

## A LEARNING MODEL OF WRITING

Latar belakang,  
Langkah pembelajaran,  
Fasilitas dan sumber daya yang diperlukan  
Manfaat instruksional dan kecakapan hidupnya.

### Background

Writing is often considered to be a boring and difficult subject to teach and to learn. The general view of a writing class is to sit and learn so many rules of writing and write again and again during the whole hour. In addition, we have to think about the purpose, organization, flow, and mechanics to name a few. Moreover, writing in second or foreign language such as English, concerned with rhetorical discourse of the target language. As a result, many students find it hard to write a piece of composition in English discourse, while many teachers become frustrated with the content and grammar errors the students make. Silva (1993, in Brown, 2001:339) mentions that “L2 writers did less planning, and they were less fluent (used fewer words), less accurate (made more errors), and less effective in stating goals and organizing material”. So, how to make writing class more fruitful, if not less boring?

In an attempt to create a fruitful writing class, this paper suggests several ways. Indonesian first year university students, first and foremost, should realize that writing is not a one shot activity. It needs rewriting and revision before they feel satisfied with the text they produce. In this line, the teacher should introduce the process of writing<sup>1</sup> which starts from getting ideas to editing in the beginning of a writing course. The process of writing enables the students to write in self-consciousness. They will understand that writing a piece of text has not only a purpose, but also readers to take into consideration. In this sense, the students will try to write carefully, in form and content, so that the texts are comprehensible to themselves as well as to other people.

However, first-year students are unlikely to be such self-conscious learners without the teacher's support<sup>2</sup>. At this stage, the teacher should encourage the students to write in English more. The students need to be reassured that they *can* write in English. The mistakes they have in grammar is a part of their learning; therefore, mistakes in grammar should not hinder them to write more in English. Students are also exposed to a number of models of authentic texts so that they can learn what good writing is in English discourse. Exposing to authentic text also enable students to relate what they learn in the classroom, i.e. writing, has a purpose that can be applied in real life.

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<sup>1</sup> See The process of writing on page 3 in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> The role of teacher is very important in a writing class, as suggested by Brown (2001:340), Harmer (2001:261).

On the other hand, teacher should spend time and energy to read the students' papers. It is by reading their papers that the teacher is able to locate and solve the problems of writing a text immediately. Teacher then can give feedback in such a way that students feel encouraged and at the same time begin to be aware of their lack skills in writing.

In consequence, a writing class should create a positive and supportive atmosphere, in which students and the teacher can work together to develop the writing skills. Students who enjoy the class are probably not good writers (yet), but are eager to improve their skills. Meanwhile, the teacher whose students are eager to learn, will find that teaching writing is no longer a burden.

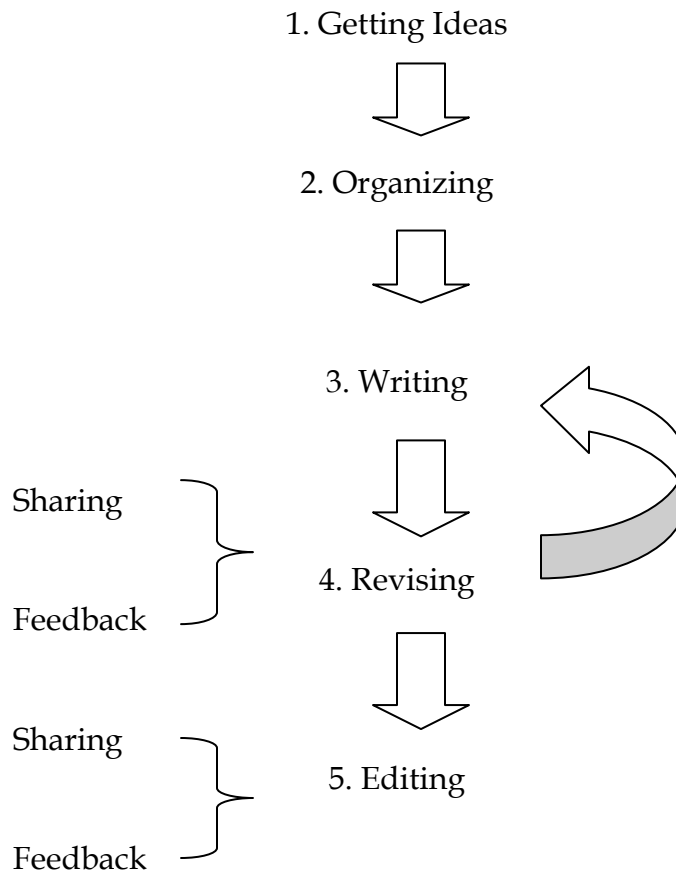
In sum, developing writing skills is both the students and the teacher's responsibility. The students need to understand the importance of process and building awareness on content, while the teachers should play a supportive roles to make the learning possible.

## The Steps of Learning Writing

In the beginning of the course:

Introduce the stages of writing process. Emphasise the importance of revising the drafts the students are going to make.

### STAGES IN WRITING PROCESS



*(adapted from Fellag, 2001)*

During the course

#### The Model Text

Expose the students to a number of model texts. The texts are authentic taken from internet and English newspaper. The authentic texts enable students to learn what good writing is. They can see how the sentences are put together to create meanings and how

the words are used to have effects. Besides, these texts provide students to see the relationship between what they learn in the classroom with the real life they lead. This serves the contextual learning which encourage students to learn something purposefully<sup>3</sup>. In this sense, the students are able to apply what they learn in every aspects of life they may lead in the future.

To cater the purposes, the texts have the themes that closely related to the students' life. As the first-year students, they are adapting to new situations in college. Therefore, the texts are about themselves, their surroundings, and text they may encounter in academic life.

Feedback

Facilities and Resources

## MODEL INSTRUCTION

- Lesson** : Unit 10. *When I was....*
- Time** : 2 x 100 minutes.
- Objective** : By the end of the sessions, students are able to write a short recount text.
- To achieve the objective, students have to:
- identify where recount texts are possibly used;
  - identify the generic structure of a recount text;
  - use simple past tense and adverbial clause of time;
  - make a unified and coherent paragraph collaboratively.

## PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES (80 minutes)

### Stimulating strategies (10 minutes):

1. T (Teacher) asks Ss (students) to tell what experience they remembered most when they were 10 years old.
2. T takes one experience to be written on the board.
3. T asks Ss the order of events take place in that experience.
4. T asks Ss to read Task 1 and discuss Task 2.

### Presentation (10 minutes):

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<sup>3</sup> See Clark, G (2003). Contextual Learning. And Grand Design (Diknas, 2006)

1. T points out the sequence of events to review what a recount text is. (T refers to section **Have a Look!** on page 65).
2. T also reviews the use of topic sentence to control a paragraph's coherence.
3. T reviews the use of past tense to tell actions in the past by having Ss discussed Task 3.

**Practices (40 minutes):**

1. Ss do Task 4 in which they have to identify the generic structure of a model text.
2. Ss do Task 5 to put the events in order so that the paragraph runs logically.
3. Ss do Task 6 to remind them of irregular past form of verbs.
4. Ss do Task 7 in pairs to complete a recount text using appropriate verbs to make it comprehensible.

**Review (20 minutes)**

**A collaborative writing**

1. T provides an opening sentence to a short recount paragraph. T asks Ss to continue the story in group of four. Each member of the group writes one sentence, and then passes the paper to the next student. Every student has to write the continuation of the previous sentence she reads. It is repeated until the paper returns to the first writer. She/he then writes the end sentence of the story.
2. T asks some volunteers to share the stories in front of the class.

**WRITING ACTIVITIES**

**First Stage (20 minutes) :**

**Rough Draft**

T asks Ss to write a recount text based on their personal experience or an imaginative one. T reminds them to write in logical order using past tense and a topic sentence. The students should at least write the first draft of the writing.

**Second Stage:**

**Peer Collaboration (40 minutes)**

Ss write the first and second drafts of writing at home. They have to revise the first draft before asking their friends to read their second draft of writing. During the peer collaboration, they are asked to check and comments on:

- whether the writer has put the topic sentence.
- whether the writer has put the ideas in logical order.
- whether the writer has put the sentences in correct tense.

Every paper should be read at least by two peers.

## **POST WRITING**

### **Collective feedback by the teacher (60 minutes)**

T gives feedback based on her observation on what problems mostly occurred in the students' writings. This activity also provides opportunity for students to discuss some elements of writing that they haven't understood. In addition, the students can solve the arguments they might have during the peer collaboration. The follow-up of this activity is the final paper.

## **SAMPLE OF CLASS ACTIVITIES**

Unit	:	Three. A Town of Our Own.
Time	:	2 x 100 minutes.
Goal	:	By the end of the lesson, students are able to produce a descriptive paragraph with a clear topic sentence.
		The goal is achieved by:
		1. reading a descriptive passage.
		2. identify its topic sentence.
		3. develop one's topic sentence.
		4. write a descriptive paragraph based on the topic sentence.

### **Pre-Writing Activities (60 minutes):**

- Teacher shows the picture of a town and asks students what they see in the picture.
- Teacher asks the students to imagine the sights, the sounds, the feeling, and probably the smell of the town. Then teacher enlists students' answer on the board in those four categories: sight, sound, feel, and smell.
- To enrich students' vocabulary, teacher asks students to do Task 2.
- Teacher introduces today's topic: describing a place where the students live. It can be their towns, or the easier one, their neighbourhood.
- Teacher has a discussion about
  - what descriptive text is. (see Have a Look section, and Task 3).
  - topic sentence to control a paragraph. (refer back to the model text and then students do Task 7)

- Teacher asks students to work in pairs to discuss the descriptive words and phrases as well as their effects to the text of Task 8.
- In groups of three, students decide a topic sentence in each paragraph in Task 9. After that each group presents their topic sentence in the board. The whole class decide which topic sentence has the clearer focus. Teacher facilitates the discussion by reminding students the characteristic of a clear topic sentence.

#### Writing Activities:

##### 1. Pair writing (40 minutes)

Students work in pairs to develop a descriptive paragraph by answering guiding questions in Task 10.

Or:

Ask students to look out the window and try to see what sights they see, what sounds they hear, what smells and what feeling they capture from the view.

They revise the first draft.

Teacher offers guidance during the activity.

##### 2. Individual writing

Students to write an individual short essay about their neighbourhood. Task 11 helps the students to generate ideas to start the writing.

#### Post-Writing Activities (100 minutes)

##### The first 30 minutes:

- Teacher reviews the characteristics of a descriptive text by
  - asking the students to describe the sight, the sound, the smell and the feeling of the view outside the window.
  - enlists the words the students mention in the board.
  - Then, asks students to give a topic sentence to the description of the view.
- Teacher asks the students to do peer-editing by having them working in groups of four.
- Students are asked to read their friends' paper and answer the following questions:
  1. What do you like most about the writing?
  2. What is the main idea?
  3. Does the writer use convincing details, in this case, using descriptive words?
  4. What could the writer add to make the writing more convincing?
  5. What areas that seem unclear?
  6. How could the writer make the piece clearer?

(questions are based on *Brown, H.D. 2001. Teaching by Principle, pp. 353*)

- Teacher offers guidance when necessary.

##### The second 30 minutes:

- Teacher leads class discussion on the goal of the lesson. If there are problems that the students are not sure how to solve, they can bring the case to the class.

Or

- Teacher can focus on grammar forms in case she sees many students make mistakes in a certain area of grammar.

The last 40 minutes:

- Students return the writing to the writer. The student writer revise the paper to be submitted to the teacher in the next session.

## **TEACHER'S FEEDBACK**

### 1. Giving Response

- Teacher collects the students' writings and give comments.
- The comments should focus on the content by request specific information when the idea is unclearly presented; and give summary of grammar.

### 2. Collective Feedback

- From the post writing activities, teacher gets information about some problems that occur most in students writing.
- Teacher presents the problems in the classroom and leads discussion about how to solve the problems.