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EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF WRITING SKILLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN WEST AFRICA

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Abstract

The paper discusses effective methods of teaching writing in primary schools in We are Africa. The modern teaching of language as communication calls for an approach which brings linguistic skills and communicative abilities into close association with each other. This paper examines problems and possible sequence of teaching African child the approach in writing. The paper makes conclusions and recommendations that will improve teaching and learning of writing process.

Keywords: writing skill, holistic approach to writing, learning writing skill.

Introduction

Communicative language teaching is made of four major skills: listening speaking, reading and writing skill. But in traditional approach of language teaching, some teachers deliberately ignore writing skill. Some have the believe that writing skill is an individual desire. There fore, it should be ignored. Max Wertheimer a German philosopher and psychologist in (1912) propounded the cognitive/Gestalt theory of development human learning. This theorist believes that 'man' is born with innate abilities; he is goal directed, active, purposive and dynamic. They emphasized the holistic approach to learning Because there is meaning in the whole than parts, learning in whole is better than learning in parts or bits, learning whole will help the child to learn and see the way he different parts are associated. For quite some time now there has been a new devel opment in the era of language teaching, like most innovations this has been viewed with great suspicion and has been approached warily by some or put aside

altogether by other teachers of languages. earlier stated one wonders why many teachers have this attitude given the fact that which seems to be dogged by despair both by teachers and students. The agony of the communicative approach emphasizes the same experience or topic leading to the use of friends and follow it up by reading an article that the lecture suggested. The sorts of reasons, someone who listens to a lecture may also describe the lecture to his written, secondly, people use different skills when dealing with the same subject for all listen as well as people seldom write without reading even if they only read what they have performed without another. It is impossible to speak in a conversation if one does not position is clearly ridiculous for two reasons, firstly, it is often true that one skill cannot be lesson students concentrate on reading only, on the next period on speaking e.t.c. This language teachers see the skill as separate and treat them as such. For example in one the aims of language teaching are commonly defined in terms of four skills – many Effectiveness of the communication will often require the learner to make reference, since Even though a particular exercise may focus on a particular skill or its ability. brings linguistic skills and communicative abilities into close association with each other. The modern teaching of language as communication calls for an approach which Holistic approach to writing the product but leave the process of writing up to inspiration write primarily by dissecting a completed piece of writing". They insist that we analyze problems". Flower and Heys (1977) a criticism states "that we still undertake people to criticism points out that model tend to be "too long and too remote from the students' with pupils writing as being patterns of the model. Eschole (1980) and Wtson (1982) on Model- based approaches therefore concentrated with the product of writing and and that good writing conformed to apre-determined model a logically ordered set of written tasks and exercises To find it that teaching writing was matter of prescribing that there was a best method and one just had method were based on the faulty assumptions. These past efforts to establish the best Of ten contradiction Zamel (1987) states; they do it, past research into writing provides us with few significant findings and were writing has established thought. Provoking ideas about what good writers do and how organization and style, Delfaven (1983) it is only recently however that research into developing ideas, analyzing meanings and making decisions about content, form, mastery of the language. It is a complex process which involves generating and Writing has been identified broadly as the supreme checkpoint of the writers total the predictable leading the learner towards pre-specified objectives. outcomes. Unexpected, because carlier language teaching was largely preoccupied

with into being more content specific and creating more exciting, creative and unexpected Integral language teaching has now challenged the more traditional approaches illiterates being experienced in tertiary institutions in West Africa. which have to be made for students entering the university, and the high level of semi- common entrance examination into secondary schools in West Africa, the concessions but also nmanifests itself on a international scale and can be seen in the massive failures in responding to such a task bears this cut. This problem not only reserving at the class level students when posed with a writing tasks and the disappointment of the teacher when many diflerent skills, for example, where pupils practice reading this could be used as for protecting other skills (Nwoke and Ashom 1996) oral communicative activity will be to do some witing o oadng in order to accoplish the task pupils will be asked to but on the basis ofreading, listening or discussing The communicative approach to language teaching involves the uses of language define hypothesis, clasly, promise, apologies, command, etc. and it is argued that will entene flom small groupprovide greater intensity for involvement so thatt the quality language practice is increased and the opportunities for feedback and monitoring all Riven adequate guidance and preparation by the teacher The setting is more natural that of the full class, for the size of the group resembles that of normal conversation groupings, Simple mathematics wvill show that if a ten-minute accuracy production takes place in a class of forty, and if each pupil response takes thirty seconds (nelth instructing and corecting) only help of class will be able to say anything of controlled sentences, then the situation with language is far more serious, in a forty only a very small percentage ofthe class will get a chance tom speak, pair/around up immediately increase the amount of pupils practice, placing pupils in small groups as individualization, For each group, being limited by its own capacities determines its appropriate level of work more precisely than can a class working in lock-step wih largernumbers Niwoke (1996). Learning writing skill through pair group The change role of the language teacher: in the writing approach the teacher play less didactic role in the classroom. This is necessary in order to help the pupils acquire language, the role of the teacher is not seen as that of feeding the learners with knowledge they are supposed to lack. The role of tencher will depend to a large extent on the function performs in diflerent activities, such roles will include controller, assess, as An organizer, prompter, participant, resource, etc. Particularly when a fluency activity involved, the role of the teacher should be that of a facilitator, a monitor ora partet approach is correction of pupils writing skill errors should be mild and friendly as a or

facilitator, the teacher provides equal opportunities to all pupils in his class in order to develop the writing skill at this stage of academic endeavour of our African children.

Problems of writing skills writing.

These problems are ranged from teachers to pupils. There are many technical problems experienced by pupils in context of learning in the classroom, they don't write at times, if they will write, it looks like "unknown" because of the teacher's attitude: many teachers are afraid to lose their authority and control. As it is stated that 'learning is by imitating the inspirer where their teacher is an amateur writer. So this problem hinders writing skill in our primary schools. Differences between phonology, semantics, stylistics, syntax, encounter a lot of problems trying to learn the target language. How can one learn from target language experience a lot of problems in learning to write. In case if there is background knowledge of pupils in writing: Pupils whose source language differs from the target language learn better grammar and lexis, the meta-language problem: This comprises dictionary, encyclopedia, etc. More languages are very important for the study of every language. Every subject must have a language register, which aids in its understanding. Before one writes he must first of all know that he is writing, the problem of inadequate meta-language materials hinders writing skill. Large classes: The more the class the less attention, the teacher gives to writing skill. In this case, because of the size of the class teachers do not mark assignments to make corrections or to observe some pupils who cannot write well.

Lack of control over the speed: at which the writer writes, this problem is observed while the teacher dictates his or her notes. There is no textbooks/no teaching aids/equipment: Another important factor that affects writing skill is lack of material, often, pupils have this type of problem without the parents or teachers observing it.

Learner's limited vocabulary: writing skill cannot be treated in isolation of semantics, one cannot write what he does not understand, on the process of cancellation written work becomes dirty and untidy. Teacher's responses do not help writer's improvement. The teacher should introduce methodology in teaching writing skill. Punctuation marks in writing skill: Pupils should be taught all parts of writing marks and symbols for instance, the capital letters and small letters should be known by pupils before they start writing e.g. capital letters, P, G, Y, F should not be written as small letters like p, B, y, f.

Identify writing task: Task should be identified clearly, read all the words in title of the essay identify it according to the purpose of the writing and the audience what age do I want to across to the reader MAP (message audience purpose). Produce ideas (Brain storing) Brain storing means gathering, researching or collecting ideas, points, words experiences that are connected to the time and the level of writing e.g. an assignment in class as a short or a long project where the information gathering will be sophisticated. As ideas come they should be jotted down immediately.

Organize ideas: Similar ideas are grouped together to form distinct units with the aim of having them into paragraph. Introductory and conclusion paragraphs can also be constructed.

Write first draft: the just draft begins with students.

Improve first draft: This is another crucial stage of the process. This stage is rather neither editing nor proofreading but careful examination of the content, aims structure, vocabulary and other aspects of the writing. At this stage sentences may be reconstructed or may even change directions. Flowers and Hayes (1981) suggest that the writing is completely recursive and highly dynamic.

Write the second draft: The improve version is rewritten neatly proofread. This is where proofreading the second draft comes in with areas of grammar, and mechanics take preference. Here the writer turns his prose into a reader-based activity considering how his work would be affected by what he is written.

Read and response: This is teacher-based task but sometimes it can also be a assistant languages are very important for the study of every language. Every subject must have a language register, which aids in its understanding. Before one writes he must first of all. know that he is writing, the problem of inadequate meta language materials hinders writing skill.

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Read and response: This is teacher-based task but sometimes it can also be a assistant Coherence, Readiness, Proficiency, and Feedback in Students' Writing Students' development in writing should be practical and engaging. Movement energy should be encouraged at this stage. Learners should be actively involved in the art of composing, especially in the case of large classes. The teacher can adopt group participation and quantities of grading. These would then give students more writing opportunities.

Graves (1987) states that writing teachers view themselves as language teachers, not just assessors of surface-level features of writing. Teachers are encouraged to look beyond minor errors and assess the writing as a whole unit.

Grammar should have its place before the actual writing process. The teacher should teach the particular orthography of the language involved before pupils proceed to write. For instance, in the Hausa language, there are two types of letters, like "b" and "6." If pupils are aware of the sounds of these letters, their problems in writing properly will reduce.

Teachers need to make a fresh commitment. The holistic approach to learning should be used by teachers—no skill should be left out.

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