

Teaching Freehand Writing: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT: Writing is one of the four skills essential for effective English learning / acquisition. In Bangladesh, Secondary & Higher Secondary / Intermediate level of students cannot bid fair in writing English, not only in the examinations but also in reality, is an open secret. Rather, most of them only cram the answers from so called guide books, though those books have been banned here by law. In this particular case study (Teacher Centered Method) it is shown that through a systematic teaching & practice students can achieve the maximum level of proficiency in English writing essential for their academic & practical life in Bangladeshi settings.

KEYWORD: NCTB, Systematic, Proficiency, Mastery, Banned, Guide Books, Pragmatic, Strategies, Procedures, Vice Versa, Conducted, Will Power, Core.

Introduction:

Students are required to gain mastery in Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening skills for learning / acquiring English. But in reality, the students pass the examinations without learning / acquiring these skills, rather they only read & write. This is the reason students cannot bid fair in English speaking & listening skills.

English writing skill is very critical thing to master. If it is practiced in a well-controlled environment conducted by experts, then English freehand writing is possible to acquire / learn within a short time. In this study it will be shown how to gain mastery in English writing, especially free hand writing in a systematic way in Bangladesh by following some pragmatic strategies & NCTB guidelines.

Method:

The main part of this particular case study had been conducted from January 2021 to March 2021. After the initial period, April & May 2021 had been the review period when students were instructed to repeat the procedures by themselves.

Initially, students of 4 classes were chosen. There were students from Secondary class 9 & 10 and Higher Secondary class 11 & 12. A total 80 students, 20 students from each class, participated in the experiment. Students were basically selected as per their intense will power to gain mastery in English writing as well as merit.

Strategies:

The core experiment continued for about 3 calendar months & the class duration was 50 minutes (as per their class schedule). The study took a total 40 working days, meanwhile classes were conducted on a daily basis singlehandedly (2000 minutes / 33 hours) at a stretch till the completion of the experiment.

To initiate the experiment the selected students were required to have some basic knowledge of English writing & Grammar (Chart 1).

Chart 1:

1. Alphabet
2. Word Formation
3. Syllable & its kind
4. Sentence & its kind
5. Structures of different sentences
6. Parts of Speech
7. Tense
8. Conjugation
9. Strong & Weak verbs
10. Phrasal Verbs
11. Idioms & Proverbs
12. Appropriate Prepositions
13. Right forms of Verbs
14. Conversion
15. Transformation of Sentences
16. Genre & Formats of writing
17. Bengali Sentence & Structures
18. Translations

Procedures of implementation:

Phase 1

Phase 1 continued for about 15 working days (750 minutes / 12.5 hours). The items in Chart 1 were made clear to the students through core study daily for about 35 minutes. The remaining 15 minutes of the class they had to write on selected topics in Bengali, their mother tongue. Students of class 9 & 10 had to follow Category 1 while students of 11 & 12

Students had to write different writing items as per their syllabus & examination test items, such as Paragraphs, Short Compositions, Short Stories / Completing Stories, Newspaper Reports, E-mails, Formal & Informal Letters, Summary & Dialogue.

The selected topics covered the following topics:

Category A

About themselves, their families, locality, educational institutions & contexts, surrounding problems, narrative & descriptive items, country & region, history & politics, sports, etc.

Category B

Category 1 along with Local government, economics & finance, international relations, science & technology, life skill & profession, local & international music & culture, etc.

Phase 2

During this period students were taught basic strategies about freehand writing that covered policies to write a paragraph, short composition, e-mails, formal & informal letters, etc. Then they were instructed to follow Chart 1.

After completing Phase 1, the students of class 9 & 10 were instructed to gain knowledge & information on Category A in English through reading text books, newspapers, internet & grammar books. Similarly, students of upper classes were instructed to follow Category A & B respectively. This process continued about 5 working days. All the students were assisted within the classroom to gain this by the instructor.

From day 21 to 30, the students were thoroughly instructed & observed to gain mastery over English freehand writing. Within days 21 to 25 they were instructed to translate information from Bengali to English keeping an eye to the accuracy of grammatical structures & vocabulary. After that during day 26 to 30 the students translated the information about selected topics & produced in English in their exercise books, roughly. Some corrections were made during this time to assist them gain confidence.

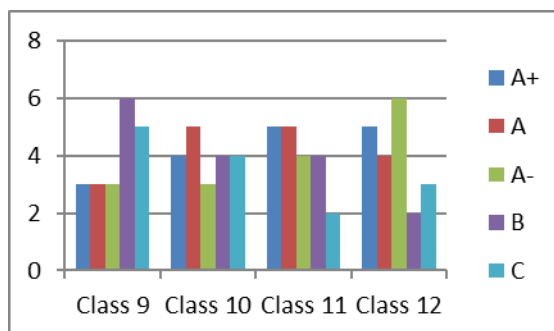
In the last stage from day 31 to 35 students wrote about all the topics that were listed in Category A & B as per instructions keeping an eye on correction of sentence structures, tenses, use of vocabulary & grammatical rules.

From day 36 to 40 class tests were taken as final examinations of the institution, but with a difference. The students were appointed as Examiners to check the answer scripts of all the participants i.e. each student will check other's answer scripts. In this way the participants of the study would experience how to check answer scripts & evaluate finally.

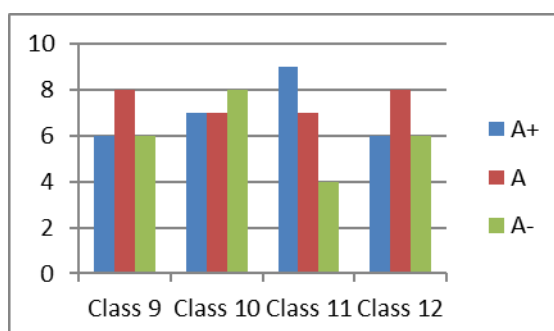
Result & Discussion:

Firstly, the participants of the study, 80 students, overcame their drawbacks in English writing given in a formal and/or informal contexts. Secondly, they could comprehend the context & thus gained adequate information & mastery in written language, both in Bengali & English. Thirdly, they were also enriched with improved & advanced knowledge about numerous topics covering both local & international level & standard. Fourthly, the participants also gained mastery over grammatical items & any kind of translations from native language to English or vice versa. Fifthly, they almost shunned cramming the answers from their Guide Books / notes without comprehending. Last but not the least, by checking answer scripts students understood the real-life situation regarding the evaluation of examination scripts. The students knew how to evaluate answer scripts in any public examinations. Thus, they would be confident facing that in the near future when their turn would come.

Students' result before the experiment:



Students' result after the experiment:



Conclusion:

The abovementioned methodology is strongly recommended for Bangladeshi students who wanted mastery over English writing. This Teacher Centered Method & practices would help students overcome their drawbacks in English freehand writing radically and achieve best Grades in any Public examinations.

References:

1. English For Today by National Curriculum & Textbook Board (NCTB), Bangladesh.
2. English Grammar & Composition by (NCTB), Bangladesh.