

UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY
TEACHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

WAYS OF DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS APPLYING DIFFERENT WRITING
APPROACHES IN THE ENGLISH CLASSES
RAKSTĪŠANAS IEMAŅU ATTĪSTĪŠANA IZMANTOJOT DAŽĀDAS PIEEJAS
ANĢĻU VALODAS STUNDĀS
DIPLOMA PAPER

AUTHOR: DAINA ŠEVČIKA
TEACHER EDUCATION FACULTY
ID.NO.SKAN 010073
MAG.PAED: LILITA LINDE

RIGA
2008

LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTE
PEDAGOĢIJAS UN PSIHOĢIJAS FAKULTĀTES
SKOLOTĀJU IZGLĪTĪBAS NODAĻAS

ANĢĻU VALODAS SKOLOTĀJS
DAINA ŖEVĀIKA
SKAN 010073

RAKSTĪŖANAS IEMAŅU ATTĪSTĪŖANA IZMANTOJOT DAŖĀDAS PIEEJAS
ANĢĻU VALODAS STUNDĀS
DIPLOMDARBS

ZINĀTNISKAIS VADĪTĀJS:
PED. MAĢ. LILITA LINDE

RĪGA
2008

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I declare that this work is my own and does not contain any unacknowledged form of any source.

Daina Ševčika

26 May, 2008

ABSTRACT

The author has chosen a theme ways of developing writing skills applying different writing approaches in the English classes that is topical in terms of methodology and pedagogy. The author wishes to do research in this field in order to find and design different tasks that would improve students' writing skills and students would become more competent in the concrete field.

The aim of diploma paper is to develop Secondary school students' writing skills applying different approaches and collecting motivating pre- writing tasks.

The study was set out to investigate how well students can apply their writing skills in different situations doing several tasks. The intention is to provide some insight into the theme and to examine effectiveness of approaches.

The author wants to make sure that the students are competent enough to use their writing skills effectively and appropriate to the task.

In order to do the research the case study was used. The author studied the literature about approaches of teaching writing skills, carried out a set of activities for students, made a questionnaire for the students and the teachers.

It was found out that only few students are convinced in their writing skills and there should be done more work in the writing field. Nevertheless, even the students with lower level did some progress and there is a possibility for the teacher to continue successfully the commenced work.

ANOTĀCIJA

Autors izvēlējās tēmu rakstīšanas iemaņu attīstīšana izmantojot dažādas pieejas angļu valodas stundās, kura ir aktuāla metodikas un pedagoģijas jomās. Autors gribēja veikt pētījumu, lai atrastu un apkopotu dažādus uzdevumus ar kuru palīdzību varētu uzlabot skolēnu rakstīšanas iemaņas un lai šajā jomā skolēni kļūtu zinošāki.

Diplomdarba mērķis ir attīstīt vidusskolas skolēnu rakstīšanas iemaņas ar dažādu pieeju palīdzību un apkopot darbam motivējošus sagatavošanās uzdevumus.

Pētījums tika veikts, lai noskaidrotu, cik veiksmīgi skolēni izmanto rakstīšanas iemaņas dažādās situācijās pildot dažādus uzdevumus. Autora nodoms ir sniegt dziļāku ieskatu šajā tēmā un pārbaudīt izmantoto pieeju efektivitāti.

Autors gribētu būt pārliecināts par to, ka skolēni ir pietiekami kompetenti, lai efektīvi un atbilstoši uzdevumiem izmantotu rakstīšanas iemaņas.

Lai veiktu pētījumu tika izmantots atsevišķa gadījuma pētījums. Autors izpētīja literatūru par rakstīšanas pieejām, deva skolēniem uzdevumus, kas saistīti ar konkrēto tēmu, aptaujāja skolēnus un skolotājus.

Pētījuma laikā tika noskaidrots, ka tikai daži skolēni ir pārliecināti par savām rakstīšanas iemaņām. Tomēr pat skolēni ar zemāku zināšanu līmeni uzlaboja savas rakstīšanas iemaņas un autors secināja, ka šajā jomā ir vēl daudz darba, lai panāktu, ka lielākā daļa skolēnu būtu pārliecināti par savām rakstīšanas iemaņām un skolotājam ir visas iespējas, lai veiksmīgi turpinātu iesākto darbu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
1. Writing Approaches	11
1.1 Product approach	12
1.2 Controlled writing	13
1.3.Process approach	15
1.4.Creative writing	17
1.5. Writing with a computer	21
2. The Stages of the Writing Process	24
2.1. Pre- writing stage	25
2.2 Planning	26
2.3 Drafting	27
2.4 Revising	28
3. Written feedback techniques	31
4. Case Study	33
4.1. Analysis of the questionnaires	35
4.2. Lesson plans	43
4.3. Written assignment plans	51
COCNLUSION	
THESES	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
APPENDICES	

INTRODUCTION

The author has chosen the theme that studies how to effectively develop Secondary school students writing skills applying different approaches.

Although writing used to be rather neglected in school syllabus, it is now being given more attention and emphasis in teaching. Writing is a comprehensive ability involving the following elements: grammar, vocabulary and conception. Therefore writing should by no means be restricted to writing courses or composition classes; it must be integrated with the other entire language course. Writing is also one of the most difficult skills to master in both a first language and a second language. Learning to write well takes a lot of practice and patience. Students need clear guidance, positive feedback, and also interesting ideas to write about. Teacher's role is very significant in the writing process. Teachers are the motivators; they motivate the students by creating the right conditions for the generations of ideas, persuading students of the usefulness of the activity, and encouraging them to make as much effort as possible. Teachers also have to be ready to supply information and language where necessary, offer advice and suggestions in a constructive and tactful way.

When students learn the second language, they learn to communicate with other people: to understand them, read what they have written and write to them. Writing helps also students to learn. First, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that teachers have been teaching their students. Second, when students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take the risk. Third, when students write, they necessarily become involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eye, hand, and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning. They discover a real need for finding the right word and the right sentence. The close relationship between writing and thinking makes writing a valuable part of any language course. Teaching writing can be used as the means of developing logical thinking, promoting students' self-expression through written communication and raising their self-confidence in using the language and writing skills in future. Besides, writing also promotes language learning and the enrichment of vocabulary.

The need to reflect on the theme can be proved by the fact that, although students acquire writing skills starting to learn the English language, not everyone is able to communicate his/her thoughts properly in written form. There is lack of knowledge how to write different assignments correctly and appropriate to the form, which is required.

Moreover, the students in the 12th grade have to pass English exam where writing test examines the students' ability to write correct and appropriate sentences, use conventions

peculiar to the written language, think creatively and develop thought excluding irrelevant information, manipulate sentences and paragraphs to use language effectively, write in an appropriate manner with a particular audience in kind, organize and order the written material. (Co project “Year 12”)

The author has chosen the theme because she is interested in effective teaching process and wishes to join fun and knowledge in the English lessons and to gain good results in developing students writing skills. Students need to learn to communicate also in written form as through writing, in the same way, as through speaking, it is possible to give information, share ideas, arouse feelings and convince people.

Writing is essentially a creative process and good writers must communicate their ideas clearly. For students, not always it is easy to produce a good piece of writing. Most teachers focus not on meaning, significance and pleasure, but only on grammar, structure and spelling. Therefore, after some time, it becomes boring and less motivating tasks for students. They are not willing to put any effort to produce a good, thought- out, and interesting piece of writing, with appropriate vocabulary and even organization. However, sometimes student even do not exactly know or cannot choose the words they have to use.

Besides, writing requires knowledge and focuses thought. In order to write, students must have something to say. Therefore, students must acquire and present content, such as facts, generalizations, and concepts, when they write an assignment or test response.

There is no one right way of teaching and developing writing skills, but still teachers can choose the most appropriate and interesting tasks for their students and follow all the writing stages, so that they could motivate the students to do these tasks as good as they can. There are different approaches and pre- writing tasks that can be used to make the lessons more colourful and motivating for the students.

Thus, the aim of the diploma paper is to develop Secondary school student writing skills applying different approaches and to design motivating pre- writing tasks.

The following enabling **objectives** are set to reach the aim:

1. To study the available sources of literature on the theme;
2. To analyse the variety of the writing tasks in the Secondary school textbook;
3. To carry out a set of different pre- writing tasks;
4. To pilot writing activities using different approaches;
5. To find out students’ opinions about writing activities by means of questionnaire.

(see appendix 2)

6. To find out teachers' opinions about ways of teaching writing activities by means of questionnaire. (see appendix 1)
7. To analyze the results by comparing students and teachers opinions.
8. To draw conclusions from the data.

The research questions are:

1. How to make students interested in process of doing writing activities?
2. What are different writing approaches?
3. Which writing approaches are more appropriate to develop writing skill?
4. How effective is usage of pre- writing tasks?
5. How can students be motivated to do writing tasks?

Hypothesis: applying different writing approaches and pre- writing tasks is successful strategy to develop secondary school students' writing skills.

Research method:

According to Nunan's (1992) classification of foreign language learning research methods, a **case study** is used. The research is carried out with 10th and 12th graders in one of Riga Secondary schools.

Data collecting techniques:

- **Observation.** The data from which the results and conclusions are drawn consists of observation. Looking at the ways of teaching writing at school definite conclusions are made;
- **Questionnaires.** To find out students' and teachers' opinions about the approaches and methods used for teaching and improving writing skills.

Outline of Chapters:

The first chapter deals with the information about writing approaches. The usage of different writing approaches during the English classes can make the writing process more colourful and interesting. It is also stressed that the teachers have to decide whether to focus more on the process of writing or on the product, whether they want them to study different genres or they want to encourage creative writing tool.

The first chapter consist also of sub- chapters where described different writing approaches are:

- Product approach;

- Controlled writing;
- Process approach;
- Creative writing;
- Writing with a computer.

The second chapter deals with the information and description of the stages of the writing process. The writing stages are described:

- Pre- writing stage;
- Planning;
- Drafting;
- Revising.

The third chapter deals with the information about different written feedback techniques that teacher can use while checking the students' written assignments.

The fourth chapter is a case study. There are analysis of questionnaires, lesson plans and written assignment plans.

CHAPTER 1

WRITING APPROACHES

It is probably fair to say that around the world in many English language classrooms less time is devoted to the skill of writing than to reading, listening and speaking. There are numerous reasons for this, not least of which is the question of time. In many teaching situations, the teachers may see their students for no more than an hour or two a week and writing is seen as time-consuming and not perhaps the best way of making use of such a short amount of time. The students too may feel that writing is an activity best done out of the classroom and that spending valuable classroom time writing in silence is a waste of time. Another factor that may dissuade teachers from devoting time to writing skills is the fact that written work needs to be corrected.

Educating learners about the role and value of writing and pointing out the numerous different purposes the teacher should take into consideration that writing can have: both in terms of communication and in terms of language practice that can also help to project a more positive image for writing-based activities in the classroom. In this respect, time spent discussing what people write, how they prepare what they write and how it is corrected and by whom, will be time well spent. In much the same way that learners begin to experiment with speaking at quite an early stage of their foreign language development, they will often want to experiment with writing at an early stage. Trial and error will be an inevitable part of the process but in this modern age, where e-mail communication is rapidly becoming the main means of communication, an ability to compose an effective written message is an indispensable skill and writing must be given its rightful place in the process of language teaching as a whole. [18]

There are a lot of advantages for writing:

The first advantage is that writing takes more time than speaking, which allows students to process the language and vocabulary they use. Also while students are doing writing tasks teachers can monitor efficiently during the tasks, asking students to think again and reformulate language. [18]

Secondly teachers can take notes of areas that require more work and plan remedial microteaching slots based on their findings. Moreover at the end of the task there is a product that can usefully be used for further work. [18]

Finally as preparation time for other tasks it gives students valuable time and space, in which they can elaborate the language forms they might need in the next stage of the

activity. [18]

There is also a disadvantage for writing and it should be avoided. It is not recommendable to use writing just for filling in time in a lesson. There mostly should be pre-writing stage used to motivate students and also planning, drafting and revising. Otherwise if teacher almost all the time gives writing tasks for filling in time students with time being might get bored with writing tasks and less motivated. [18]

Language teachers might be aware that teaching writing is more difficult than teaching other language skills as students have limited knowledge of the target language. Furthermore, there is cultural interference due to the difference in the style of literary and rhetorical patterns of expression in their native language and the target language. Consequently, when students write in English, they do not create the text themselves; they only translate their thoughts word for word from their native language into English, often with grammatically incorrect results. In order to help students, teachers have to choose appropriate approaches and pre-writing activities for their students.

There are number of different approaches to the practice of writing skills both in and outside classroom. Teachers need to choose between them, deciding whether they want students to focus more on the process of writing than its product, whether we want them to study different written genres, or they want to encourage creative writing tool.

1.1. Product approach

Product approach is a traditional approach. It encourages students to mimic a model text, which is usually presented and analyzed at an early stage. Stages for such an approach are:

- Stage 1- the model text is read and then features of the genre are highlighted.
- Stage 2- this stage consists of controlled practice of the highlighted features. So if the students are studying a formal letter, they may be asked to practice the language used to make formal requests.
- Stage 3- organization of ideas. This stage is very important. Those who use this approach believe that the organization of ideas is more important than ideas themselves and as important as the control of the language.
- Stage 4- the end result of the learning process. The students choose from a choice of comparable writing tasks. Individually, they use the skill, structures and vocabulary they have been taught to produce the product.

When concentrating on the product the teachers are only interested in the aim of the task and the result of the product.

Using product approach teachers focus on the concepts of the thesis statement, the topic sentence, paragraph unity, organization strategies and development of paragraphs by patterns. Exercises to teach the logic of English organizational patterns included re-ordering deliberately scrambled paragraphs, identifying “irrelevant sentences” placed in paragraphs, and writing topic sentences for specific paragraphs, identifying “suitable” topic sentences for paragraphs from which the topic sentences had been removed. [6]

1.2 Controlled writing.

Reid (1993) outlines that in the 1970s writing classes focused on grammatical sentence structures that supported the grammar class and controlled writing. Exercises consisted of pieces of discourse, which students were instructed to copy and in which to make discrete changes or fill in the blanks. The philosophy of controlled writing is that students are taught incrementally, error is prevented, and fluency is expected to arise out of the practice with structures. Controlled writing allows students to practice and habituate correct structures and in that way learn to write on their own.

In controlled tasks more work is given to the students, for example, an outline to complete, or a passage to continue. Controlled writing is a useful tool at all levels of composition teaching and not just in the early stages before students have gained enough fluency to handle free writing. In writing students need the opportunity to get down words on paper and to try out the written language.

Controlled writing tasks give students focused practice concentrating on one or two problems at a time. Thus they are spared from tackling the full range of complexity that free writing entails. For the teachers controlled writing is easier to mark and much less time – consuming, so more can be assigned.

Controlled writing can be used into a composition curriculum at any level of student ability in two places:

- Before free writing, when students practice a grammatical point or syntactic structure within a text and not just as a sentence exercise, and, at the same time, use that text as a source of vocabulary, ideas, idioms, and organization to help them in planning their own piece of writing.
- After free writing, when teacher can see what problems students have and assign a controlled task to practice with the problem area.

The fact that students are performing the same operations on a common text makes controlled tasks highly suitable for small- group or whole- class discussion. Students can work together and decide on a possible range of options for the answer for each task within the controlled writing. The advantage of controlled writing practice is that students are provided with practice in a specific feature of the written language or the process of writing. There are five types of controlled writing:

1. *Controlled composition*- when students write controlled composition exercises, they are given a passage to work with. Students do not have to concentrate on content, organization, finding ideas, and forming sentences. They write the given passage making a few specific changes, usually of grammar or structural nature. While students are doing controlled tasks they do not add any information by themselves.

Controlled composition focuses the students' attention on specific features of the written language. It is a good method of reinforcing grammar, vocabulary and syntax in context. In addition, as the students write the passages, they are using the conventions of written English, such as indentation, punctuation, connecting words, and spelling.

2. *Questions and answers*- the type of controlled composition that uses a question and answer format allows students a little more freedom in structuring sentences. They are not given the actual text that they will write, rather, they are given series of questions and the answer to these questions will form the text. Carefully constructed questions will produce a coherent text.

3. *Guided composition*- is an extension of controlled composition. In the late 70s and early 80s guided writing occurred. Free writing was limited to structuring sentences, often in direct answers to questions, the result of which was like a short piece of discourse, usually a paragraph. Moreover, exercises were language – based, they usually concentrated on vocabulary building, reading comprehension, grammar, and even oral skills which afterwards were shown in a piece of the written work. Typical guided writing exercises included the following:

- Model paragraph;
- Comprehension questions;
- Vocabulary;
- Oral composition (students have to answer to different questions);
- Written composition (where students have to follow the model paragraph and answer the questions)

It is less controlled. Students are given some part of the written work they have to finish but not all have the content and form of the sentences they will use. Thus their

finished works will be similar but not exactly alike. In the guided composition are given the first sentence, the last sentence, an outline to fill out, a series of questions to respond to, or information to include in their piece of writing. As with any free writing tasks with guided composition too students should be able to discuss, make notes, share their ideas and findings, and plan strategies together before they begin to write.

4. *Sentence combining*- it is the combining of “base” or “kernel” sentences into one longer compound complex sentence. It is found out that sentence combining exercises improve students’ sentence structure, length of sentence, and sentence variety.

5. *Parallel writing*- this is the freest kind of controlled writing. Instead of making changes in a given passage or writing according to an outline or given sentences, students read and study the passage and then write their own on a similar theme, using as a guide the vocabulary, sentence structure, cohesive devices and organizations of the model passage. Far more freedom to use imagination is given in the type of parallel writing exercise that asks students to write about an event from the point of view of another person.

1.3.Process approach

Murray (1980) in his book outlines those twenty years ago or so, researchers and teachers of writing to native speakers of English were beginning to explore the processes that went on in the creation of written text. They discovered that writing was a highly complex process, made up of various sub processes.

Instead of concentrating on the writing that students produced and making critical comments on it, they could aim to help students write better by aiding them in the actual process of writing, by finding the source of their problems in creating good written texts and enabling them to overcome those difficulties.

The key factor was that teaching focussed on the writing process rather than the final product. This approach tends to focus on the varied classroom activities which promote the development of language use: brainstorming, group discussion, re-writing.

Murray. (1980) defines a process as "a set of interrelated or interacting activities that transform inputs into outputs." The process approach is built on the belief that a desired result is achieved more efficiently when activities and related resources are managed as a process. This approach is built on four concepts: inputs, outputs, verification, and validation. These four ideas form a cohesive structure to ensure that the desired outcome results from the process applied.

Also Gocsik (2005) in her article stresses that the most important principle of process pedagogy is that writing is the result of a very complex, highly individualized process. Before process pedagogy, writing classes generally ignored the writing process. Teachers assigned papers, graded them, and then handed them back. They attended to the product - its clarity, originality, and correctness - but they did not attend to the writing process. Nor did they attend to the writers themselves.

Process theorists believe that writing can be understood as the culmination of several steps in a complicated process. Furthermore, they feel that these steps - which include prewriting, writing, rewriting, and all their attendant strategies - can be talked about and modelled. In short, writing-as-a-process can be taught.

Process approach deals with the stages that writing process goes through. By spending time with students on pre- writing phases, editing, redrafting till the work is finished completely. A process approach aim is to cover the various skills that should be employed when writing.

White and Arndt (1997) stresses that process writing is an interrelated set of recursive stages which include:

- Drafting;
- Structuring (ordering information, experimenting with arrangements);
- Reviewing (checking context, connections, assessing impact, editing);
- Focusing (to make sure if students have understood the task correctly);
- Generating ideas and evaluation (assessing the draft and/ or subsequent draft)

Risinger (1987) outlines the following stages:

- The prewriting stage;
- The drafting or actual writing stage;
- The revising stage;
- The editing stage;
- The publishing or presentation stage

Still, there is one disadvantage of getting students to concentrate on the process of writing it takes time: time to brainstorm ideas or collect them in some other way; time to draft a piece of writing and then, with the teacher's help review it and edit it in various ways before, redrafting and re- editing the written work. However, the various stages may involve discussion, research and language study.

1.4. Creative writing

Creative writing can technically be considered any writing of original composition that is in no way guilty of plagiarism. It is more commonly considered to be any writing, fiction or non-fiction that goes outside the bounds of normal professional, journalistic, academic, and technical forms. In this sense creative writing is a more contemporary and process-oriented name for what has been traditionally called literature. Creative writing, as a means of classification, is more inclusive than exclusive.

Witty and LaBrant (found in the Internet sources) give a very clear definition of creative writing. They say: “ it is a composition of any type of writing at any time primarily in the service of such needs as the need for keeping records of significant experience, the need for sharing experience with an interested group, and the need for free individual expression which contributes to mental and physical health.”

Creative writing includes but is not limited to:

- Fiction;
- Drama for stage or screen;
- Screenwriting — writing for films;
- Poetry;
- Self-exploratory writing (e.g. autobiography);
- Creative non-fiction;
- Writing that self-consciously mixes these or other genres.

The benefits of creative writing in the language classroom are:

First of all, students express themselves and their own ideas. Most teachers would agree that what we want to say, what comes from the heart, we are happier to work on. Creative writing can be very stimulating and a lot of fun.

Secondly, creative writing involves playful but rigorous work with language. A lot of people seem to associate creative writing with an "anything goes" mentality. However, in order to produce a good text, poem, short story or dramatic scene, the language needs to be correct and it needs to work.

To conclude creative writing requires greater precision in expression. In order to say precisely what they mean, students have to be very careful in their use of vocabulary and idioms. [20]

Stages of creative writing work:

- **Starting**

Less confident students may feel under pressure to turn in a masterpiece, which may

block them in their writing. To prevent this it pays to do the first activities either orally and/or in groups. Students can first explore an idea together, possibly without committing themselves on paper. If we want to explore the whole range of activities connected to a given field in class, for example, in characterisation, it pays to introduce the topic with a playful opening activity, ideally connected to the sort of language games students may play in their own language or in class, and to make use of the fact that most people find talking easier than writing. This opens ways into the field that are easy and non-threatening. In other approaches this stage is called pre- writing stage and also drafting. [20]

- **Writing**

Much of this can happen outside the classroom with the exception of activities that require interaction. For example if two students write alternative lines of a poem in a 'ping-pong' writing activity they both write, say, a line of a poem, then exchange their sheets and write the next line of the poem, reacting to what the partner put there, then swap back, add another line to the one the partner wrote and continue until the text is finished. Students should also be encouraged to rewrite a first draft, which improves the language and the choice of vocabulary. This stage also includes stages, which are mentioned in other approaches these are: structuring, reviewing or revising, focusing or editing stage. [20]

- **Presenting and feedback**

A very important part of the creative writing process generally is presentation of texts for the feedback to be incorporated in re-writes. For language training this opens up a range of possibilities, from suggestions for improvement of the text to group discussions. In Process approach this stage is called the publishing or presentation stage but in Product approach – stage 4 or the last when students use the skills, structures and vocabulary to produce a good piece of writing. [20]

Castillo and Hillman in their article point out that creative writing can offer a lot of expressions build writing and reading skills, as well as much – needed confidence in the classrooms. Creative writing also fosters self- esteem and builds important communication bridges between learners and the teachers who work with them. The aim of the exercises they offer is to encourage self- expression. Besides developing creativity, the exercises can reduce the affective filter, foster self- esteem, enhance communication skills, and improve students' interest and confidence in learning to read and write in a second language. Castillo and Hillman in their article offers ten ideas for creative writing that can be successfully used in the writing classes:

- Three minutes free- write- writing needs to be considered as a process. A discovery process is part of creative writing. At every writing session the teacher can begin by free- write. The teacher should encourage the students to write about whatever is on their minds. There are two main goals for free- write: it shortens the distance between thoughts and the written word and it gives learners the chance to free their minds from their other thoughts and helps to concentrate on the subject. Once they have jotted down ideas on a theme, they have something to review and develop. To sum up, free- write is a technique to advance and develop ideas on a theme, and it is useful for any kind of writing.

- The journal- the teacher can encourage students to write in their diary for ten minutes every class. The teacher can just check to make sure that students are maintaining their journals but do not insist on reading it as it is a private document.

- Ten impossible things- students are asked to write a list of ten things that are impossible. They may list such “real life” impossibilities or use their imagination. The aim of this task is to expand their visionary capacity and to allow them to imagine fantastic.

- Memories- memories are another source of inspiration for writing. In this case students are the characters, and the landscape of their lives is shaped by change in their state of mind. Moments of pain, fear, love or peace are the seed of memories in the same way that conflict is the heart of fiction. The teacher can ask students to describe their very first memories, asking that they include vivid details.

- Music writing- it combines free- write and composition writing for this exercise using music without lyrics. The piece selected should evoke imagery. After a five to seven minute session, the teacher allows learners to select their favourite part of their free-write and expand it into a short story or poem.

- Future writing- the teacher has to pretend students that they have slept for 100 years and awoken to the world of the future. Then the teacher asks them to describe this future world in details.

- Poetry- learners have to write about their feelings, both- good and bad and paint word pictures. Poetry does not have to rhyme. What distinguishes that from prose is that there are no extra words and the words that the poet uses have a sound value, as well as meaning value.

Creativity also improves pupils' self-esteem, motivation and achievement:

Pupils who are encouraged to think creatively and independently become:

- More interested in discovering things for themselves
- More open to new ideas

- Keen to work with others to explore ideas
- Willing to work beyond lesson time when pursuing an idea or vision.

As a result, their pace of learning, levels of achievement and self-esteem increase.

When teaching:

- Actively encourage pupils to question, make connections, envisage what might be and explore ideas. Promote and reward imagination and originality.
- Ask open-ended questions such as ‘What if...?’ and ‘How might you...?’ to help pupils see things from different perspectives.
- Value and praise what pupils do and say. Establish an atmosphere in which they feel safe to say things, take risks and respond creatively.
- Create a fun, relaxed working environment if you want to encourage pupils to be adventurous and explore ideas freely.
- Create conditions for quiet reflection and concentration if you want to encourage pupils to work imaginatively.
- Make the most of unexpected events. When appropriate, put aside your lesson plan and ‘go with the moment’, but never lose sight of your overall learning objectives.
- Be willing to stand back and let pupils take the lead. However, make sure that you are always on hand to provide prompts and support as needed.
- Join in with activities and model creative thinking and behaviour. Showing the pupils that you are a learner too can help to create an open, constructive learning environment.
- Give pupils opportunities to work with others from their class, year group and different age groups.

When reviewing work:

- Help pupils to develop criteria that they can use to judge their own work, in particular its originality and value (this can be as simple as asking, ‘What makes a good...?’).
- Stop regularly for open discussion of the problems pupils are facing and how they can solve them. Encourage pupils to share ideas with others and to talk about their progress.
- Help pupils to appreciate the different qualities in others’ work and to value ways of working that are different from their own. [20]

The following ways in which teachers can help pupils to give and receive constructive feedback are presented below.

The sum of it could be the following:

First of all, the teachers need to give the activity a purpose that is something outside practising a certain language point. This purpose can usually be defined as some kind of outcome or product, which can be very simple like writing a shopping list for new dessert learners would like to make for a friend's birthday. Or it can be something really spectacular like putting scene on a stage. In this kind of activity, language is used as a tool, as a means to an end like in real life.

Secondly, the teachers need to organise the learning process in a way that gives time, space and freedom to learners so that they can use their imagination and originality. This often means suspending judgment for the time of the activity and being open to many possible answers, solutions and products. Learners need to understand that there is no one right answer, that there are many valuable solutions possible. This calls for tolerance for ambiguity in the classroom. Managing a creative classroom activity also makes it necessary for the teacher to act more like a facilitator or helper. All this, of course, does not mean losing sight of the objective or lacking realistic timing.

Thirdly, the teachers need to make evaluation an integral part of the creative process. For evaluating a creative activity, it is very important not to restrict the evaluation to language use, as this would give learners the message that the outcome of the activity is not really important.

In conclusion, it can be said that if teachers want to run a creative activity in the classroom, they need to check for the presence of these four features: imagination, purpose, originality and value, and organise the process in a way that all these can be incorporated.

[20]

1.5. Writing with a computer

There are many good reasons for using computers for writing, as the following list shows:

- A word- processing package removes the problem of poor handwriting that some students have;
- A word- processing package allows the competent user to edit his/her material at great speed and with facility;

- Spellchecker can ease the task of achieving correct spelling;
- If students are working in groups, a computer screen can sometimes be far more visible to the whole group than a piece of paper might be.

A computer screen frequently allows students to see their writing more objectively. It has also advantage of greatly enhancing the participation of individuals when they are working with their classmates in pairs or groups.

An important use of computer is as the means of creating “mouse- pals”, the e-mail equivalent of pen- friends. Getting students to write e-mails in English to others around the world can be very motivating. The communication is immediate and exciting, and may well stimulate and motivate students where other letter writing does not.

E-mails represent a genre all of their own linguistic accuracy is not so formally important, but despite this, teachers can still encourage students to consider the results of their effort before sending the e-mail.

Reid (1993) during the past decade, the use of computers in composition teaching has grown dramatically. Software programs teacher- designed computer exercises that prompt the writer to compose and revise and then offer suggestions for improvement have become available. Comment files and networked computers allow students to review each other’s drafts and allow teachers to comment on and evaluate student prose. Software programs also analyze texts quantitatively by identifying discourse features such as a word frequency and a sentence length, and by providing information for statistical analysis concerning student use of language and changes form draft to draft.

Computer-based language learning is getting more and more popular. The advantages are obvious:

- Students feel motivated by the game-like language quizzes and exercises;
- The interactivity and the opportunity to learn and have fun at the same time;
- Teachers can use computers to prepare new materials both printable and interactive;

The Web provides teachers and learners with a wealth of interesting ESL websites featuring innovative lesson plans, Web Quests, grammar, vocabulary, reading and listening. Surfing the Net is great for authentic reading practise and writing is a natural response to Web reading. You can find authentic writing tasks for all levels of English: from filling in simple registration forms or sending holiday greetings to huge projects where the final product is a website created by the students. Engaging in these authentic tasks makes writing meaningful. [18]

The first chapter dealt with the information about writing approaches. The usage of different writing approaches during the English classes can make the writing process more colourful and interesting. It is also stressed that the teachers have to decide whether to focus more on the process of writing or on the product, whether they want them to study different genres or they want to encourage creative writing tool.

The first chapter consist also of sub- chapters where described different writing approaches are:

- Product approach – using product approach the teachers focus on the concept of the thesis statement, the topic sentence, paragraph unity, organization strategies and development of paragraphs by patterns.
- Controlled writing – controlled writing tasks give student focused practice concentrating on one or two problem areas at a time.
- Process approach – the key factor is that teaching focuses on the writing process rather than the final product. This approach tends to focus on the varied classroom activities, which promote the development of language.
- Creative writing
- Writing with a computer – there are listed advantages of writing with a computer.

When there are discovered and described writing approaches the teachers also have to think about stages of writing. The second chapter of the diploma paper is going to deal with the stages of the writing process.

CHAPTER 2

THE STAGES OF THE WRITING PROCESS

Harmer (2004) writes that it is accepted for most fields of learning that motivation is essential to success: that people have to want to do something to succeed at it. Without such motivation they will almost certainly fail to make the necessary effort. If motivation is so important, therefore, it makes sense to try and develop one's understanding of it.

As Brown (in Harmer 2004) points out, a cognitive view includes factors such as the need of exploration, activity, stimulation, new knowledge and ego enhancement

Williams and Burden (found in the Internet sources) suggest that motivation is a state of cognitive arousal which provoke a "decision act" as a result of which there is "previously set goal". They go on point out that the strength of that motivation will depend on how much value the individual places on the outcome he or she wishes to achieve.

In discussions of motivation an accepted distinction is made between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation that is motivation that comes from inside or outside.

- Any number of outside factors causes extrinsic motivation.
- Intrinsic motivation, by contrast, comes from within the individual. Thus, a person might be motivated by the enjoyment of the learning process itself or by a desire to make them feel better.

Most researchers and methodologists have come to the view that intrinsic motivation is especially important for encouraging success.

Increasing and directing student motivation is one of a teacher's responsibilities. But we cannot be responsible for all our students' motivation. However, there are three areas where our behaviors can directly influence our students' continuing participation. These are:

- Goals and settings
- Learning environment- although we may not be able to choose our actual classrooms, we can still do a lot about their physical appearance and the emotional atmosphere of our lesson.
- Interesting classes

In the further development of the chapter following stages of writing process will be discussed: pre- writing stage, planning, drafting, and revising.

2.1. Pre- writing stage

Risinger (1987) pre- writing stage is considered the most crucial. This stage includes individual or group brainstorming to select a topic, identifying any particular needs of the audience, gathering information, determining the most appropriate purpose and style, and developing an outline or tentative plan.

Often, even most fluent writers in their own language need time to generate ideas and to plan what they are going to write. Students are no different. This is especially true for more formal writing tasks such as narrative writing, discursive writing, report writing, formal letter writing or the design of publicity material such as advertisements and posters. There are several different warm-up activities that help students to come up with their ideas and opinions.

The main advantage is that all these kinds of activities make students think, and provide them with the ideas and words they will need to complete their written tasks. Harmer (2004) offers different pre- writing tasks:

- *The buzz group*- by far the most common collaborative model is the buzz group. This is where students “buzz” or generate ideas, reactions, cues, or opinions quickly and informally. Students might also be asked to split in to groups and come up with their own ideas. They can also make some notes and discuss some main points that are asked in the task. Buzz groups can be created instantly and they frequently lead to successful idea generation that the individual student can then carry forward into their own planning.

- *Individuals, pairs and groups*- a more elaborate version of the buzz group is called “pyramid planning” by Hedge. Here students at first think about topic individually and only then discuss it in pairs and then in groups. Afterwards, the teacher asks students to report back on their ideas; everyone has had the opportunity not only to make suggestions but also to have their imaginations stimulated by the suggestions and ideas of others.

- *Whole group discussion*- sometimes students need help not only with having ideas and thinking of a topic they might want to write about, but also with thinking of appropriate vocabulary. Students are asked to give words, which they think might be used in a topic area. Later these words can be transferred on the board.

- *Note making*- students benefit greatly from thinking about how best to note down the ideas they come up with. Often, when students start to generate ideas they write down words and phrases in a random way. Then, by making connections between them, they can see patterns emerging and can organize their thoughts into sub- topics and categories. This is a classic note- making sequence.

- Another very visual way of making preparations notes is often referred to as a *spider gram or mind map*. In this idea- generation model students start with the topic at the centre and then generate a web of ideas from that. It is a structured strategy, which shows the (hierarchical) relationship of ideas, as opposed to an unstructured strategy, such as brainstorming; in which students produce notes at random on paper. Students start with a topic at the center and then generate a web of ideas form that, developing and relating these ideas as their mind makes associations. Mind map works well as their visual design enables students to see the relationship between ideas, and encourage them to group certain ideas together as they proceed.

Spidergrams work especially well when students are working in groups since the discussions this engenders together with its visual representation helps to stimulate creativity.

- *For and against*- another way of generating ideas, especially where the writing is to be discursive or will consider different arguments is to generate for and against notes.

2.2 Planning

For some people writing is easy. They sit down and write work until they have finished and it turns out that the first draft is also the final one. However, such ease of composition is rare. Although writing is a hard work, it is also opportunity to express something personal, to explore and explain ideas, to assess the claims of other people.

The best way to start writing is planning. As the first stage in the writing process, planning helps students to uncover, explore and evaluate a topic. In that stage students can answer to such questions as:

- How much information can I produce about this topic in writing?
- How can I use this information to create or refine an interesting piece of writing?

One of the information sources can be students' own experience. Trimmer (1988) offers the following planning strategies:

- *Listing*- when students know their topic they need to write about they can make a list of their ideas and information they would like to include in their written work. At first student has to write a title of the blank list and then quickly put down words and phrases that come to mind, ideas and information. Afterwards the student evaluates the information and chooses the subject he/she would like to develop in greater details.

- *Freewriting*- freewriting helps to write down all the information as quickly as possible what students can remember. Still, freewriting differs from other strategies by

encouraging them to remember coherent blocks and to write in phrases and sentences. Students do not have to worry about writing perfect sentences. First ten or fifteen minutes students write without stopping. Under these conditions they do not have time to reflect on their previous experiences. They certainly do not have time to correct misspelled words, cross out awkward phrases, or reread what they have written. The main advantage of this activity is that it forces to write immediately, by- passing the difficulties of selecting the perfect topic. The one more advantage is that it makes students to write about immediate, the impulses and events that have just occurred. However, while students are filling up the page, they may discover a provocative word or forgotten episode that leads to a more complex and deeply textured pattern of ideas. It is often difficult to evaluate freewriting because sentences slide from subject to subject. In that case, students can underline the sentences or phrases that seem significant and later develop the chosen information.

2.3 Drafting

Risinger, (1987) defines it as the drafting or actual writing stage. The student begins to write, knowing that he or she is producing a tentative product, one that will require assessment and revision.

Through drafting stage student determines whether the information he/she discovered in planning can be shaped into successful writing. Drafting requires making specific choice about subject, audience and purpose. There are four approaches to creating a first draft:

- *The scratch outline-* to make a scratch outline students have to examine their material for revealing relationships and then determine a preliminary organization. The scratch outline does not impose format, they arrange the material into whatever seems helpful. The pattern that is created in the scratch outline will form the middle (body) part of one's draft. Later students' preliminary hypothesis about this pattern will lead to an introduction that makes a statement about the subject and why he/she is writing about it.

Students begin by assembling lists or notes that were produced during planning. Afterwards read through the materials and students have to look for recurrent patterns and ideas or phrases that are useful by marking key words and identify the related information. Once they have established these groups of information, then they have to establish connections among them and arrange them into a meaningful pattern, copying it onto another sheet of paper.

- *Drafting a hypothesis-* a hypothesis states a possible purpose for writing. Unlike the thesis that formally asserts what students will prove in their essays, hypothesis expresses a

tentative purpose. This sentence has to be restricted, unified and precise. To draft hypothesis Trimmer (1988) offers to answer the following questions:

- What do I expect to accomplish in this written work?
- What is my attitude toward the material I have gathered?
- What hypothesis could I prove by writing about it?
- Which Hypothesis seems the most restricted, unified and precise?

- *The discovery draft*- the first draft is called discovery draft because students should expect that they write to discover something new about subject, audience and purpose of the written work.

- *Composing an effective thesis*- a thesis asserts the main idea he/she will develop in their writing. In a sense, it summarizes ideas about subject and suggests a point of view towards it. It is efficient to work by testing various hypotheses in drafts, selecting the one that best controls one's material and refining it into a thesis. A thesis must limit the scope of a piece of writing to what can be discussed in detail in the space available. Unified thesis means that it must express only one idea. Finally, a thesis is precise when it can have only one interpretation.

2.4 Revising

Risinger (1987) this stage and the previous one begin almost tenuously. Students are encouraged to evaluate as they write and begin to make changes in both content and structure. The use of word processing equipment encourages the process approach to writing.

Revising means correcting a paragraph for many times to improve it. Revising involves looking at the whole paragraph to see if it has unity. At first, structure and content are revised. Then, the work is checked for coherence and word choice. At last, all the other mistakes are corrected, such as faulty agreements, incorrect verb ending form and others. Spangler and Werner describe four revising strategies:

- Check for unity, concreteness and coherence- the following questions must be answered in this stage:

- Do the subtopics really discuss the topic sentence?
- Are any of the details off the main idea?
- Do the secondary supports give specific and concrete details about the primary supports?
- Are these supports the best choice?

- Does the topic sentence describe the rest of the paragraph?
- Do the subtopic sentences have transitions and references to the topic and key noun, as well as naming the subtopic?
- Do some of the secondary supports have transitions?
- Is the concluding sentence suitable for the paragraph?

- Choose the right words- the right words say what student means and make his/her ideas clear and understandable to the reader. Words that students use should be concrete, it means, specific words and details that make an impression on the senses of sight, sound, smell, touch or taste. Concrete words make the supporting details understandable and interesting to read. If students use abstract words- general words that do not make an impression on the senses, then they should use these words with concrete, specific examples and details. Words that students should avoid are slang – stale, weak phrases that quickly go out of use, clichés- phrases that are worn- out or overused.

- Avoid wordiness and unnecessary repetitions. It means that students should not say the same things twice in different words, add unnecessary words, and use expressions that add words but not details.

- Check for consistency in point of view and verb tenses.

Risinger (1987) in his book outlines as a separate stage which is called *editing stage* After a draft of the writing assignment is produced, students review the document in light of decisions made during the prewriting stage. Form and structure become more important than content. Some advocates of the process approach recommend that students work together in groups at this point. Others give the classroom teacher a larger role in assisting the student in evaluating whether or not the content, style, and related goals have been met. The student presents a final copy of what has been written to the intended audience.

The second chapter dealt with the information and description of the stages of the writing process. In different sources some stages are named differently but it does not change the stage's role. The writing stages that were described are:

- Pre- writing stage – this stage includes individual or group brainstorming to select a topic, identify any particular need of the audience, gathering information, determining the most appropriate purpose and style, developing an outline or tentative plan.
- Planning- planning helps students to uncover, explore and evaluate a topic.

- Drafting- through drafting stage students determine whether the information they have discovered in planning can be shaped into successful writing.
- Revising – students are encouraged to evaluate as they write and begin to make changes in both, content and structure.

The writing process does not only include the choice of writing approach and going through all writing stages, but if the teachers want their students to improve their writing skills the appropriate feedback should be given. The chapter three is going to deal with the written feedback techniques.

CHAPTER 3

WRITTEN FEEDBACK TECHNIQUES

When responding to students' written work teachers are not only concerned with the accuracy of their performance but also with the content and design of writing.

Harmer (2004) outlines that when teachers give back feedback on students' written performance; they are called on to play a number of different roles. Tribble (1997) suggests that at one way teachers' will be seen by students as *examiner*. Almost all teachers will set class tests or mark practice papers for the public exams their students are taking. The students will justifiably expect some kind of an objective evaluation of their performance. This role contrasts strongly with the teacher's potential as the *audience*, responding to the ideas and perceptions that the students have written about. Between these two extremes the teacher may act as *an assistant* (helping the student along), *a resource* (being available when students need information or guidance), *an evaluator* (saying how well things are going so far), or *an editor* (helping to select and rearrange piece of writing)

When handing back students' written work teachers can use a number of devices to help them write more successfully:

- *Responding-* one way of considering feedback is to think of it as "responding" to the students' work rather than assessing or evaluating what they have done. When teachers respond they say how text appears to them and how successful they think it has been, and sometimes how it could be improved. The comments teachers offer them need to appear helpful and not censorious. This type of feedback takes time but it appears to be more useful for students.

Another constructive way of responding to students' written work is to show alternative ways of writing through reformulation. Such reformulation is very useful for students since by comparing their version with teacher's they learn about the language.

- *Coding-* some teachers use codes, and can then put these codes either in the body of the writing itself, or in a corresponding margin. This makes correction more helpful and random marks and comments. When the teachers use codes they mark the place where the mistake has been made and use one of the symbols in the margin to show what the problem is.

- *Focusing/ selective correction-* a way of avoiding the over- correction of scripts, which also has the advantage of helping students to concentrate on particular features of written English. In this mode teachers restrict feedback to a particular aspect of language.

They can tell students that teachers will only give feedback on, for example, spelling or grammar.

If the teachers are going to employ selective approach students need to know about it. So that they can concentrate on concrete aspect of writing, especially, something that otherwise they might not do.

- *Marking scale*- many teachers use a range of different marking scale when correcting written work and tests. This means that though students may be bad at, for example, grammar, they can still do well in the way they answer a task or in their use of vocabulary.

- *Peer review*- *Peer review* is the evaluation of creative work or performance by other people in the same field in order to maintain or enhance the quality of the work or performance in that field. Peer review is a valuable element in the writing process. It has the advantage of encouraging students to work collaboratively. It also deals with the problem of students reacting too passively to the teachers' responses. Peer review is less authoritarian than teacher review, and helps students to view both colleagues and teachers as collaborators rather than evaluators. However, in order to be successful students will need guidance from teacher so that they know what to look at when they read classmates' work.

The third chapter dealt with the information about different written feedback techniques that teacher can use while checking the students' written assignments. The students need this written feedback because this is one of the ways how they can improve their writing skills and avoid the mistakes.

The fourth chapter is case study. There is analysis of questionnaires, lesson plans and written assignment plans.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY

In order to prove the hypothesis of the Diploma paper, practical research was carried out in one of Riga secondary schools during the school practice. Thirty students and three teachers were involved in the research. Students were tenth and twelfth graders of age 17-19 years.

The method used in the practical research was case study.

At first, the author was observing the particular group of students during their English lessons. The main goal of the observation was to state the methods used in teaching writing skills in this group, to find out possible problem areas and analyse them. Author was also analysing the textbooks' writing tasks the students were taught from. These groups are using Headway textbooks in their English classes.

The tenth graders were learning from New Headway written by Liz and John Soars, New edition, Level- intermediate. This textbook is divided in 12 units and each unit provides one writing assignment. Writing assignments that students have to acquire during the school year are:

- Writing informal letters, formal letters and emails;
- Writing Narrative- telling a story.
- For and Against Essay;
- Making a Reservation;
- Writing Description- describing a room and person;
- Letter of Application;
- Writing a Biography;
- Have to acquire usage of linking words.

All the writing tasks have pre-writing stage, and then there an example is given for the needed writing piece. Afterwards, the last task for students is to provide written assignment by themselves. Usually they have to do it at home, rarely in the classroom. In author's opinion, not all tasks in the pre-writing stage arise students' interest and motivate them to do the writing task. The tasks in the textbook are mainly based on product approach- students can see the pattern and then they have to do the written task by themselves. Not always teachers have time to do all these pre-writing tasks during the class therefore not all students do them at home. This could be one of the reason- lack of interesting pre-writing stage, and students are not motivated. As the result, students might

consider that they are writing for writing and not for learning, and they are not willing to work hard on vocabulary and pay attention to different details.

The twelfth graders were also learning from New Headway written by Liz and John Soars, New edition, Level- upper- intermediate. This textbook is divided in 12 units and each unit provides one writing assignment. Writing assignments that students have to acquire during the school year are:

- CV and covering letter;
- Narrative writing;
- Have to acquire usage of linking words;
- Emails;
- Writing Report;
- For and Against Essay;
- Describing places;
- Formal and informal letters;

Also this book provides the same pre-writing stages and activities. Moreover, also in this textbook the last task is to write the assignment. The author thinks that teachers must work hard to provide students with interesting writing classes as the biggest part of the writing assignments do not differ a lot in the tenth grade and in the twelfth. Therefore teacher has a significant role of a motivator.

According to the observed work during the English lessons and student's ability to learn, it is appropriate option for these groups' level. The overall level of English in these groups is good. Therefore students' work during the lessons was good, except some students, whose level of English language knowledge was lower.

A case study was carried out in one of the Riga secondary schools during February and March 2008. Thirty students and three English language teachers were involved in the research. Students were from 10th and 12th grades of age 17- 19 years. Students were given set of tasks and questionnaire on the theme in order to find out whether students like writing tasks and what are the main problem areas. In order to state teachers' opinion about teaching writing skills in the Secondary school the questionnaire was designed. Three teachers were given questionnaires in order to find out teachers' opinion about writing skills and the main problem areas. Questions for students and teachers were asked similar.

The criterion how teachers were chosen was: the teacher should teach in the Secondary school.

4.1. Analysis of the questionnaires

The author gave the questionnaire for the teachers. The questionnaire consists of eight questions.

In the first question teachers had to answer: *Do teachers need to teach and improve writing skills in the Secondary school? Why?*

All teachers answered that writing skills should be taught. Because during students' life experience they will have to write different formal letters and also this is the possibility for them to formulate their thoughts and opinions. Moreover, teacher can focus on one item- for example new vocabulary usage or grammar patterns.

Author agrees that writing skills must be taught because students have to be able to communicate also in written form; they have a possibility to state their opinion, to convince someone or at least make a reservation.

The second question was: *What are the most typical mistakes/ problems.* Teachers listed such problems as:

- Students are not able to express their thoughts and opinions properly;
- The vocabulary is poor;
- Spelling mistakes;
- Students are not motivated to write;
- Students do not use linking words or use very seldom;
- Grammar mistakes;

The next question was: *Do You write any comments when You have to corrected the written assignment.* The answers were:

- Not always – she writes often in the beginning of the school year- when students have not got used to writing tasks and requirements; does not write if she was focusing on one item, for example, grammar and during the next lesson she is going to give feedback to the whole class;
- Reason for writing comments- it is easier to write than talk to each student individually;

The author thinks that teachers should write comments and mostly they should be motivating students next time to concentrate on his/ her typical mistakes and problem areas. Disadvantage of it is that it takes time and still it rather hard to write comments to the each student, but in this case then the teacher can choose the other way to give feedback to the students.

The question number four was: ***Do teachers always have to use pre- writing stage?***

The most common answer was that it depends on the task and aim of the concrete writing task. Teachers should use pre – writing stage if he/ she wants to teach or revise some definite areas. In case teacher wants to use writing task as a test there are not used pre- writing tasks.

The author agrees with this opinion. Pre- writing tasks can be used for enriching vocabulary, practicing using linking words or even revising some definite grammar areas or just motivating students to acquire new knowledge.

The question number five was: ***Which writing stage/ stages is/ are more important?***

Before stating which writing stage is the most important teacher has to state the aim of the writing tasks/ tasks. If the teacher wants to teach or improve writing skills during the lesson then planning and drafting are more important because in these stages students are putting in some concrete order their thoughts and are learning to plan and organize their piece of writing. In drafting stage they still can overview and reread their works and see their mistakes. Even if for the first time it is rather difficult then later they get used to it, they can better see their own mistakes and to improve their own results in writing.

In case teacher wants just to motivate students or to practice definite grammar or vocabulary area then pre – writing stage is more important.

The next question was: ***How many lessons per week should be devoted only for improving writing skills?***

The answers were that it depends on:

- the students level;
- aim of the task;
- if teacher wants students afterwards to write the whole essay/ story/ letter etc.

If students' level is at least intermediate then it is easier to work and it is possible to do more during the lesson. Therefore even several pre- writing tasks do not take a lot of time. But the problem is that more often there are mixed levels in one group so it may take more time for all the tasks.

Also the teacher should devote more time for writing if students have to produce the whole piece of writing after pre- writing tasks. It depends also on the aim of the task- if it is test then not using pre- writing tasks save time.

Overall teachers came to the conclusion that 1- 2 lessons per week should be devoted only for writing but the problem is that writing is not the only area which should be

improved, there are all the other skills. There are 3 English lessons per week so improving and focusing only on one skill can approximately be done once in two weeks.

The following question was: ***Would students be ready for exam's writing part if teacher would not use any extra writing activities and explanations?***

Teachers came to the conclusion that no. Students would not be ready for exam's writing part if the teacher would not use any extra writing activities and explanations. The reason is that no student's book is perfect and there is always something to be improved in each book. As many books there are as many writing tasks and explanations are. So to plan more interesting lesson some extra tasks should be used. Moreover, there are such cases that when student is learning in the Secondary school grades he/ she has no idea how to write and plan an essay or formal letters, therefore the teacher should give more explanations than it is in the definite student book.

The last question was: ***How would it be possible to improve students' writing skills.***

The answers were:

- With drilling tasks;
- Students should read;
- With more creative works- such as projects and reports, where they have to search for the information by themselves and afterwards also present

The author's opinion is that teachers should more base their writing classes on process approach- using pre-writing stage, brainstorming ideas and using other techniques, planning, drafting, reviewing stages. If these stages, especially pre-writing stage and planning stage help students to generate ideas and to focus on the topic then they will be more willing to write and they will be also motivated to improve their vocabulary and focus also on grammar usage and other items which are necessary to create good and successful piece of writing.

The author also had a questionnaire for students, its' main aim was to find out whether students like writing tasks and what are the main problem areas.

The first question was: **What do You think, why do You need to learn and improve writing skills?**

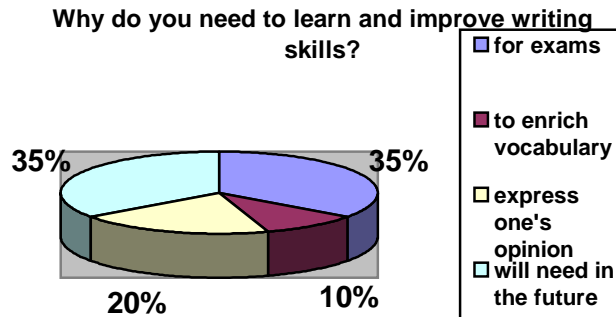


Figure 1

The figure1 shows that the main reason in students' opinion why do they need to learn writing is that this is the skill that they will need also in the future and therefore they need to acquire it very good. And also they think that this skill is useful for exams.

Less popular option is the reason that they can enrich their vocabulary.

The reasons that mentioned twelfth graders were:

- To enrich vocabulary;
- For English exam;
- To learn to express his/ her opinion which sometimes is also based on facts;
- Students think that this skill will also be useful for their future.

The tenth graders also named the same reasons for learning writing skills.

The second question was: **Do you like writing activities? Why?**

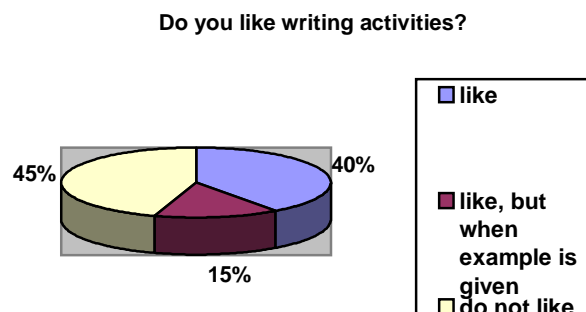


Figure 2

The figure number 2 shows that students (45 %) do not really like writing activities but they acknowledge that this is one of the skills which will be necessary in the future. The author thinks that it is lack of motivation and students not always are provided with

interesting pre-writing tasks, which could engage them in the theme. Students also mentioned that some of the reasons why they do not like writing activities are: it takes time and after writing they feel tired, they have to concentrate a lot and part of the students speak better than write, therefore they do not prefer writing. But still there are 40 % of the respondents who say that they like doing writing activities. One of the reasons why they like writing activities is that they can express themselves and their opinion and it can also be quite interesting activity. Only 15 % of the students like writing activities only when the example is given.

The third question was: *Do teachers need to write any comments when they have corrected the written assignment?*

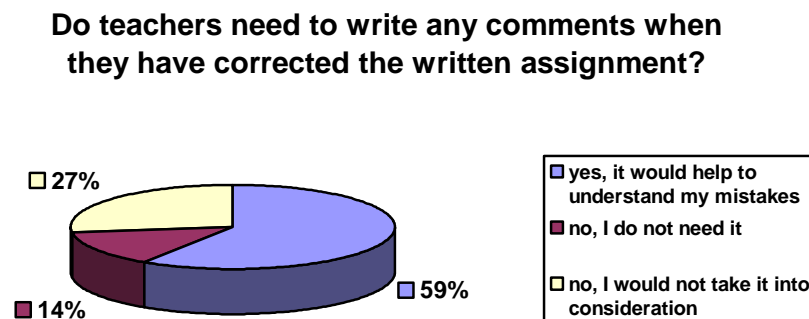


Figure 3

The figure 3 shows that the greater part of students (59 %) think that they need teachers to write comments when they have corrected the written assignment because it would help them to understand better their mistakes and in future take them into consideration and try to avoid.

Nevertheless 14 % of the respondents' state that they do not need that the teacher writes any comments and 27 % do not need it because they would not take it into consideration any way. Unfortunately, there are such students who have no motivation to improve their skills in language and more often they have some learning problems also in other subjects. Meanwhile, there are also students who do not need these comments because their writing skills are very good and excellent.

The author thinks that writing comments would be one of the ways how to improve students writing skills and better explain their mistakes, as by the time when teacher is giving back the written assignments only with a mark and no comments it is more difficult to explain to each students his/her mistakes because the teacher has already forgotten all the small details.

The fourth question was: *How many lessons per week should be devoted only for improving writing skills?*

How many lessons per week should be devoted only for improving writing skills?

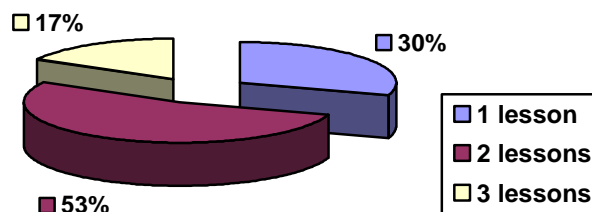


Figure 4

The figure 4 shows that majority of respondents (53 %) considers that there should be devoted 2 lessons per week only for improving writing skills. The reason for such great number could be that students do not feel confident doing writing tasks or they may not have earned marks for writing tasks that would satisfy them. The second reason for such result could be, as writing includes not only writing as itself but also grammar and vocabulary if student has poor grammar or vocabulary it is very difficult to achieve good results in writing. One of the ways how to solve this problem would be that teacher should be aware of students' problem areas and in pre- writing tasks tries to focus on them.

Meanwhile, only 17 % of students think that 3 lessons should be devoted for writing activities and 30 % consider that there should be devoted 1 lesson per week to improve their writing skills.

The author thinks that teacher should pay more attention to these 17 % and try to help them to improve their problem areas, because, if they think that they need 3 lessons per week to improve their writing than it could mean that their language level is rather low. Teacher might give them some extra tasks to do at home but the problem is that not always these students would do these extra tasks at home because they have to do more than others and also for teacher it is extra work and it takes time to prepare these tasks and afterwards also check and correct them.

The fifth question was: *Would You be ready for exam's writing part if teacher does not use any extra writing tasks or explanations?*

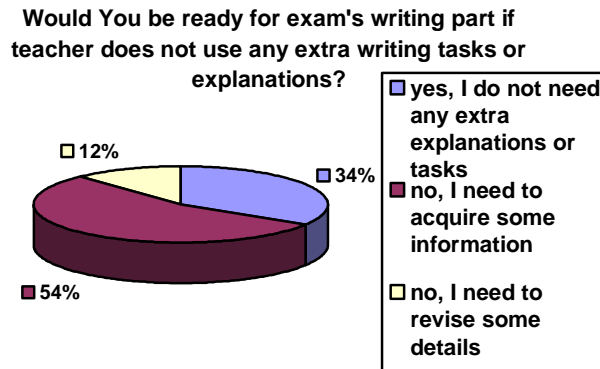


Figure 5

The figure 5 shows that the greater part of students (54 %) would not be ready for exam's writing tasks using only the *Headway* student's book information that is given about writing. One of the minuses in this book is that not always there are given clear explanations what should be written in each part: introduction, body and conclusion. One of the pluses of this book is that there is given an example for each writing assignment but not always it is enough only with the example.

Nevertheless there is also great part of students (34 %) who do not need any extra explanations or tasks from teachers and 12 % of the respondents need extra information only for revision.

The last question was: *In Your opinion, what kind of problems do You face while you are doing writing tasks:*

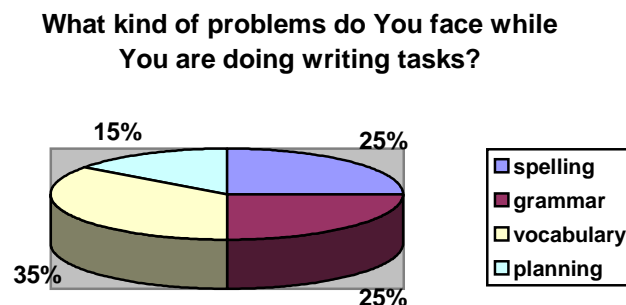


Figure 6

The figure number 6 shows that the problems students mainly face is vocabulary. They mentioned that they feel that there are problems to express their opinions only because there is lack of vocabulary. It means that with these students teachers have to think

how to enrich students' vocabulary and find the appropriate techniques and approaches that students also use the new words they acquire.

Students not always feel confident about usage of grammar rules. One of the techniques how to try to solve this problem is to give feedbacks on written works focusing on grammar areas.

Fewer problems they have in spelling and planning, however teacher should take into consideration all these problems and to work on them. But also these answers show that students do not always feel confident when they are planning the written assignment, it means, that from very beginning they have problems in creating qualitative work.

Tenth grade students mentioned that they have problems mainly in:

- Spelling;
- Grammar.

Twelfths had mentioned more problems:

- Vocabulary is not enough to do the task appropriately;
- Grammar;
- Spelling;
- Planning.

And in both classes were students who did not have any problems.

The author considers that teachers should apply process writing as it will help students' in planning, enriching vocabulary and also will help to improve their grammar knowledge as there are also grammar based writing tasks.

This approach might also help to raise students' motivation and soon they would achieve better results.

The age of the students is a major factor in teachers' decisions about how and what to teach, as people of different ages have different needs, competences, and cognitive skills. However, teenagers, if they are engaged, have a great capacity to learn, a great potential for creativity, and a passionate commitment to things that interest them.

4.2. Lesson Plans

Lesson 1

Set of activities.

Aim: To encourage and motivate students using different pre- writing tasks.

Title: Childhood

Task 1

5 min

Students can see on the board written word CHILDHOOD. In order to make students think, and provide them with the ideas and words they will need to complete their written tasks they have to put down all the words that associates with the word CHILDHOOD. Even if they do not remember that word in English they are allowed to put it down in their native language and later they will have an opportunity to translate the word. *That kind of pre- writing task is called note taking.*

This task student is doing in written form generally in their notes (in this case teacher has given out for everyone sheet of paper). (see appendices 3; 4)

Task 2

5 min

When students have completed the first task they have to answer to one question: CHILDHOOD IS THE BEST TIME- YES/ NO. WHY?

Now they have to decide whether to agree or disagree and give the reasons- they have to give appropriate arguments.

This task can be done as in written form as in oral form. It depends how much time do teacher has. This time students were doing it in written form and those who were willing to answer read their opinion to the whole group.

Task 3

10 min

Now students have to do the third pre- writing activity. The third task students are going to do in pairs. Students split in pairs as they are sitting- it is more comfortable because students do not have to move- what takes extra time and do not have to decide who will be in which group. On the board students can see the table which they have to fill in. all the ideas students write in the table.

Getting older

Pros	Cons
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4

Not to limit students they could write more and also less points than 4. (see appendices 3; 4)

Task 4

5 min

Teacher writes on the board:

- Introduction;
- Body;
- Conclusion.

Together with the teacher in one sentence students state what should be written in each part.

Task 5

15 min

Write a plan for composition- Pros and Cons of Getting Older.

Task 6

40 min

Students have to write composition: Pros and Cons of Getting Older. Word amount is 200 words. (see appendix 5)

FEEDBACK

When students had finished the task they had to answer to question: *Did pre- writing tasks help You to do the task?*

The majority of students answered that these tasks helped them to do the task because they had an opportunity to revise vocabulary, to think about plusses and minuses and to write a short plan, what gives the opportunity to “ put in order their thoughts” and it is easier to get down to the work.

Plusses: while doing the whole written assignment students have revised vocabulary, found translations for unknown words and have written a plan.

Minuses: still the pre- writing tasks take the time and it is better to do such kind of activities if students have in one day two English lessons, because next day they may have forgotten the tasks they were doing. Basically all the tasks are done in written form.

Lesson 2

Set of activities.

Aim: To teach how to write CV and Covering Letter in English.

Title: CV and Covering Letter

Task 1

5min + 2 min to check

Teacher hands out copies of an example of Covering Letter. Students have to match the parts of the letter with the topics:

- Formal ending;
- Personal qualities;
- Why good for the job;
- Reasons for interest;
- Reason for writing.

While doing this task students get acquainted with the letter as itself and can compare whether in their native language they write the same or there are some differences. This is rather interesting pre- writing task which arises students' interest.

Task2

5 min + 2 min to check

Students have to look at the underlined linking words in the letter and decide if they express addition or reason.

This pre- writing will encourage students to use linking words as they have an example of linking word usage. It is more likely that they will also use them in their writing. This is one of the problem areas to be worked on.

Task 3

10 min

Students have to fill the table about themselves:

What kind of person You are (adjectives)	Knowledge and skills, and education	Job experience

Students can use this time while they are filling the table to enrich and revise their vocabulary and get used to working with dictionaries. (see appendix 6)

Task 4

15 min + 2 min to check

Teacher hands out another covering letter plus word list. Students have to read the letter and decide which parts sounds too informal and they have to replace with the given words.

As writing covering letter students have to use formal language this task clearly shows the equivalents of informal language words. Also this task helps students to enrich their vocabulary.

Task 5

5 min + 1 min to check

Students are given copies of CV. Now their task is to match information which is in CV with the headings:

- Profile;
- Education;
- References;
- Additional information;
- Personal details;
- Name;
- Work experience;
- Interests.

Task 6

33 min

Write Your own CV and Covering letter for a job You would like to do and are well qualified for using information from the tasks 1-5. (see appendix 7)

FEEDBACK

After the lesson students were asked to give the feedback and answer the question:
Did pre- writing tasks help You to do the task?

There were some students who already knew how to write CV and some also knew how to write Covering letter, nevertheless they admitted that they have enriched their vocabulary and that there were a lot of new vocabulary.

Those who before these lessons did not know how to write Covering letter admitted that the most them helped tasks 1, 2 and 4.

Pluses: students can compare how CV and Covering letter is written in their native language and they can write so good examples of CV and Covering letter that they can use them in future. These tasks are interesting that helps to make the lesson more colourful and motivate students to do the written assignment at the end.

Minuses: All these tasks take a lot of time, but the author considers that they are necessary as it helps to motivate the students.

Lesson 3

Set of activities.

Aim: To encourage and motivate students using different pre- writing tasks.

Title: Friendship

Task 1

5 min

Students can see on the board written word FRIENDSHIP. In order to make students think, and provide them with the ideas and words they will need to complete their written tasks they have to put down all the words that associates with the word FRIENDSHIP. Even if they do not remember that word in English they are allowed to put it down in their native language and later they will have an opportunity to translate the word. *That kind of pre- writing task is called note taking.*

Task 2

10 min

For ten minutes student with no stopping have to write everything that associates with FRIENDSHIP. *Freewriting helps to write down all the information as quickly as*

possible what students can remember. Still, freewriting differs from other strategies by encouraging him/her to remember coherent blocks and to write in phrases and sentences. Students do not have to worry about writing perfect sentences. First ten or fifteen minutes students write without stopping. Under these conditions they do not have time to reflect on their previous experiences. They certainly do not have time to correct misspelled words, cross out awkward phrases, or reread what they have written. The main advantage of this activity is that it forces to write immediately, by- passing the difficulties of selecting the perfect topic

Task 3

3 min

Teacher writes points on the board which should be included in their work:

- What is friendship?
- Why it is good to have friends?
- Good and bad qualities to have friends;
- Why it is important to have friends and friendship? (see appendix 8)

Task 4

5 min

Teacher writes on the board:

- Introduction;
- Body;
- Conclusion.

Together with the teacher in one sentence students state what should be written in each part.

Task 5

10 min

Write a plan for the composition: FRIENDSHIP

Task 6

47 min

Write a composition FRIENDSHIP. Word amount- 200.

FEEDBACK

After the lesson students were asked to give the feedback and answer the question:
Did pre- writing tasks help You to do the task?

Majority of students mentioned that the first task- when they had to put down the words and plan writing helped them to do the task.

Some mentioned that also freewriting helped because than they did no have to think about spelling, paragraphing and other details. They can just put down the ideas which are coming into their minds and only afterwards reorganise all the ideas.

Lesson 4

Set of activities.

Aim: To teach/ revise essay writing in English. To write a sample essay.

Title: Essay writing.

Task 1

7 min + 3 min to check

Students have to rewrite the information using the linking words and expressions to join the sentences. This task helps students to understand the usage of some linking words. As this is one of the problem areas it should be worked on it so that in future students not only start using them but do it regularly.

Task 2

5 min + 2 min to check

Teacher gives out a copy with an essay and students have to read that essay and match the headings with the paragraphs:

- Conclusion;
- Arguments against;
- Introduction to the topic;
- Argument for.

Task 3

5 min + 2 min to check

Students continue working with the text and now they have to complete the text with the linking words.

Task 4**7 min**

As students will have to write an example essay on the topic: SHOULD SMOKING BE BANNED? Working in pairs they have to make a list of arguments for and against.

arguments FOR	arguments AGAINST

Task 5**15 min**

Students work individually and using their notes write a draft of the sample essay: SHOULD SMOKING BE BANNED? Word amount- 120

Task 6**10 min**

When students have finished writing they exchange with their pieces of writing (teacher helps to organize this exchange) classmates read each other's essays and write the suggestions, for example, improve your spelling etc.

Task 7**24 min**

Rewrite your draft taking into consideration the corrections.

FEEDBACK

After the tasks students were asked the questions: *Did peer- editing helped and did you take into consideration the corrections?*

Majority answered that it helped a lot as at first they can see how other are writing and they admitted that it is rather difficult to see and mention owns mistakes. Those who admitted that this activity helped him/ her also took into consideration the corrections.

Students admitted that it was rather interesting activity and as the aim was not to write the whole essay but sample then it was even more interesting.

4.3. Written assignment plans

In the tenth grade and twelfth grade, students have to learn to write different pieces of writing. Before starting writing some kind of writing piece students have to acquire the plan how to write, it means, that they have to be familiar with the plan of each written assignment. There in the practical part the author gives the plans of each written work and only then students had different kinds of activities to do. One of the reasons for giving the plans is that students cannot write correctly if they do not know structure of the written tasks.

One of the written assignments is essay. In authors opinion at first students should have got acquainted with different kinds of essays. So that they know that in English is more than one essay pattern. Students should understand the difference between for example essay on one topic and for and against essay.

When they have acquired the difference between essays they have to know also how to write it, they have to know the plan. Therefore, at the end of activities the result was such kind of chart in their notes. Also they were given copies with the example with written assignment.

Tips for writing essays:

1. **Introduction** – good opening sentence, background information, thesis statement, subtopic sentence;
2. **First body paragraph**- topic sentence, supporting details;
3. **Second body paragraph**- topic sentence, supporting details;
4. **Third body paragraph**- topic sentence, supporting details;
5. **Conclusion**- good ending sentence, overview of subject.

The students should know that there are several kinds of the essays and they have to know how to write each of them, at least to have a clear plan.

Tips for writing discursive essays:

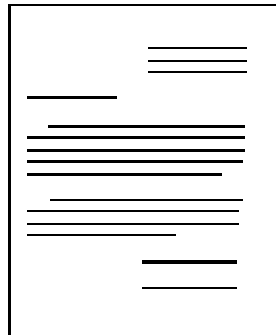
1. **Introduction** – a short paragraph to introduce the topic. Give some background.
2. **A list of arguments “for”**- choose two or three points. Give examples where possible.
3. **A list of arguments “against”** - choose two or three points. Back up your arguments with examples.
4. **Conclusion**- give your own personal opinion about the topic.

The next one what students have to know is writing informal letters.

Tips for writing informal letters:

1. **The Heading.** This includes the address, line by line, with the last line being the date.
5. **The Greeting.** The greeting always ends with a comma. The greeting may be formal, beginning with the word "Dear" and using the person's given name or relationship, or it may be informal if appropriate.
6. **The body.** Also known as the main text. This includes the message you want to write.
7. **The complimentary close.** This short expression is always a few words on a single line. It ends in a comma.
8. **The signature line.** Type or print your name.
9. **Postscript.** If your letter contains a postscript, begin it with **P.S.** and end it with your initials.

Layout of informal letter:



Mainly students get used to writing informal letters in the basic school but in the secondary school they have to get used to also writing formal letters.

Tips for writing formal letters:

1. Your address and the date
 2. Greeting
 3. Paragraph 1 – give your reasons for writing the letter.
- Divide your queries into two or three paragraphs.
4. Paragraph 2, At first.....
 5. Paragraph 3, Secondly.....
 6. Paragraph 4 – thirdly
 7. Formal ending- I look forward to hearing from you soon.
 8. Signing off

These were the written assignments which the author managed to cover while working with the students. The author's opinion is that students can write a successful assignment only then if they have a clear plan of the work, if they are sure about the layout.

Also the students found these tips useful and they have also a chart about letters:

Beginning	ending	Specific phrases, words and sentences
1. Letter of Complaint 2. Cover letter etc.		

As the students sometimes doubt about how to write the essays then they were asked also to look through all the materials they have about the essay writing (the material that they have covered) and make the similar chart only now about essays.

In the author's opinion this is one of the ways how to put in order all the information the students have acquired and they can overlook it very easily and if the students with the teachers continue this work then for the time they will have to pass the exam students will be sure about structure and layout for each piece of writing. Moreover, the students will have a good lucid material to use.

CONCLUSIONS

The author's chosen theme was ways of developing writing skills applying different writing approaches in the English language classes. The approaches that were discussed in the Diploma paper are:

- Product approach – using product approach the teachers focus on the concept of the thesis statement, the topic sentence, paragraph unity, organization strategies and development of paragraphs by patterns.
- Controlled writing – controlled writing tasks give student focused practice concentrating on one or two problem areas at a time.
- Process approach – the key factor is that teaching focuses on the writing process rather than the final product. This approach tends to focus on the varied classroom activities, which promote the development of language.
- Creative writing
- Writing with a computer – there are listed advantages of writing with a computer.

The aim of the Diploma paper was to develop Secondary school student writing skills applying different approaches and to design motivating pre- writing tasks.

The author studied the available literature on the theme. The author used not only books, but also magazines and the Internet sources.

To choose the most appropriate tasks in the textbooks the author was analysing them. According to the studied literature the author also designed pre – writing tasks, which would be interesting enough to motivate students to do the writing task. The tasks were piloted and the feedback from the students was received.

The students' and teachers' opinions about the writing activities and problem areas were clarified by the questionnaires. Afterwards the results were analysed. The teachers' questionnaire consisted of 8 questions:

1. Do teachers need to teach and improve writing skills in the Secondary school? Why?
2. What are the most typical mistakes/ problems?
3. Do You write any comments when You have to corrected the written assignment
4. Do teachers always have to use pre- writing stage?
5. Which writing stage/ stages is/ are more important?
6. How many lessons per week should be devoted only for improving writing skills?
7. Would students be ready for exam's writing part if teacher would not use any extra writing activities and explanations?

8. How would it be possible to improve students' writing skills?

The students' questionnaire consisted of 6 questions. The questions in students' questionnaires were translated into Latvian, to be sure that they have understood the question correctly. The questions in students' questionnaire were:

1. What do You think, why do You need to learn and improve writing skills?

Tavuprāt, kāpēc ir nepieciešams uzlabot rakstīšanas iemaņas?

2. Do you like writing activities? Why?

Vai tev patīk rakstīšanas uzdevumi? Kāpēc?

3. Do teachers need to write any comments when they have corrected the written assignment?

Vai skolotājiem vajadzētu rakstīt kādus komentārus, ka dir izlabojuši tavu rakstu darbu, piem. eseju vai vēstuli?

4. How many lessons per week should be devoted only for improving writing skills?

Tavuprāt, cik daudz angļu valodas stundas nedēļā būtu jāvelta tikai, lai uzlabotu rakstīšanas iemaņas?

5. Would You be ready for exam's writing part if teacher does not use any extra writing tasks or explanations?

Vai tu būtu gatavs eksāmena rakstiskai daļai, ja skolotāja neizmantotu nevienus papildmateriālus vai paskaidrojumus?

6. In Your opinion, what kind of problems do You face while you are doing writing tasks

Tavuprāt, ar kādām problēmām tu saskaries, kad pildi rakstīšanas uzdevumus?

Doing the research the attention was paid to the students' motivation to do different writing tasks. The author came to the following conclusions:

- Mostly, the students were not interested in doing writing activities because they thought that it would be boring for them;
- There are different writing approaches but the best, students liked when the process approach was applied because now they could learn how to develop their thoughts in a piece of the written work.
- The author came to conclusion that the teachers at that level should continue working applying the Process approach as a great part of students are not used to develop their ideas yet.
- The best motivator was different pre- writing activities. The author found out that if an appropriate pre – writing tasks then students are more eager to do the writing task.

The researched proved that much work should be done in developing the students' writing skills as writing includes also vocabulary, grammar and logical thinking skills. The students can learn the layout for each writing assignment but much more work should be done if the students' problem area is vocabulary, grammar or logical thinking skills.

After the research the author is sure that students will be more eager to do writing tasks if there is time spent for pre – writing stage. Moreover, the author considers that the students have used the opportunity to develop their writing skills and have learned much about writing. The author suggests the teachers continue their work by using different approaches and going through all the writing stages as each of the stage has a great importance in students' thought development into a successful outcome.

THESES

1. Although writing activities are time – consuming there are a lot of advantages for writing, for instance, it allows students to process the language and also the vocabulary they use.

2. One of the writing approaches is the Product approach. Using this approach the teachers focus on the concept of the thesis statement, the topic sentence, paragraph unity, organization strategies and development of the paragraphs.

3. The second writing approach that was described was the Controlled writing. The controlled writing involves students’ teaching incrementally; error is prevented and fluency is expected to arise out of the practice with the structures. Through controlled writing students practice and habituate the correct structures.

4. The third discussed approach was the Process approach. The teaching focuses on the writing process rather than the final product. This approach tends to focus on the varied classroom activities, which promote the development of the language.

5. The next discussed approach was Creative writing. Besides developing creativity the exercises can foster self- esteem, enhance communication skills and improve students’ interest and confidence in learning to write in a second language.

6. The last discussed approach in the Diploma paper was writing with a computer. Using computer in the English language classes have different advantages, for example, students can create “mouse- pals” and through writing e- mails practice writing skills.

7. There are four writing stages that are described in the different sources. These stages are:

- Pre- writing stage – this stage includes individual or group brainstorming to select a topic, identify any particular need of the audience, gathering information, determining the most appropriate purpose and style, developing an outline or tentative plan.
- Planning- planning helps students to uncover, explore and evaluate a topic.
- Drafting- through drafting stage students determine whether the information they have discovered in planning can be shaped into successful writing.
- Revising – students are encouraged to evaluate as they write and begin to make changes in both, content and structure.

At the end the students present the final copy of what has been written.

8. The writing process also included feedback techniques. The students need this written feedback because this is one of the ways how they can improve their writing skills and avoid the mistakes.

9. Case study deals with analyzing questionnaires, presenting four lesson plans and offering written assignment plans.

Bibliography

1. Harmer, (2004), How to teach writing, Pearson Education Limited.
2. Harmer, (2001), The Practice of English Language Teaching, Pearson Education Limited.
3. Harris, Mower, Sikorzynska, (2002), Opportunities Upper- Intermediate, Pearson Education Limited
4. Hillman (1991), Creative writing exercises for adolescent offenders, Harris County Juvenile Probation Dept., Texas.
5. Long, Richards, Methodology in TESOL (1987) , A book of readings, Newbury house Publishers.
6. Murray, (1980), Writing as process: How writing finds its own meaning. In T.R. Donovan and B.W. McClelland (eds), *Eight approaches to teaching composition* (pp. 3-20). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
7. Raimes, (1983), Techniques in Teaching Writing, Oxford University Press.
8. Spangler, (1989), Strategies and Structures a Basic Writing Guide, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
9. Reid, (1993), Teaching ESL Writing, London; Prentice Hall Regents
10. Trimmer, McCrimmon, (1988), Writing with a purpose, Houghton Mifflin Company.
11. White and Arndt, (1991). *Process writing*. London and New York: Longman
12. Castillo and Hillman, (1995), Ten ideas for Creative writing in the EFL Classroom, Forum. 10/4
13. Klobusicky-Mailanderp, (1990), Putting the computer to work in your writing class, Forum. 4/2
14. Kopprojekts Year 12 (LR IZM un Lielbritānijas Padome), (1998), Angļu valoda. Eksāmens vidusskolā, Rīga: LR IZM ISEC
15. ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education Bloomington IN, 1987-07-00 Risinger, C. Frederick
16. www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/tutor/pedagogy/process.shtml, Karen Gocsik
17. <http://www.naction.org.uk/creativity/whyis.htm>
18. <http://www.onestopenglish.com/section.asp?catid=59444&docid=146516>
19. www.teachingenglish.org.uk
20. Wikipedia, 3rd October 2007