

GENERAL WRITING APPROACHES FOR DYSGRAPHIA INTERVENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

While learning a foreign language, one of important productive skills is writing. This skill involves on accuracy, fluency and content. Doing writing tasks includes a different kind of mental process. It obviously affects the blending of attention, fine motor coordination, memory, visual processing language, higher-order thinking. The writing difficulties may cause a destruction of writing process called a dysgraphia. It is a learning disorder in which the individual's writing skills are below the level expected for his or her age and cognitive level. The extent of difficulty a learner experiences with different process of writing should inform steps to remediation and utilizing different types of writing approaches. There are already well known approaches for teaching writing, and this article links these approaches with effective use for children with disorders of written expressions.

Keywords: Dysgraphia, approaches, free, controlled, guided, accuracy, fluency, written disorder, higher level of thinking, mental process, intervention, communication.

WRITING APPROACHES FOR DYSGRAPHIA INTERVENTIONS

“Since the nature of the Language and its complex operations are the matter of controversy and since the psychologists have still much to learn about how the language is acquired, - we as language teachers have an open field and are free to experiment and innovate”. (Rivers, M. Temperley)

The importance of writing in everyday life has changed dramatically over the last years. When ELT teachers select writing work for learners they need to be clear about whether it is useful practice as writing is a complex communicative activity. It is known that writing involves a different kind of mental process. It obviously affects the blending of attention, fine motor coordination, memory, visual processing language, higher-order thinking and lower-order of thinking. The writing difficulties may cause a destruction of writing process called a dysgraphia. It is a learning disorder in which the individual's writing skills are below the level expected for his or her age and cognitive level[1].

Firstly, ELT teachers should pay attention the process of writing that learners pass through. While a learner of a foreign language is doing writing task, the visual feedback mechanism is at work checking the output, adjusting fine motor skills, and monitoring eye hand coordination. At that time, kinesthetic monitoring systems are conscious of the position and movement of fingers on space, the grip on the pencil, and the rhythm and pace of the writing. Cognitive systems are also busy, verifying with long-term memory that the symbols being drawn will indeed produce the sounds of the word that the writer intends to write[2].

Dysgraphia from the Greek “dys” meaning “impaired” and “graph” meaning “making letter forms of hand” is a disorder of writing ability. At its broadest definition, dysgraphia can manifest as difficulty writing at any level, including letter illegibility, slow rate of writing, difficulty spelling, and problems of syntax and composition [3]. Whatever the neurological cause of writing difficulties, some learners try to get over because so much time they spend on the process that they often lose track of the content they are working on[4]. Dysgraphia is a written language-based disorder in serial production of strokes to form a handwritten letter. This involves not only motor skills but also language skills - finding, retrieving and producing letters, which is a sub word-level language skill. The impaired handwriting may interfere with spelling or composing. These interferences create difficulties in learning foreign languages. And teachers responsibility is to find a way for them, moreover motivate them in order not to stop from learning.

Taking into all these points into consideration, there cannot be just one answer how to teach English as a foreign language and opportunities to avoid dysgraphia.. There are many approaches as there are teachers and teaching styles, or learners and learning styles. Below there are some already well known general writing approaches that can be used properly by language teachers to intervene psychological disorders [5]:

The Controlled-to-Free Approach in writing is students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by, for instance, changing questions to statements, present to past or plural to singular. They might also change words or clauses or combine sentences. They work on given material and perform strictly prescribed operations on it. With these controlled compositions, it is relatively easy for students to write a great deal yet avoid errors. Because the students have a limited opportunity to make mistakes, the teacher's job of marking papers is quick and easy. This approach involves using more visual processing language that can be helpful training from avoiding dysgraphia.

The Free-Writing Approach. Some teachers and researchers have stressed quantity of writing rather than quality. This type of approach demands the teaching of writing by assigning vast amounts of free writing on given topics, with only minimal correction of error. The emphasis in this approach is that intermediate level students should put content and fluency first and not worry about form. Once ideas are down on the page, grammatical accuracy, organization, and the rest will gradually follow. It is clear, by free writing approach a learner trains on higher order thinking that is also one way of protecting a written language based disorder.

The Paragraph-Pattern Approach. Instead of accuracy of grammar fluency of content, the paragraph-pattern approach stresses another feature of the peculiarities of writing skill. Students copy paragraphs, analyze the form of model paragraphs, and imitate model passages, They put scrambled sentences into paragraph order, they identify general and specific statements, they choose or invent an appropriate topic sentence, they insert or delete sentences. This approach is based on the principle that in different cultures people construct and organize their communication with each other in different ways.

The Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach. Writing tasks that lead students to pay attention to organization while they also work on the necessary grammar and syntax. For instance, to write a clear set of instructions on how to operate a calculator, the writer needs more than the appropriate vocabulary. He needs the simple forms of verbs; an organizational plan based on chronology sequence words like first, then, finally and perhaps even sentence

structures like "When...then..." This approach links the purpose of a piece of writing to the forms that are needed to convey the message.

The Communicative Approach. The communicative approach stresses the purpose of a piece of writing and the audience for it. Traditionally, the teacher alone has been the audience for student writing. But some feel that writers do their best when writing is truly a communicative act, with a writer writing for a real reader. Teachers using the communicative approach, therefore, have extended the readership. They extend it to other students in the class, who not only read the piece but also actually do something with it, such as respond, rewrite in another form summarize, or make comments-but not correct. Communicative approach stresses the purpose of a piece of writing and the audience for it. Under this approach students are encouraged to behave like writers in real life and to ask themselves the crucial questions about purpose and audience: What am I writing this for? Who will read it? Taking into consideration the audience (readers) of a piece of writing, the teacher provides students with a context in which to select appropriate content, language, and levels of formality.

Writer-based approach/Writing as Process/Process approach The Process Approach. Recently, the teaching of writing has begun to move away from a concentration on the written product to an emphasis on the process of writing. Writers ask themselves not only questions about purpose and audience, but also the crucial questions: How do I write this? How do I get started? All writers make decisions on how to begin and how to organize the task. Student writers in particular need to realize that what they first put down on paper is not necessarily their finished product but just a beginning, a setting out of the first ideas.

Within the Process approach, students explore a topic given by a teacher through writing, showing the teacher and each other their drafts, and using what they write to read over, think about, and move them on to new ideas. According to A. Raimes, this approach gives «two crucial supports: time for the students to try out their ideas and feedback on the content of what they write in their drafts ..writing process becomes a process of discovery .new ideas and new language forms to express those ideas[6].

Text-based approach/The product approach to teaching writing is oriented on the creation of a text as a product. The basis of this approach is explanation of the rules of using language units and features of discourse models. Technology of teaching is aimed at developing the language and rhetorical subskills. This approach stresses three features: grammar (rules for verbs, agreements articles, pronouns, etc), syntax (sentence structure, sentence boundaries, stylistic choice, etc.), and mechanics (handwriting, spelling, punctuation, etc.). Besides, the teacher presents rhetorical models as types of a speech organization: (narration, explanation, reasoning, etc.) for the purpose of teaching development of writing skills. Thus, teaching writing is built on the basis of samples of written texts and analysis of their structure and content, and then their formal reproduction follows.

Genre approach is more popular in teaching writing. D. Nunan[7] explains different genres of writing as typified by a particular structure and by grammatical forms that reflect the communicative purposes of the genre». Writing is seen as an essentially social activity in which texts are written to do things. The model of genre writing has a three-phase organization: 1) the target genre is modeled for students; 2) a text is jointly constructed by the teacher and students; 3) a text is independently constructed by each student. The main attention on the first stage focuses on the function of the text-genre, its structure and content Within the second stage the following activities are used: research and analysis of the text, note-taking, discussion, role-

play. In the third stage students construct their own text on the basis of experience acquired in the previous stages. The approach acknowledges that writing takes place in social situations and reflects a particular purpose, and that learning can happen consciously through imitation and analysis, which facilitates explicit instruction.

This approach emphasizes task-based activities that involve the exchange of information, with the focus on fluency. This approach practices a good deal of modeling and controlled practice, and pays great attention to motivation and self-expressing. The activities used under this approach: writing instructions, cards, letters, messages, articles, job applications, reports, advertisements, projects, etc.

To sum up, language teachers should help students to intervene dysgraphia, they must first determine the approach and the point at which a student can learn and practice better. They should think about the problem occur as the student begins to write or does it appear later on the writing process or with organization of thoughts. Moreover, the problem with dysgraphia can also be noticeable, when the student changes from just copying material to generating complex ideas and trying to commit those to writing. Or one more thing, confusion over printed and cursive letters, over grammar, or because of punctuation, these issues also can be dysgraphia. Once the teacher should learn the problem situation area and identify, then select the appropriately combination of accommodation, modification and remedial approaches and techniques for the learners of foreign language.

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