

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### Conducting the Lessons.

The research was conducted over a number of lessons. The lessons were divided into two different topics. Both used the “Process Writing Approach’ but with different method of teaching. The two lessons were:

- (1) Argumentative Essay – “ A lot of our life is spent doing useless things. Is this true?” In this lesson, the teacher only explained about the processes involved in writing without showing them how to do each step. They were left on their own to follow the steps explained.
- (2) Argumentative Essay – “Uniforms are not necessary”. In this lesson, the processes in ‘Process Writing’ are adopted and carried out in class. Therefore, a few lessons were used in class to go over each step.

In lesson 1, the teacher talked about the various steps involved in writing an essay as described in the ‘Process Writing’ approach i.e. from brainstorming, outlining and writing drafts to the final product. However, the students were not shown how these steps are done. The next step, the teacher explained another type of essay, which was the argumentative essay and how they should approach this kind of essay. After that,

the topic of the essay was written on the board. Then, the teacher explained the meaning of the topic and told the class to follow all the steps discussed earlier, starting with brainstorming the ideas. The whole essay should be done in three parts i.e. introduction, the body of the essay and the conclusion. Once all these were explained, the students were left on their own to start their work. While the students were doing their work, the teacher walked around to help those who needed help as well as to see that they started their work following the steps mentioned or at least did the 'brainstorming' process. The students were given four days to complete the work.

#### Findings from Lesson 1.

From the observations made by the teacher while the students did their work in class, it was found that many students did not follow the steps explained by the teacher in class. Some students refused to start their work in class by giving excuses such as no inspiration doing work in the class, could not think in class as it was noisy or they prefer to work at home. The few girls in the class (those from the Chinese School) had problems starting their work and the teacher had to explain to them the meanings of some of the words in the topic.

After the given time, the teacher collected the products from the students and marked them. However, not many students did the work. Only half of the class handed in the work. The teacher corrected all the errors made by the students by putting signs such as underlining and symbols ~, =, sp, SVA, SS etc. It was noted that all the errors looked at were the structural errors. However, the teacher also put some comments at the side or at the bottom of the page such as 'good points' or 'should elaborate more'. At the end

of it, each product was given a grade as this was what the students expected to see when they got back their work. The teacher compiled some errors taken from the students' work and wrote them on the blackboard in the next lesson. The students were shocked to see the errors and could not believe that they had made them. The teacher pointed out that these could be the results of not checking their work before writing the final drafts as most of them did not follow the instructions given. It was also apparent that they did not plan their work first. After that, the students were asked to correct the errors on the blackboard and they were told that there were more than one ways of correcting them depending on the message that each sentence tried to convey. However, the mistakes on grammar, spelling and punctuation marks were not flexible. The students attempted to correct the sentences but some sentences were too vague that they had to change some of the sentences as they did not understand what the sentences meant. After this activity, it was found that the students could correct the mistakes when they were taken out of the essay and put into individual sentences. This could be because in the individual sentence, the errors are clearer and easier to identify. Even the weaker students could see some of the mistakes that they themselves did. Errors on structural were the easiest to correct.

Lesson 2 was carried out using the 'Process Writing' approach but this time with a different method. Therefore, the teacher had to do some readings on this approach and brainstorming some ideas on the topic to be given to the students. This was done through discussion with a few teachers in the staff-room. The lesson started by explaining to the students the steps involved in writing an essay i.e. from the beginning stage, that is, how to decide or choose a topic. Next, was the brainstorming of ideas,

writing an outline, writing drafts, revising, editing and finally writing the final drafts. The teacher explained the purpose of each of this step and the advantages. They were also told that even if they do not have time to during the examination to follow these steps, at least the exercise in class would help train them to write better and think systematically before writing. It was also explained that the whole class would be doing this exercise called 'Process Writing' together in class. The reason for that was so that they would be exposed to what actually are involved in each step as well as how to go about doing it. The topic was written on the blackboard, which was, "Uniforms are not necessary".

The next step was brainstorming session whereby the whole class contributed ideas on both sides of the topic (agree and disagree). All the points were written on the board under two different headings. At times, they were asked to explain their points by giving examples. One period was used to do this. Then, the teacher explained to them how to write an outline or skeleton of the essay based on the points given. One sample was done on the blackboard. It was also emphasized that they should write in the form of a chart or a diagram. The outline should contain the introduction, the body of the essay and the conclusion.

The next period, the students were asked to do an outline to be handed in at the end of the period. In the following lesson, the teacher returned the students' work and from the outline they started writing their first draft. They were given the freedom to write the first draft in their exercise book or on a piece of paper. They could also write in pencil if they wanted to. Students were told to hand-in the work by the end of the second period even if they did not finish the work. This was so that the teacher could

see what they had done so far and that they could continue the work in the next lesson. They were also reminded to organize their points into paragraphs and expand or elaborate them. While they were doing the work, the teacher walked around to see and to help those needed help. The last lesson on 'Process Writing' was spent returning the first drafts, revising and editing them. Once they got back their first drafts, the students were encouraged to exchange their work with their friends as one of the ways to revise and edit their work. By doing this, the friend could help proof - read the work. When they were satisfied with their work and know how to improve the work, they could start writing the final draft.

### Findings on Lesson 2.

The findings on lesson 2 can be divided into three parts, which were, the outline, first draft and the final draft.

#### **Outline:**

Most of the students copied the sample done by the teacher on the blackboard. However, there were some students who attempted to write their own outlines such as in the form of a flowchart. Overall, 95% of the students handed in their outlines by the end of the lesson which was surprising because normally it was difficult to get even half of the class to hand in their work, what more doing the work. The teacher was impressed with the response even though some of them copied from the blackboard. At least it showed that they knew what an outline is and what it contains. In checking this work, the teacher did not write much feedback except that most of the time, they were

asked to give more examples in their points. There was no correcting of grammatical errors in this task.

### **First Draft.**

Only a few students managed to finish their first drafts in class. However, even those who did not finish the work were told to hand in the incomplete work. More than half of the class did not manage to complete the whole draft but at least all the students had started writing their drafts. The reason for the incomplete work could be because they were busy talking with each other and also many of them were busy reading their friends' work as they were encouraged to do so. Also, some students took a longer time to think and to write compared to others. It was rewarding to see that they all started doing their work as they had the outline to work with and did not need to spend so much time thinking of what to write or how to start. They could also get ideas from their friends' outlines and by doing this, gave them a sense of power of their writing. For the weak students, the sample outline was sufficient for them to work with. Thus, from the products collected, even these students managed to come up with an essay.

The students also felt more relax when the teacher accepted their drafts on a piece of paper and can even be written in pencil. So even the boy who rarely did his work in class, did that particular work because in the past, he always gave the excuse of not having any exercise book. All the products (first drafts) were checked by correcting the errors and the teacher also wrote some comments where it was felt that they could expand the points or give more examples. Most of the structural errors were pointed out

but wherever possible, the teacher also tried to give some positive feedback i.e. writing comments such as 'good points' or 'well expressed'. No grades were given for this work.

### **Final Drafts.**

The final drafts definitely showed some improvement in the writing in almost all of the students' work. The weak students' work did not change much from the first draft except that in the final drafts, all the structural errors had been corrected. In terms of content, there was no significant change either. For the good students and the average ones, the work showed some improvement both in structural and content of the essays. They not only polished their style but also developed the ideas i.e. elaborate and give more examples.

On the whole, it was found that the outline and the drafts helped the students to write better and also helped more students to be interested in doing their work as they felt that they knew what to do or what was required of them. By giving examples/samples in class and giving the time in class for them to do the work together helped improved their work either in terms of the number of students who did the work as well as the quality of the work produced. It was felt that the instructions were clear and helped them. Some students produced better pieces of writing than the previous work especially in terms of ideas and the organization of ideas.

The samples of the students' work on all three lessons are enclosed. The samples are taken from the weak, average and good students.