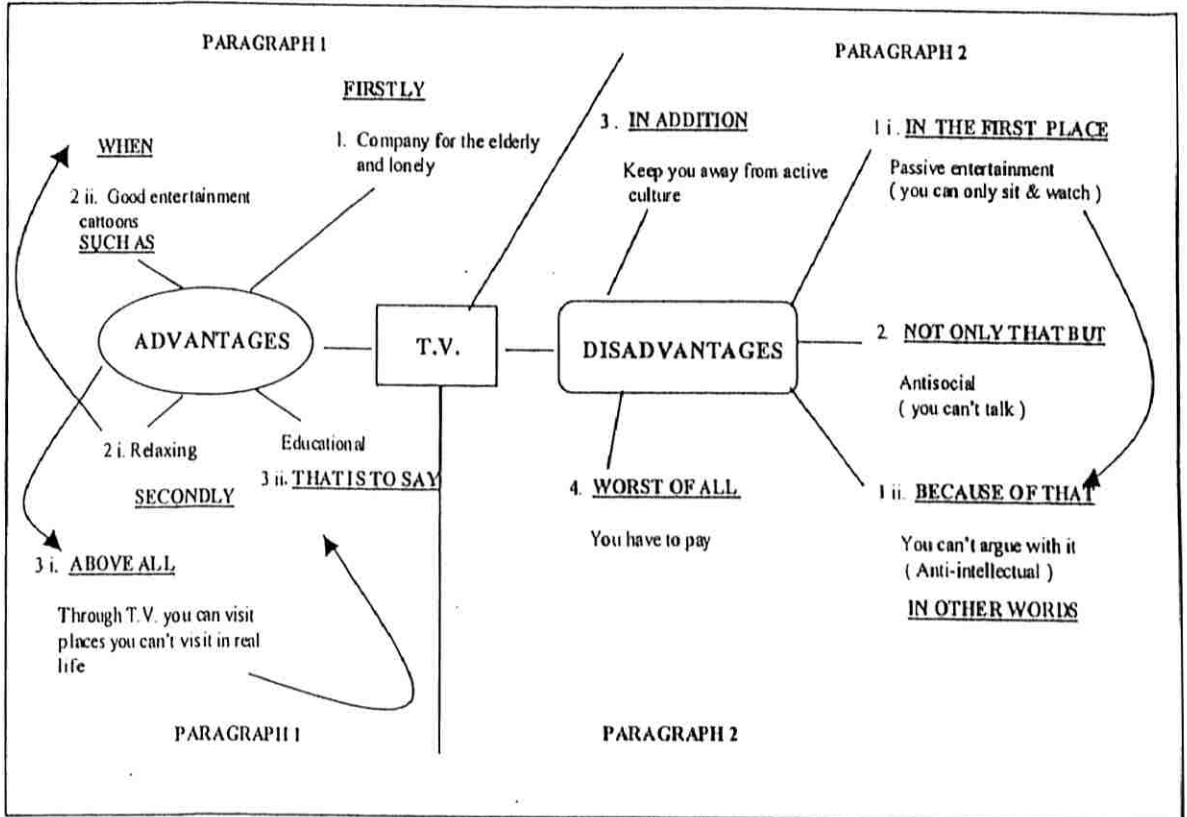


Figure 7. Development of Mind Map on Advantages and Disadvantages of Television

Once again, Mr. Lopez stressed that the manner in which to use the model would depend on the language ability of the students being taught.

Comparison of Language-Focussed and Genre-Based Teaching of Writing

Mr. Lopez provided the teacher trainees with the following comparison between the two teaching approaches so far discussed. Four major areas were looked at.

1. Language learning as a systematic activity
2. The way grammar is taught
3. The main aim of written tasks
4. Teaching

According to Mr. Lopez, in language-focussed writing, language learning is a systematic activity based on mastering the grammar rules, whereas in genre-focussed writing, language learning is a systematic activity based on mastering the discourse structures of the various text-types.

In language-focussed writing, grammar should be taught using a variety of techniques, both in isolation and contextually. In genre-focussed writing, grammar should be taught as and when needed, taking into consideration current writing demands. For example, if teaching the narrative, most of the time, the past tenses and the linkers that are associated with the narrative are taught.

The main aim of written tasks in language-focussed writing is to introduce, clarify or reinforce a specific grammar point. Tasks are designed to check on mastery of this

particular item. In genre-focussed writing the main aim of written tasks is to enable students to recognise and produce text types through analysis of good models of writing. Written tasks focus on the imitation of the model.

In language-focussed writing, teaching would tend to be teacher-centred. The teacher supplies the exercises and provides the instructions. In genre-based writing, teaching is also teacher-centred. The teacher supplies the models for imitation but makes an effort to ensure discourse structure is understood. However, the manner of implementation in the classroom of both language-focussed and genre-based activities using peer-interaction, peer teaching and peer error correction, as espoused by Mr. Lopez, is student-centred, in keeping with his basic principles of teaching writing (given on p. 75).

Responses of the Five Teacher Trainees to the Genre-Based Approach

Of the five teacher trainees, only Amreet had reservations about the use of the genre-based approach. Amreet said, "I don't think students are proficient enough in the language for genre-based type of activities. I prefer to use language-focussed activities." Amreet added, "Moreover I have to use activities which my mentor (the person who will supervise her during simulated teaching and teaching practice) likes in order to do well in my teaching assessment."

Depat and Chee Leng were both in favour of using genre based activities although they both said that this was the first time they heard the term "genre". Depat said, "I prefer to use these genre-based activities compared to the other activities taught by Mr.

Lopez. These activities are important because we need to get students to become familiar with the format to prepare them for examinations.” Chee Leng concurred with Depat saying, “I previously used genre-based activities, although I didn’t know it was called that, when I provided my students with guided composition. Chee Leng said, “I like these activities because it is easy to plan well and students will find it easy to follow and benefit from the lessons.”

In contrast to Amreet who felt that students were not proficient enough for genre-based activities, Laura said, “Genre-based activities are very good for students with weak or average language proficiency. These activities will spur their creativity. Once they have a format for writing, they will be able to create within the frame given.” Laura added that most of her lessons will be based on the examples given by Mr. Lopez.

Like Laura, Siti too said that she would mainly use genre-based activities in her lessons. However, Siti was the only one of the five who said that genre-based activities were suitable for students of different language ability. Siti said, “These activities are important. It will be easy for students to do these activities and they will benefit no matter what their level of proficiency.” I agree with Siti because I felt that Mr. Lopez had repeatedly pointed out how the various activities could be adapted to suit students of different language ability.

With the exception of Amreet, the focal teacher trainees were comfortable using models mainly because this was the manner in which they themselves were taught to write in English. This was the point brought up by Farrell (1999) when he stated that teachers tend to revert to the manner in which they were taught the language. Amreet

with her years of experience had developed her own ideas and strategies and so was confident of moving away from the traditional ways of teaching writing. The innovations that Mr. Lopez added to the traditional models were the use of mind maps and the development of these mind maps. However, during teaching practice discussed in the next chapter, we see that although the teacher trainees did use mind maps, their mind maps remained at first stage (Figure 3, p. 105). They never really developed the mind maps beyond first stage in the manner explained by Mr. Lopez, as shown in Figure 4 (p. 106) and Figure 7 (p. 112).

Process Writing

In this section, Mr. Lopez began by explaining the development of the process writing approach to the teaching of writing. He then discussed the procedures involved in the process writing approach and the manner in which these could be applied to Malaysian classrooms.

Processes of Learning

Mr. Lopez went back in history to the earlier beliefs about learning. He discussed what he described as the “empty vessel” or “blank sheet” approach to education where it was assumed that students were ignorant beings and the task of education was to fill their minds with appropriate knowledge, attitudes, values and habits. The teacher was seen as the expert and his main task was to instruct. He discussed the times when the behaviourist theory of learning prevailed, when learning was seen as habit formation and language learning depended on drills and rote learning. Foreign language learning at that time aimed at producing grammatically correct sentences. He explained to the teacher trainees that as a social dimension of learning, education was to produce socially functional citizens to enable them to fit into roles and careers that could be accurately predetermined. Writing proficiency then meant being able to write predetermined text types for specific situations. Instruction was basically top-down and one-way.

Mr. Lopez then discussed the influence of humanism that arose in the second half of 20th century. The person-centred approach to psychotherapy, based on two books by Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person and Freedom to Learn was then briefly discussed

and he provided the teacher trainees with the principles of humanism. Humanism, according to Mr. Lopez, stresses that each person is unique and he finds his significance in holistic growth, which is developing intellectually, spiritually and emotionally. Growth obliges one to learn in order to enhance uniqueness and competence. Learning involves interacting with others and requires among others, the skill of productively connecting with others. Self-knowledge and trusting one's capacity to learn are central issues of humanism. Education should be concerned not so much with information but with providing the skills to enable one to find and create knowledge. Education should not teach you information but teach you how to find information yourself. Emphasis is on processes of learning rather than on information imparting. That is, moving away from the "what" to the "how." Mr. Lopez then discussed the processes of learning.

Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees that proponents of distributed intelligence claim that intelligence, knowledge and information are distributed throughout society in the form of people, printed and other materials, computers, telephones and other extensions of human facilities. True individual intelligence, he explained, is largely the ability to co-operate with social and cultural resources that are available to us and create a synergetic relationship (four people working together produce an output greater than four people working individually) with these social and cultural resources. Thus, emphasis is not on what (the content) but how (the process).

Mr. Lopez explained that in order to use the process approach students need to be able to ask pertinent and accurate questions. The ability to ask questions, Mr. Lopez explained, is the key to learning how to learn. It shows ability in process learning. Students should be able to do research, to look for input they need from magazines,

books, the Internet and from a variety of first-hand resources such as dictionaries, grammar books and people directly involved in the matter under scrutiny. Students should learn to work in groups and learn interactive skills of listening to others and expressing their own views. Students should be able to process the information, which has been collected through reflection, selection and organisation. The teacher should be viewed as one resource among others and students should not be afraid to ask and share resources with him.

Basic Principles of the Process Approach to Writing

Mr. Lopez discussed with the teacher trainees the following principles of the process approach to writing: The aim of writing is not to display language competency but to communicate ideas, opinions, attitudes and feelings. A person does not need others to tell him what to say. He is fully capable of acquiring and creating his own knowledge. A person should not be afraid of making mistakes. Mistakes are friends. Growth is made possible through apparent failures. In real life, writing is not one smooth linear process. It involves writing down rough ideas, arranging and rearranging, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

Learning to write involves these processes. So students should be taught these processes. The teacher is an interested party at every stage of the process. Freedom to choose what to write and the belief that ideas do not present themselves in an orderly fashion are other aspects of process writing. In keeping with these principles, Mr. Lopez provided the teacher trainees with the following detailed, step by step, example of

process writing in action. This example has no adaptation to the Malaysian setting and was actually given to provoke a discussion among the teacher trainees of problems that would arise. The discussion follows the example.

Process Writing in Action – One Scenario

Step One

The teacher selects five students to meet her for one hour every week to improve their composition writing.

Step two (1st week)

In order to decide on the topic, the teacher discusses general topics of interest, for example, fashions, music, boy-girl relationships, and the generation gap. For the project, they choose three topics. They decide the first topic would be “Fashions”. The teacher discusses aspects of the topic they can choose, for example, men’s fashions today, women’s fashions today, how fashions change, becoming a fashion model and so on. The teacher discusses the point of view from which each aspect can be written. The writing can be an article for a newspaper, short story, a letter from brother to sister, or a reflective composition. Students are asked to come back the next week with points jotted down on the aspect they wish to write on.

Step three (2nd week)

Each student discusses what he has jotted down. The others ask questions, seek clarification or give suggestions. The teacher too gives suggestions and asks the students to write their first draft. The teacher explains he would only respond to their ideas. They hand in their drafts during the week.

Step four (3rd Week)

The teacher responds to the ideas in the drafts by writing his comments. Students read drafts to the group for further comments. The teacher asks them to hand in their second draft during the week incorporating the suggestions and concentrating on organisation. The teacher gives a short lesson on what is meant by this. The teacher makes an appointment for a one-to-one conference with one of the students during the week.

Step five (4th week)

The teacher reads the second drafts and comments on both the ideas and organisation. The teacher has jotted down grammar, spelling and lexical mistakes and spends time going through these with the group. The teacher asks the students

to hand in their third draft during the week. The teacher has a one-to-one conference with another one in the group.

Step six (5th Week)

The teacher hands back the drafts and asks the students to exchange compositions and to respond to each draft. The teacher gives each student a note putting down his comments. The teacher asks the students to hand in their final version. They are free to make any changes. This version will be pasted on their class notice board. The following week they will begin with the second topic.

Problems of Using Process Writing in Malaysian Classrooms

Mr. Lopez held a discussion with the teacher trainees to obtain their views about the feasibility of using the process writing approach in Malaysian classes. Many teacher trainees voiced their concerns about this issue and the following are problems that were brought up and the suggestions given by Mr. Lopez.

In Malaysian classrooms, particularly in form four and form five classes, the topics for writing are pre-determined in the syllabus so teachers and students have no choice but to cover these topics. As a solution, Mr. Lopez suggested that teachers list down all topics for the year based on the syllabus and then ask students what they want to do. The teacher, in this manner, will then be adjusting to reality of the Malaysian situation.

Writing classes in Malaysia are generally very large. The teacher trainees pointed out that it is common to have over 40 students in one class and four to five classes handled by each teacher. The teacher trainees were outspoken in voicing their concerns about time constraints and the reality of coping with three drafts. Proof reading, they said, would not be easy and correction would take up too much time. One teacher trainee

pointed out that students would get bored with the topic if they had to spend so much time on it. Another teacher trainee complained that students never bothered to prepare and if they did, they were not willing to share ideas. In response, Mr. Lopez drew the attention of the teacher trainees back to the basic principles of process writing. He stressed the benefits of being a facilitator and the value of having a relationship with students through written comments such as “I have read your work and it is worthwhile improving by....” He told the teacher trainees to look at the means to produce the essay and stressed that the procedures for process writing were not strict rules that needed to be followed. He suggested that the teacher trainees create their own procedures but apply the principles. Mr. Lopez then presented to the teacher trainees his adaptation of the process writing approach for Malaysian schools. In his adaptation, the teacher does not deal on a one-to-one basis with students but with the whole class. Students do not write drafts of the whole essay but instead respond to questions in not more than 20 words. These adaptations were made to cope with the large number of students generally found in Malaysian classes

Process Writing in Action: An Adaptation for Malaysian Schools

The following is an adaptation of the process writing approach designed by Mr. Lopez specifically for Malaysian schools. This plan was given out in a handout that was distributed to the class.

Topic: Child Abuse (Form Five curriculum specification)

Procedure:

Step One: Monday (double period) Time: 15-20 minutes

- (a) The teacher introduces the topic. The teacher asks for clarification as to what is involved and for examples of child abuse. The teacher does not give any input at this stage. In their exercise books, he asks students to answer the following question in not more than 20 words. "What is child abuse? Give one example of child abuse."
- (b) On a piece of paper, the students formulate a question about child abuse they wish to know the answer to. The teacher collects these papers together with the exercise books.
- (c) He asks the class to bring newspapers cuttings and other writings on child abuse to be put on the classroom notice board. The teacher himself has a collection.

Step Two: Tuesday. Time: 10-15 minutes

- (a) The teacher returns exercise books with comments on their ideas. He spends five minutes discussing ideas, sometimes asking specific students to read their answers. He then asks them to develop their answers.
- (b) The teacher asks students to write the answer to a new question in not more than 20 words.

Question: What are some of the ways in which adults abuse children?

- (c) The teacher makes sure that the newspapers cuttings and articles are put on the wall for all to read. This will then form a research base.

Step three: Thursday. Time: 10-15 minutes.

- (a) The teacher returns the last answers with responses and spends a few minutes discussing the question and asking some students to read their answers. He then asks them to develop and expand their answers.
- (b) New Question: What can be done to prevent child abuse? Students are to answer the question in not more than 20 words.

Step Four: Friday. Time: whole lesson

- (a) The teacher holds discussion on child abuse, using ideas found in the students' work. The teacher returns answers, reads a few students' answers and asks the class to expand on their answers.
- (b) The teacher distributes the questions they asked on Monday for peer responses and returns the sheets to the owners.
- (c) The teacher conducts a quick grammar lesson based on mistakes that the teacher has been collecting.

Step 5: Monday – Double Period

Essay on child abuse using any text type. Teacher goes around helping where necessary.

Thus one essay is given after three weeks. Mr. Lopez went through each of the above steps and showed the teacher trainees examples of how to respond to students' answers to the questions. The following is an example of a student's answer to the question, "What is child abuse? Give one example of child abuse". (Given in step one of the procedure).

An example of a student's answer:

Child abuse is bad that the children not treat well like caned by the father.

Mr. Lopez provided an example of how the teacher can respond to the answer:

I agree when you say that the child is not treated well. Who does not treat the child well? Only the Father? When is caning a child, abuse?

Mr. Lopez also provided an example of how the teacher may respond to a student's answer to the question, "What are some of the ways in which adults abuse children?"

This question was given in step two of the procedure.

An example of a student's answer:

They can beat the child or not give the foods and can also sexual.

Mr. Lopez suggested that the teacher may response in the following manner.

You have given three forms of child abuse: beating the child so that the child is badly hurt, starving the child and sexually abusing him (The teacher is reformulating subtly). Can you write about other forms of child abuse that are found in the world today?

Mr. Lopez then provided an example of a student's response to the question, "What can be done to prevent child abuse?", which was given in the third step of the procedure:

An example of student's answer:

Laws against child abuse must be enforced.

Mr. Lopez suggested that the teacher respond in the following manner.

I agree with you. I would also like you to consider steps to prevent child abuse. You punish people only after they have done the crime.

In the above manner, Mr. Lopez taught the teacher trainees how to respond to students' answers and help them develop their ideas. Here, in his adaptation, there was no one-to-one conferencing or revision of drafts but a development of the essay through questions and the questions subtly corrected student's errors. These were the important changes Mr. Lopez made in his adaptation of the process writing approach.

Responses of the Five Teacher Trainees to Process Writing

The five teacher trainees were unanimous in their opposition to process writing.

Amreet said,

These activities are good but they cannot be used because it takes too much time. I do not think students are ready for process writing. Teachers need to control students' writing initially and slowly move to freer writing. I feel that process-based activities can be demotivating when students have to keep improving on a single essay.

Depat felt that process writing activities were suitable only for small groups of good students. Depat added that under the process approach, students would only be able to

write two or three essays in a semester because a lot of time was needed for each essay. According to Depat, two or three essays were not enough because the students needed to be exposed to different types of text for examination purposes. Siti said that process writing activities were not really practical during their Teaching Practice. However, Siti added that some of the principles could be used to help students gather information for the content of an essay. Chee Leng bluntly said,

This is out. I tried to do before but students found it boring. Students do not want to write so many times. Moreover, no time for one-to-one conferencing. Maybe, overseas can when you have only 20 students but not in the Malaysian context.

Laura agreed with Chee Leng saying, "Not viable. I have tried it and students can die of boredom. Imagine writing and rewriting the same topic."

I felt that because of preconceived notions about process writing and the fear of change, the teacher trainees were not open to suggestions of Mr. Lopez. However, I felt that compared to language-focussed and genre-based activities, Mr. Lopez did seem to rush through the lessons on process writing activities. Mr. Lopez explained to me, that through the body language of the teacher trainees, he was aware that he was not getting through to the teacher trainees. He felt that this was because he did not have the time (seven weeks for the whole course) to explain things in detail. He said, "I need to conduct a whole course just on process writing. The time I had was too short."

Techniques of Giving Feedback and Corrections

Techniques of giving feedback and corrections formed the fourth section of the course after language-focussed activities, the genre based approach and process writing. Mr. Lopez began this section by discussing the worrying factors of giving feedback and doing corrections. He pointed out that Malaysian students need to have massive practice in written work to cope with the demands of the examinations because 60 to 70 percent of public examinations consist of the written paper. In reality, according to Mr. Lopez, massive practice will result in a drain on time and energy for the teacher. Teachers have large classes to teach and the English language proficiency level in Malaysian schools is generally low. But despite these constraints, teachers need to give massive practice in writing. According to Mr. Lopez, one composition in three weeks is not enough. As a compromise, he suggested that teachers give frequent written work in such a way that time demands on the teacher will not be stressful. He told the teacher trainees to give written work that is interesting and communicative. For example, the teacher can give a question demanding a one-sentence answer. The students must limit their answer to 15 words. Students will then have to leave out a lot of information and this gives the teacher the opportunity to ask further questions. Mr. Lopez demonstrated three ways of correcting which the teacher trainees could use.

The first method of correction is what he called “straight forward correction”. He used the following example of a student’s written sentence.

I choose (chose) to become a teacher because I was very impress (impressed) with my own teacher.

The teacher here corrects directly the two mistakes “choose” and “impress”. According to Mr. Lopez, this method may be used if there are one or two mistakes in a student’s answer.

The second method of correction described by Mr. Lopez is to reformulate the whole sentence. He used the following example of a student’s sentence.

I must choose for teaching for I not find better other job.

The teacher reformulates the sentence in the manner given below.

I chose teaching because I could not find a better job.

The third method of correcting suggested by Mr. Lopez is to make a response to the content written. He told the teacher trainees to praise if they could sincerely find something to praise and then help the student develop his ideas by asking a question. Using the first example of a student’s sentence, Mr. Lopez suggested the following response.

Student’s sentence: I choose to become a teacher because I was very impress with my own teacher.

Teacher’s response: I am happy to hear that. What were you so impressed about?

Using the second example of a student’s sentence, Mr. Lopez suggested the following response to encourage the students.

Student’s sentence: I must choose for teaching for I not find better other job.

Teacher’s response: I am very curious to know about this or I am looking forward to hear your ideas.

Mr. Lopez held a discussion with the teacher trainees on how to use these methods of correcting in the classroom so the correction time is reduced. It was decided during the discussion that it is better to make students write one-sentence response to questions frequently than to make them write one long essay once every three weeks. Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees to always give students a question that is relevant to them and recommended that teachers ask open-ended questions. He further suggested that to formulate an answer in the past tense the teacher should ask a question in the past tense therefore teaching the tense. In this manner, Mr. Lopez explained, the teacher is actually controlling the grammar structure, the length and at the same time giving students work that would not demand too much time. By responding in the manner described above, the teacher is showing personal attention in a very encouraging way. Mr. Lopez suggested that the teacher could go for three to four exchanges. The teacher can also relate these exchanges to the topic that he is teaching according to the prescribed syllabus. Students' answers can be used to generate enough information for students to be able to write an essay on, for example, "Drug Abuse" at the end of it.

According to Mr. Lopez, this method of developing an essay by asking questions takes into account the reality of the classroom setting, time constraints, teacher's workload, the practice students need and allows for individual attention. He said that ideally, feedback should be given as soon as possible. He told the teacher trainees to avoid questions that ask for one-word answers and to avoid questions that do not allow for a wide variety of answers. Following are some suggestions given by Mr. Lopez about the kind of questions to ask.

1. What do you do in your free time?

2. What do you think must be done to prevent road accidents?
3. What did you do in the weekend?
4. What suggestions can you give to improve your school?

Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees to always tell students that their answers must be in full sentences. The teacher, he said, needs the skill of asking the right questions and the skill of responding well.

Another method recommended by Mr. Lopez was to use cards on which students formulate questions on any problem. Students should have the skill of formulating questions. However, the teacher should reformulate the question if it is badly formulated. Mr. Lopez suggested that if students cannot formulate, especially if students' English is bad, the teacher can ask students to formulate the question in Bahasa Malaysia or a mixture of Bahasa Malaysia and English because the teacher will be reformulating. Mr. Lopez suggested telling students to:

- ask a question about the problems they face in learning English.
- ask a question dealing with anything they are not happy with in school.
- ask a question concerning any problem as a hostelite.
- ask a question about problems they face in writing compositions.
- ask a question about problems they are facing with a friend/member of family/neighbour.
- ask a question about some problem they are facing in their studies.
- ask a question regarding teachers.

Mr. Lopez suggested that the teacher give out the cards with the students' questions to other students at random and get them to write the answers as honestly as they want. The teacher here is not interested in students' answers but only in questions, because the objective is only to get students to formulate questions. According to Mr.

Lopez, questions have become the monopoly of teachers. Students never get to ask questions. Mr. Lopez felt that half of learning is already done if students can ask questions. He suggested that the teacher correct the errors if there are one or two errors. If there are a lot of errors, the teacher should reformulate the questions. If questions are in Bahasa Malaysia, the teacher should reformulate in English. Thus, in the manner described above, in the short time available, students are given individual attention.

Mr. Lopez further discussed other forms of corrections with the teacher trainees. In order to help students move towards self-correction, he suggested correcting only errors that were not previously discussed with students. The teacher here does not correct errors that have been discussed. Students are helped by the teacher to correct these errors themselves. Mr. Lopez also suggested having dialogues with students about errors. A student's written piece can also be used as a comprehension passage with students correcting the errors in the actual essay. Mr. Lopez discussed the student's essay shown on Figure 8 with the teacher trainees and showed them the manner in which such an essay can be dealt with. In the essay shown on Figure 8, Mr. Lopez explained that the teacher corrected certain glaring errors and then held a dialogue with the student who wrote the essay. This dialogue, which was given to the teacher trainees in a handout, is shown on Figure 9. Figure 8 and Figure 9 are shown on the following pages.

Tourist Attractions in Malaysia

[THINGS]

INTERESTING

NOT ONLY ...
BUT ALSO

FOREST RESERVES

BE / SATISFIED

Tourist coming to Malaysia will find many things to do and see which is very interesting. Much tourist is attracted to the many races, culture and religion of the people of the country. There is many temples, mosque and church which are not only beautiful but also have historical interest also. The country has many places with beautiful beach as well as hill resort. There are also many reserves of forest where visitor can see many types of plant and animal in their natural surroundings. I am sure much visitors will be very satisfy with Malaysia and will want to come again.

Figure 8. Example of a Student's Essay

A Discussion With the English Teacher

- Teacher : Lisa, I have read your composition and I would like to spend a few minutes discussing it with you. On the whole, I like your essay. I understand everything you want to say and for me that is very important. How do you feel about this essay?
- Lisa : Teacher, I am very worried because my written work is still poor.
- Teacher : I have good news for you. This is the fourth essay you have written for me and you are definitely improving. In the beginning of the year I could not understand most of what you wrote.
- Lisa : Thank you.
- Teacher : Now let us see how you can improve further. One of the main mistakes you are still making is about using the plural form. I mean that you often do not use the -s ending when you are talking of more than one person or thing. For instance, we say cat when we are talking of one cat. What if there are more than one cat?
- Lisa : Cats.
- Teacher : That's right. Your essay has a number of words which need this plural form. For example, the very first word : Tourist.
- Lisa : It should be Tourists.
- Teacher : Yes, why?
- Lisa : More than one person.
- Teacher : Right. You sometimes use the plural form correctly. You correctly say "many races" and "many temples". But you forget that you are talking of more than one thing in other places. For instance, "many races, culture and religion". You are talking of more than one culture and religion, right?
- Lisa : Yes.

Figure 9. Example of a Dialogue with Student

- Teacher : So?
- Lisa : Cultures and religions.
- Teacher : Right. Can you spot another place when you make exactly the same mistake?
- Lisa : Mosque and church.
- Teacher : Good. I have counted about 10 or 11 places in your essay where you need to use the plural. Do you think you can spot them on your own?
- Lisa : I will try. ..
- Teacher : Now I want to point out two other types of mistakes which you have made. Plural nouns like mosques and churches must go with plural verbs. There is one plan? But there ARE many plans? Understand?
- Lisa : Yes.
- Teacher : Let's look at the first sentence. "Tourists..... will find many (things) to do and see which is very interesting. Should be.....?"
- Lisa : Which are very interesting.
- Teacher : Good. I think you made 3 such mistakes in your essay. Read it carefully and correct them. In one place you have done it correctly. You wrote : "There are also many (forest reserves)." This shows that you are beginning to understand. Soon you will be making less and less of these mistakes.
- Finally, there is one more grammar point I want you to correct. We use "many" to refer to things we can count : for example, many boys, many temples, many visitors, many beaches. But we use much to refer to things that cannot be counted : too much noise, much work to do. In your essay you twice use much when you really should use most : most visitors, most tourists. Understand?
- Lisa : Yes.
- Teacher : Lisa, I would like you to rewrite this essay correctly. There are a few mistakes that we have not discussed but which I have corrected. See me if you don't understand.
You are improving. Keep it up.

Figure 9. Example of a Dialogue with Student (Cont.)

Mr. Lopez suggested that the dialogue could be used as a comprehension passage with students. He also discussed the following essay written by a student. The whole essay that is shown below is full errors, but it was written in English and comprehensible.

WHOLE CLASS CORRECTION I.

Original Paragraph

Ther many reason for the govrment should to taken strong aksyen against drug who sell and drugs addict. People who to sell drug. To the teenage are to destroy their life. Drug addict who to do anything for to get money for to buy drug. Many yong men steel and even woman steel for to get money. For to buy drug. I even hear of the addict who kill a man for to take the money.

Figure 10. Example of Student's Essay

A discussion was held with the teacher trainees on how to deal with essays like this. The teacher trainees were told that if they tried to correct the essay, the whole essay would be full of red ink and corrections and this was considered demotivating. Mr. Lopez suggested reformulation and whole class correction. Reformulation here would mean actually improving on the essay in the following manner.

There many reason why the government should take strong aksyen against drug dealer and drug addict. People who sell drug to young people are destroy the live of addict who would do anything to get money to buy drug. Many young man and even woman steal and rob to get money for drug. I have even hear of a addict who kill a man to take his money.

Figure 11. Reformulated Version

Mr. Lopez suggested doing a listening **comprehension** lesson of the improved version and then going through the essay, **sentence by sentence**, and asking students how to spell or what is missing in each line. For example, "Is there one reason or many reasons?" The teacher trainees were told that the teacher should then ask what Mr. Lopez called "Stage 1(a)" questions, that is, questions that ask **directly from one specific spot** of the text. For example, "Who should take action? The **government**?" The teacher writes the correct spelling of words on the board. Next the teacher should ask "Stage 1(b)" questions, this according to Mr. Lopez, are questions **whose answers are found in more than one place in the text**. These questions are to be followed by "Stage 2" questions, which are inference questions, and "Stage 3" questions which are questions which go beyond the text, questions which ask for **opinions and which are based on students' knowledge**. For example, "What do you think of drug addicts?"

Mr. Lopez told the teacher trainees that once the **whole passage** was read out and corrected, the teacher could then give out the **original passage**. Students then rewrite the whole passage based on the guidelines on the **blackboard**. According to Mr. Lopez, some students may get it all right but others may still **make mistakes** but it will be better than the original version. The teacher trainees were told **that for whole class correction**, they should not choose a terribly weak essay. They were **told to choose a moderately weak essay** and reformulate some sentences to make it **manageable** for students. Mr. Lopez provided on a handout the following corrected **version** of the essay together with the procedure on how to use it.

Reformulated Passage

There are many reasons why the government should take strong action against drug dealers and drug addicts. People who sell drugs to teenagers are destroying the lives of addicts who would do anything to get money to buy drugs. Many young men and even women steal and rob to get money for drugs. I have even heard of a drug addict who killed a man to take his money.

Procedure

1. Read the reformulated passage aloud to the class two or three times.
2. Ask questions concerning the content, spelling and structure of each sentence. Do this sentence by sentence.
3. Give out the original passage to the class – one copy to be shared by two students. Ask them to do the corrections and rewrite the passage correctly. The teacher goes around to help.
4. Give out the reformulated passage for them to compare.

Figure 12. Corrected Version With Procedure on How to Use It

He stressed that whole class correction if done regularly is bound to bring about significant progress, especially to the student whose work is being discussed. The following are more ways of correcting recommended by Mr. Lopez.

1. Underline the error and correct it.
2. Underline the error and use symbols to denote the type of error (e.g., Sp – spelling).
3. Pick out error and discuss and correct with whole class.
4. Concentrate on a certain aspects, for example, articles.

Mr. Lopez discussed the characteristics of weak students, pointing out that weak students are sensitive to the teacher, other students and the school environment. They are field dependent, they need to experience success and they need clear guidelines. These characteristics need to be taken into consideration in preparing and correcting tests. Testing, according to Mr. Lopez, is very much ingrained in our education system. In order to maintain standards the teacher needs to give monthly tests that are challenging and to mark strictly.

Responses of the Five Teacher Trainees to Techniques of Giving Feedback and Corrections

In a discussion that Mr. Lopez held with the teacher trainees to find out how they felt about these techniques of giving feedback and corrections, a number of the teacher trainees voiced concerns about having to fulfil the demands of parents or headmasters who may feel the teacher has not done his job if the teacher does not do corrections in the expected traditional manner. As a compromise, Mr. Lopez suggested underlining all

errors but correcting only what the teacher is focussing on, for example, articles. I feel that Mr. Lopez had quite thoroughly explained the effectiveness of his suggestions and it may be more appropriate for the teacher trainees to explain the principles of these techniques to headmasters and parents than to compromise by underlining all errors.

Concluding Discussion of Chapter

The teacher trainees were generally impressed and pleased by the manner in which the three approaches to teaching writing and the different feedback techniques were presented to them. Mr. Lopez's charisma, his anecdotes, his jokes, his punctuality (he was always the first person in the lecture room) and his hard work in preparing for his lectures won the hearts of the teacher trainees. Although Mr. Lopez collected his teaching material over the years and so was unable to provide sources, his work does seem to be substantially influenced by White (1987). The manner in which Mr. Lopez made the teacher trainees try out the activities themselves, helped the teacher trainees experience what their own students would experience. Mr. Lopez himself served as a good role model for the teacher trainees. Mr. Lopez explained to me that the exercises he gave the trainees were carefully selected to illustrate principles so that the teacher trainees would be flexible in creating their own exercises. Mr. Lopez also provided the teacher trainees with a comprehensive reading list for each of the three approaches taught. Furthermore, as an assignment, each teacher trainee had to choose a book from the reading lists and hand in an evaluative review of the book. Mr. Lopez explained to me that he considered the review of the book very important. He said, "I wanted the teacher trainees to read one book carefully so that they would have much more than I could give them." Mr. Lopez

felt that there simply was not enough time to cover everything he wanted to. He said, "I need a whole course for just process writing. Moreover, I need to continue guiding the teacher trainees during their teaching practice." However, guidance during teaching practice was carried out by the mentors who supervised and assessed the teaching of all the four skills - reading, writing, speaking and listening (see structure of the programme, p. 41). Considering the theory and principles of teacher change by Markee, Fullan and Kennedy (see p. 5 for the theoretical framework of this study) the absence of the change agent (Mr. Lopez in this case) soon after his instruction is a serious flaw. Mr Lopez was not around to observe and guide the teachers during the simulated teaching and teaching practice components of the programme. Although it was his desire to continue guiding the teachers in implementing his innovations, his contract to teach at the university was not renewed by the administration. Continued support from the administration was repeatedly stressed by Markee, Fullan and Kennedy as essential. The transmission of knowledge during lectures alone is considered ineffective for teacher change (see p. 11 for Freeman's comment on this point). Moreover, the teachers themselves were generally passive listeners who religiously took down notes. There was little in the way of discussion, challenges or questions during the lectures. Amreet was quite vocal at times but she too took down practically every word of the lecturer.

The following two chapters focus on the performance of the five teacher trainees as they attempt to use the innovations advocated by Mr. Lopez during the simulated teaching and teaching practice components of the programme.