

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF ABOUBAKR BELKAID,
Tlemcen

FACULTY OF ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES,
AND HUMAN SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT
ENGLISH SECTION

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF CRITICAL REFLECTION
AND DISCOURSE AWARENESS FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE:
THE CASE OF THE WRITING CURRICULUM, LEARNER, AND
TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

*Thesis submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Candidacy
for the degree of Doctorat d'Etat in Applied Linguistics and TEFL.*

Presented by:

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Academic year: 2001 - 2002

The teacher is ahead of his apprentices in this alone, that he has still far more to learn than they- he has to learn to let them learn.

(M. Heidegger – German Philosopher)

Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry.

(Freire, 1970, p.58)

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Key to Abbreviations

BEF	Foundation School Final Examination
CA	Classical Arabic
CALL	Cognitive-Academic Language Learning
CTR	Computer-Assisted Text Reconstruction
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
ESL	English as a Second Language
ET	Education Technology
First FL	First Foreign Language
GNP	Gross National Product
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NP	Noun Phrase
PSA	Paragraph Structure Analysis
Second FL	Second Foreign Language
RSA	Rhetorical Structure Analysis
SSLTQ	Secondary-School Level Teachers' Questionnaires
SVO	Subject-Verb-Object
SVC	Subject-Verb Complement
SVA	Subject-Verb-Adjunct
SVOA	Subject-Verb-Object-Adjunct
SVOC	Subject-Verb-Object-Complement
SVOO	Subject-Verb-Object-Object (ind) ?
SV	Subject-Verb (int.) ?
TED	Teacher Education Development
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TSA	Topical Structure Analysis
ULTQ	University-Level Teachers' Questionnaire
U.K.	United Kingdom
U.S.A.	United States of America
VP	Verb Phrase
WCE	Written Comprehension and Expression
WWW	World Wide Web
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky 1978)
1AS	1 st Secondary-School Year
2AS	2 nd Secondary-School Year
3 AS	3 rd Secondary-School Year

Abstract

What are the academic life skills and thinking strategies of a university learner? What should be the language teacher's knowledge base and classroom expertise? To be able to think constructively, argue coherently, judge dispassionately, and tackle problems effectively, teachers will need a thorough grounding in linguistic knowledge, discourse awareness, cultural content that they teach, and the ability to take advantage of the recent education technology to improve their teaching and improve their students' learning. To engage in life-long learning, learners and teachers alike need to take charge of their own learning—to learn how to think, to think how to learn, and to critically reflect on knowledge and learning. The range and type of information that they both need to know far exceeds that of previous decades.

If learners are to become better thinkers, to acquire a deeper understanding of what they learn, to think flexibly, and to make reasoned judgements, then university foreign language education must make clear what these better forms of thinking mean and set out to teach them explicitly. To do this effectively will make an impact on the current educational system at different levels. This doctoral dissertation will first examine the relationships between different levels—the learners' entrant thinking and literacy skills (reading and writing), current classroom practice, curriculum design and assessment, and more general foreign language educational policy moving from an overall macro-level systemic description to a more local, micro-level action research investigation (Chapter One).

The major aim of this doctoral dissertation is to contribute to the enhancement of literacy skills (specifically, writing given its fundamental importance to teaching, to learning, to personal development and achievement into the educational system) and thinking strategies, to identify the benefits for reflective learning, and the opportunities for bringing change in curriculum design, material, learner, and teacher development at the university level through teachers' own classroom research and reflection. Specifically, the dissertation will attempt to :

- establish and clarify the benefits of a reflective framework associated with developmental procedures, notably, classroom action research, critical reflection,

discourse awareness, and literacy instruction and examine their relevance to the present learning/teaching context (Chapter Two) ;

- provide firm evidence for the advantages of the proposed framework through empirical verification and experimental action research, making use of triangulation tools (qualitative and quantitative methodology) (Chapter Three) ;
- explore curriculum design and assessment and implications on material development (Chapter Four) ; and
- look beyond the present context curriculum and material development and link improvements in literacy skills, critical thinking strategies to questions of learner independence, teacher education development , and lifelong learning nationwide by exploring developmental ways in which collaborative action, reflective practice, and education technology can be the catalyst in bringing a constructivist, reflection-based pedagogy to language classrooms (Chapter Five).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

In order for educational change to be effective and lasting, learner development and teacher education should undergo a transformation from passive transmission and unquestioning reception of well-established academic knowledge to more critical reflective learning and practice conducive to lifelong professional development. Tomorrow's teaching and learning environment will bring new challenges and possibilities, as the education system witnesses curricular, structural, and cultural changes in order to meet the needs of an increasingly multilevel student body in a constantly changing world. For Algeria, foreign language education should not be seen as secondary, but as a key force in the new socio-economic environment.

Demands for the reformation and improvement of education keep rising, as it is increasingly evident that learners are being inadequately prepared in indispensable academic and thinking skills, witness the growing dissatisfaction with the low performance of a large number of Algerian learners of English as a foreign language (henceforth, EFL), ranging from the lower levels of education (Foundation and Secondary-School levels) to the higher one (university). As a matter of fact, despite enormous human and material investment and a long formal exposure to EFL (seven to eight years), the majority of new Baccalaureate holders appear to lack essential thinking strategies and academic life skills—to think constructively, argue coherently, tackle problems effectively, judge dispassionately, read understandably, and write meaningfully. Except for few ones, the vast majority of learners clearly exhibit low entrant skills, specifically in the most vital, albeit complex, skills—thinking and writing. These are of fundamental importance to teaching, learning, to personal development and achievement in the educational system. A lack of competency in such skills, e.g., inaccurate control over basic structures and organisation modes, little or no knowledge of useful and helpful thinking and processing resources, and production of error-laden written texts that resemble strings of

jumbled up ideas rather than well-structured and clearly recognisable coherent discourse, puts learners at a serious disadvantage in that it deprives them from fully benefiting from the academic studies they try to follow, and, by the same token, reaching the fundamental purposes of education : *learning to know* (i.e., understand and express valued knowledge and culture), *learning to do* (i.e., develop as useful, productive individuals), and *learning to be* (i.e., become autonomous, responsible members of their society). In other words, *writing failure* is most likely to result in *educational failure*.

Therefore, this doctoral dissertation attempts to establish a critical reflective framework, by means of developmental tools (classroom action research and critical reflection), for thinking objectively about the teaching and learning of a key academic, thinking and literacy skill, namely, *writing*, at the university level and lay the foundations for informed suggestions of what may be done to enhance curriculum, learner, and teacher development. If university-level students are to become better thinkers, individuals, and writers, to acquire a deeper understanding of what they learn, and make reasoned judgements, then foreign language education must make clear what these better forms of thinking and learning are and set out to teach them explicitly (*critical awareness instruction*). To do this effectively will require a systematic critical investigation into the host of contextual factors that shape the learning and teaching of EFL writing, and, by the same token, the development of a reflective-based pedagogy in which the learners' cognitive and academic development is at the centre of the teaching and learning process. This type of challenge seems to be one which university education urgently needs to address to achieve for the students of today what traditional university teaching may have achieved for students in the past. The major change will have to be therefore in a significantly changed approach to the teaching and learning process as a whole in order to make an impact on different levels of educational systems—the development of learners' thinking and writing skills, classroom practice, curriculum design and assessment, and teacher development .

This change will have to be firmly grounded in both relevant theory and classroom research and that will have to acknowledge the value of writing as a means of critical reflection and inquiry rather than merely form-producing and

content-memorising. In other words, what is actually needed is a developmental perspective towards writing and thinking which ought to consider writing not just as one of the language skills to passively record facts and pass an examination (as is the case in the lower levels of education), but as an effective support to the two major strands of language education: *useful, productive learning* and *autonomous, lifelong development*. This is to say that the present work takes on an educational hedge which is badly needed to restore the hallmarks of a university education— critical reflection, constructive thinking, and coherent writing. It attempts to uncover the complex relationships between reflection and action in the work of an experienced language teacher that may have implications for curriculum innovation, learner development, teacher education, and for ongoing language classroom research.

Accordingly, and in order to move the discussion forward, the following research questions will be discussed:

- Do the current prevalent teaching models at the different levels of education adequately prepare learners to cope cognitively and academically with university-level EFL writing?
- What are the contextual variables that influence the teaching/learning of EFL writing? How can those variables be used to enhance teachers' and learners' success rather than impinge upon it?
- What do learners need to know and practise to develop as effective thinkers and writers?
- What kind of curriculum and material design will enhance the learners' writing and thinking development?
- How do teachers, experienced and novice, renew their professional development and develop new skills and knowledge throughout their career? What kind of reflective activities are most likely to support such a developmental effort and commitment?

The answers to these questions will not only determine the type of action research, teaching, and evaluating of writing in the present learning/teaching

context, but will also provide evidence and argument for the following research hypotheses :

- The vast majority of first-year EFL university students (the research population) display a clear inadequate preparation in language proficiency, thinking skills, and writing knowledge of text processing resources to guide them in building up coherent discourse.
- Teacher and learner development is best affected when carried out along with curriculum development
- Unlike the lower levels of education, the university learning/teaching context offers pedagogical opportunities to implement such educational change and innovation.

The research questions and hypotheses will be discussed throughout five chapters with the major aim of examining the theoretical and practical implications for the introduction of desirable educational change and innovation. Systemic description, classroom action research, critical reflection and learning, and task-based teaching materials are the innovation chosen to exemplify how the process of curriculum, teacher and learner development can be activated and actualised.

Chapter One attempts to carry out a systemic description of foreign language education in Algeria and context analysis, moving from a general macro-level to a more local micro-level. The main objective is to closely examine the different contextual variables that either enhance or impinge on the teaching of EFL in general, and that of writing in particular : ^{the} socio-cultural background of the learners, the educational framework, language proficiency and difficulties, writing and thinking needs, the official institutional aims and objectives , the learners' affective orientations (motivation, attitudes, learning styles), prevalent instructional practices, and teachers' assumptions. Moreover, the analysis takes into account the role and prospects of the English language in Algeria's changing socio-economic and educational context, by examining the positive role that English can play in the economic and intellectual development of the young Algerian generations given its close links with economic opportunity, global communications, development, and globalisation.

To do this effectively, the most convenient research methodology seems to be *triangulation* since it makes use of qualitative (interpretive), quantitative (experimental), and reflective (developmental) procedures. The first type investigates the research population's affective, linguistic, and cognitive characteristics through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews; the second one carries out experimental awareness-raising instruction in thinking skills, processing and discourse strategies to assess the extent to which explicit teaching of discourse norms and thinking skills correlate positively with progress in text construction and composition; the third one consists of the teacher-researcher's own critical reflection field notes, kept over a number of years, like classroom observation diary, peer observation, and collaborative action with colleagues.

Chapter Two aims at discussing a multidisciplinary framework associated with writing and thinking skills development and examining their relevance to the learning/teaching context. The focus is put on disciplines, which link theories of EFL writing with instructional classroom practices, to assess their pedagogical implications and possible applications, identify the benefits for learning and the difficulties that might be encountered by learners. Furthermore, Chapter Two highlights the need for a shift in the writing teacher's *knowledge base*, as information expands in a number of relevant disciplines: educational theory, learning theory (learning styles and strategies), text linguistics, writing theories, literacy studies, schema-cognitive theory, English language teaching methodology, and contrastive rhetoric (cross-cultural writing studies). This interdisciplinary perspective on the theory and practice of writing and learning is wide enough to provide not only a comprehensive and coherent overview of the nature and function of writing, but also a set of principles required to understand the range of factors that affect the design, implementation, and maintenance of innovation as regards practical language and thinking skills.

Indeed, current research into written discourse and thinking processes has provided a fundamentally different way of looking at writing and writers, compared with the long-time sentence dominated models. Teacher-researchers are now in a better position to know more about what people actually do with

language when they write, what rules and conventions they apply, what kind of knowledge they need to possess, and what thinking skills they need to develop. Such findings can be immensely valuable and lead to authentic material development, and concrete classroom instructional practices if they are in turn subjected to classroom action research and testing to establish which are the most effective. What is more, such a critical analysis of relevant theory and discussions of likely implications may be necessary since in the absence of a widely recognised and accepted model of writing, teachers and researchers tend to have varying, and somewhat conflicting, assumptions on the nature of writing, the role of writing inside and outside the academic context, and the type of curriculum development for the writing class. The absence of consensus on what constitutes appropriate learning/teaching methodology is a typical characteristic of university education as well as the lower levels of education, which might result in more confusion than learning due to the unhealthy application of alternative instructional practices as will be shown in the situation analysis and education systemic description.

Chapter Three deals therefore with classroom action research and analysis of the data collected through quantitative and qualitative procedures. The proposed action research is envisaged as conferring two important benefits. Firstly, it empowers the teacher-researcher to test the findings and methods selected from theory analysis (Chapter Two) to decide which are the most effective and applicable to the present learning/context. Secondly, it encourages the teacher-researcher to reflect on classroom practice in a systematic way, leading to both teaching and learning enhancement. The main hypothesis advanced here, that the classroom practitioner needs to develop his/her own critically-informed tradition of research, practice, and innovation, is particularly consonant with the emphasis placed in educational literature on the central role of the teacher in initiating and maintaining educational change in terms of curriculum renewal and professional growth.

To this end, the quantitative research consists in critical awareness-raising instruction (reflective learning and practice) and thinking-skill improvement by introducing the research population (a group of 25 first-year students in the written comprehension and expression module) to a range of

discourse-oriented, enquiry-based micro-skills and strategies. The data analysis at both the macro-level (rhetorical organisation and development, genuine information, cognitive processing, and contextual appropriateness) and the micro-level (accuracy analysis, meta-discourse use and occurrence, syntactic complexity, and lexical cohesion) is intended to check whether the research population has gradually become aware of the discourse dimension of writing and written texts, and whether such awareness and thinking development correlates positively with better performance in writing and thinking skills.

The qualitative research tools—questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observation— are used to collect further data on the different contextual variables: teachers' beliefs and teaching assumptions, teaching methodologies, classroom resources, learners' needs, difficulties, proficiency, affective orientations, and learning styles. Firstly, the three questionnaires will be described and the reasons behind the asked questions clarified and justified in order to adequately interpret the answers. Secondly, the semi-structured interviews will be discussed and the results interpreted to identify the thinking skills and processing strategies of efficient and less efficient learners. Thirdly, the classroom observation data will be used as an additional naturalistic tool to investigate the subjects' classroom interaction (individual, collaboration, peer-review) and participation (active, passive).

Chapter Four focusses on the implementation of innovation (curriculum renewal, syllabus design and materials development) as reflective *resources* rather than *courses* for the university-level writing class and illustrates practice at the level of classroom pedagogy with the purpose of linking improvement in writing and thinking skills to questions of lifelong learning (especially the use of developmental enquiry-based activities and new technologies to encourage a gradual shift from classroom learning to self-access learning). The curriculum development takes into account the results of the action research insights and results in suggesting authentic, content-based materials (representative of a wide variety of text types and a range of cultures to develop cross-cultural understanding), useful tasks (relevant writing performances like writing reports, letters, conducting small-scale research and survey on relevant and current topics, and describing own learning styles), academic life skills (constructive

thinking, coherent argumentation, reasonable judgement, and effective problem-solving), and developmental activities (journal writing, project, own web-authored pages, portfolio of favourite readings and written works, and class newspaper). Materials development tries to cater for individual needs, encourages learner-based enquiry and access to technology, and enhances the learner's awareness of a range of cultural norms in order to negotiate meaning with other foreign-language speakers.

It is hoped that the proposed curriculum and materials development is partly original to the present learning/teaching context in the sense that it places the concept of *learner independence* at the heart of the activities and relies on *teacher development* for creative reflection (the teacher-researcher is encouraged to develop his own materials, procedures, and pedagogical attitudes that he perceives to be new and useful). In this respect, curriculum renewal offers learners an opportunity to become better thinkers, writers, and (why not) researchers, discovering for themselves what kinds of activities and resources are most useful for them to think, learn, and write for lifelong development. They explore for themselves their ideas and skills through constant writing practice inside and outside the classroom, try a variety of techniques, elicit feedback from peers and teachers, and make use of available education technologies to better improve their performance. In brief, Chapter Four underlies the importance of experiencing innovation first hand in order to develop and incorporate desirable changes into pedagogical practices.

Chapter Five, as a result of ongoing reflection and dynamic research, looks beyond the current context and links improvements in learners' thinking and writing skills to questions of *Learner and teacher development* and lifelong learning nationwide. It lays emphasis on bringing together training and development, that is linking pedagogical knowledge and the associated teaching methodological skills (training) to *reflective teaching and practice*, where professional development occurs when teachers review their experience in a systematic way and share views and actions with colleagues to introduce *change*. In other words, teachers, whether experienced or novice, need to be professional-agents of change, responsible for their own continuing education development and that of their colleagues. They should conduct action research

to release themselves from dependence upon precepts handed down by external sources, reflect on their teaching and on their students' learning, and use their knowledge and experience to make necessary changes in collaboration with others. These different developmental activities will be outlined, in some detail, discussed and illustrated in Chapter Five.

In summary, the present dissertation firstly lays emphasis on five interrelated components of educational change and innovation : *empirical-based knowledge* , *action research*, *materials development*, *teacher development*, and *learner independence*. Secondly, it stresses the hypothesis that teaching and learning can best be developed through critical reflection—reflection on action (the ability to reflect both before and after on one's practice), reflection in action (the ability to make decisions and adapt during the process), and creative reflection (the ability to examine and assess one's beliefs and values). Thus, if this research is to have anything really meaningful and perhaps original to contribute to both the immediate learning/teaching context and university education as a whole, it is about education as opposed to mere language instruction , and how to transform a lifetime opportunity for a number of students and teachers from a language learning experience into a lifelong educational one. In this dissertation, the major underlying and guiding principle consists in considering foreign language learning in the university context not merely as a proficiency (certification), but as an educational experience (development) concerned with learning to think and learn, and developing academic life skills to succeed and continue to develop for learners and teachers alike. To put it simply, it seems time for foreign language learning to accept an educational underpinning of its goals, objectives, and practices, focussing more on professional qualities of teachers and values they impart to students as citizens of a democratic society. In short, the thesis strives to underlie the fact that teacher and learner education must be in the vanguard to shape and support these vital long-term objectives.

CHAPTER ONE

FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN ALGERIA: SYSTEMIC DESCRIPTION AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

- 1.1 Introduction***
- 1.2 The Sociolinguistic and Literacy Background***
- 1.3 The Educational System***
- 1.4 Policy Implications : Objectives and Perspectives of English
in Algeria***
- 1.5 Research Methodology : Theoretical Constructs and
Analytical Tools***
- 1.6 Conclusion***

relevant to select the following background variables and attempt to establish cause-effect relationships among them:

- the sociolinguistic and literacy background;
- the educational framework (Foundation, Secondary-School, and University levels);
- the roles, objectives, and perspectives of English in Algeria today; and
- the selection and discussion of appropriate research tools.

To better represent and unravel the complexities of foreign language education and the learning/teaching context, Chapter One will, in turn, discuss the following questions:

- In what ways and to what extent does the sociolinguistic and literacy background affect the first-year university learners' performance in English ?
- In what ways and to what extent do the lower levels of education (Fundamental and Secondary) prepare EFL learners for university studies in terms of cognitive, learning and writing strategies ?
- Does (the) university, as an educational institution, meet the learners' needs and difficulties (curriculum goals, syllabus objectives, teaching methodologies and academic staff attitudes) ?
- What are the learners' needs, attitudes, motivational dimensions and learning styles and strategies?
- What are the objectives, opportunities and perspectives of English in Algeria today? What positive role can English play in the economic, social, and intellectual development of Algeria in the current transformations?
- What are the most convenient research tools to our context ?

CHAPTER ONE

Foreign Language Education in Algeria: Systemic Description and Situation Analysis

1.1 Introduction

The aim of Chapter One is to carry out a systemic description of foreign language education in the different levels of the education system in Algeria as well as to analyse the present learning/teaching context with the purpose of closely examining the multiple contextual variables that have marked the teaching and learning of EFL in general, and that of writing in particular, and have had a significant impact on the development of the learners' thinking and writing skills. A careful and comprehensive analysis will certainly add further knowledge of how the contextual constraints have exercised a powerful influence on the learning and development of EFL writing processes and outcomes. That is to say, there will be a better understanding of how learners view, approach, and complete the task of writing, the needs that they hope to satisfy, and the skills and strategies that they might have developed to cope with the academic constraints of the university context. In like manner, the analysis will assess the extent to which the educational institution itself—curriculum goals, syllabus objectives, teaching methodologies, teachers, and pedagogical resources—has been able to make room for the learners' own interests and needs, and to bring them into line with the official goals and objectives.

The systemic description and context analysis will accordingly make it possible to generate a set of testable propositions, grounded in field data, teaching experience, and constituting an agenda for a triangulation research which will contribute in putting EFL learning on a firmer ground. It may be

1.2 The Sociolinguistic and Literacy Background

A consideration of the sociolinguistic and literacy background of the learners should take into account issues of language policy and planning in the national educational system and the type of existing literacy practices. Indeed, a major issue that confronts the Algerian university, and Algeria as a whole, is *language*. Being intimately linked to national identity, political power and social mobility, language has increasingly become a controversial question and a bitter battlefield for competing ideologies and vested interests. This controversy has taken different forms, but with specific focus on the language of instruction (L1) which is seen as the heart of the politico-educational debate. The first related to identity formation of the post-independence generations; the second conjures up the issues of gaining power and achieving upward mobility in the present Algerian socio-economic situation by progressively instituting Classical Arabic (henceforth CA) and displacing French.

Algeria has resorted to language planning and enforcement as a principal means of changing the linguistic situation. The initial official policy has been the imposition of CA as the language of instruction, that is, education and training in all sectors at all levels. This policy of maximising Arabic use, known as *Arabisation*, has been on the cards for at least three decades, starting with the lower levels of education in the 1970s and then extended to higher education in the early 1980s.

Arabisation must not be considered only as an alternative to bilingualism in teaching. It must be the instrument for raising the cultural level of adults and youngsters, literate and illiterate. We cannot raise the cultural level of Algerians through a foreign language, since teaching a foreign language to a whole people will require a span of time that we can hardly imagine.

(Cheriet 1983 :76)

(Translated...)

The planned objective is then clear : to ensure a comprehensive use of Arabic in most specialisations, including foreign languages. For instance, the recent proposed reforms in programmes raise the number of modules to be taught in Arabic in the first year (introduction to linguistics and Algerian History) (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research 1996-7 : 1). Such reforms are, in the vast majority of cases, motivated by 'Partisanship' rather than 'Sociolinguistic reality':

Language (foreign and national) planning, as well as teaching, has always responded to considerations or policies imbued with partisan ship far from the sociolinguistic reality of the country. (Miliani 2001:14)

Having experienced a school system that not only teaches predominantly through CA but also allocates inadequate teaching time, a low subject-coefficient and few resources (mostly the textbook) to foreign language education, the younger generations, specifically those born in the late 1970s onwards, appear to face serious proficiency problems either in French or English (respectively, first and second foreign languages). This is clearly noticeable at the university level where the first-year students' entrant skills in speaking and writing are low. Such a situation places a heavy burden on students who may not fully benefit from the studies they try to follow. As a matter of fact, EFL learners, albeit a long formal exposure to the foreign language, come with an apparent lack of linguistic skills, learning strategies and literacy practices that are customarily required for successful university academic studies. As an illustration, the vast majority of entrants display enormous difficulties in reading comprehensibly and writing accurately and meaningfully. It is true that the underlying reasons for such inabilities are manifold—instructional practices, teaching methodologies and teachers' competence, but the fact remains that the basic tools of communication are simply not there. It is extremely difficult for the new entrants to communicate in English without directly resorting to Arabic.

The poor linguistic skills of students have led to a kind of *innovative accommodation*— with lecturers and students code-switching between Arabic and English (or/and French) in order to get their points across (Sultana, 2000 :32). This type of linguistic accommodation helps them to cope with a top-down imposed linguistic situation. In fact, it has become so frequent that it seems to be a defining characteristic of interaction in and out of the classroom, perpetuating a sociolinguistic pattern that has its origin right in the primary level. An observation of language learning and interaction in a primary school in the Tlemcen region found out that Algerian Arabic was used approximatively at a rate of 50% during the first year, while in the fourth year, teachers frequently resorted to CA to explain new words in French (Author's data, 2000). The effect

of this learning and interactional strategy of a sociolinguistic nature is that it might prevent learners from conceptualising a system different from their L1. Learners may cognitively consider L1 to be somehow the natural resource and expect the foreign languages to be its mere copy; hence, the frequently observed negative transfer and translation strategy used by the vast majority of learners at the university level.

Furthermore, there are a number of obstacles generated by an inadequate mastery of the language of instruction itself and that of French as an intermediary and first foreign language for most learners. The specific nature of the grammatical system of Arabic compared with that of the other foreign languages as well as the incomplete mastery of Arabic grammar are likely to add to the learners' difficulties in learning English. A number of key academic staff state firmly that a large number of learners do not speak Arabic fluently, let alone write it correctly. The product in Arabic is limited both in grammar and meaning and may be due to different factors such as methodology and programmes. How can then such learners develop an acceptable proficiency in the foreign languages, notably, in English? This is a major issue facing the national educational system at all levels, contributing to the widely commented and documented literacy failure as regards reading and writing.

What is more, the Algerian socio-cultural environment does not really provide opportunities for practising and enhancing intellectual and literacy activities and potentialities. There is an evident lack of literacy contests and literary and academic journals. Learners are subjected from an early age to rote-learning contests as those organised officially in religious and political celebrations. Moreover, *primary socialisation* (i.e. children's family upbringing) does not significantly back up the pupils' educational formal learning by developing useful cognitive patterns and encouraging communication through appropriate sociolinguistic behaviour. This may be due to the parents' own illiteracy. In fact, pupils from educated and literate family backgrounds are generally better prepared to cope with the school formal system of learning and succeed in their education. This observation is corroborated by teachers' collected impressions on the reasons behind the failure of most pupils. They argue that successful pupils are those who are helped by their parents. They

add that family backgrounds which make use of both Arabic and French significantly help their children to learn better French and eventually English, by raising their awareness of the importance of the uses and functions of languages.

Clearly, the presence or absence of a stimulating socio-cultural environment does make a difference. The existence of a kind of literacy deficiency partly explains why the vast majority of learners may be expected to hold rather negative attitudes towards the function and importance of reading and writing and find them difficult to learn. That is to say, due to their early scarce literacy experiences, linguistic unawareness and employment of ineffective strategies, learners may be resistant to some of the strategies and uses of thinking and writing in which they are expected to develop both proficiency and competence.

1.3 The Educational Framework

A consideration of the educational framework within which EFL is taught and learned will further clarify the circumstances that have shaped the learners' educational growth, learning outcomes and language proficiency. The Algerian educational system can be said to consist of three major levels: compulsory Primary and Foundation schooling to ensure the universal standard norm of nine-year instruction, Secondary education based on orientation and Higher education which is accessible to Baccalaureate holders. There appear to be discrepancies between the three levels with respect to the entrance requirements, institutional needs and objectives, teaching methodologies, classroom practices and material resources. While a major concern of the lower educational levels is equity in terms of giving a schooling chance to all Algerians and promoting literacy (i.e. mass schooling), the major goal of higher education is to guarantee a significant contribution to the national economic development by supplying the needed skilled manpower. Perhaps a brief diachronic overview will help clarify how these goals have marked the education system in Algeria and instituted a type of severe hiatus instead of a continuity and complementarity between all levels of education.

1.3.1 A Diachronic Overview of The National Education System

Education is, in general, a system of training and instruction designed to provide knowledge and culture, develop skills, and prepare individual learners as useful members of society (Littlewood, 1991:13). More importantly, it is the systematic influencing of people's knowledge, skills, emotions, feelings, know-how and attitudes to serve utilitarian purposes such as those related to status raising and policy application (Williams and Burden, 1996:35). It is viewed therefore as involving the whole person and not merely transmitting pieces of knowledge. Its importance lies in the paramount role it plays in any type of progress, be it human, social or material as the following influential threefold categorisation of the value system underlying education purposes worldwide shows (Skilbeck, 1982 in Littlewood, 1993:14):

The [first] purpose of education is to transmit valued knowledge and culture...to develop general intellectual abilities. The second purpose is to bring about desired social change. The third purpose is to enable each individual to develop towards self-fulfilment by nurturing natural growth processes .

Such universal purposes of education (*humanism, reconstructionism, and progressivism*) may be clarified in the diagram below :

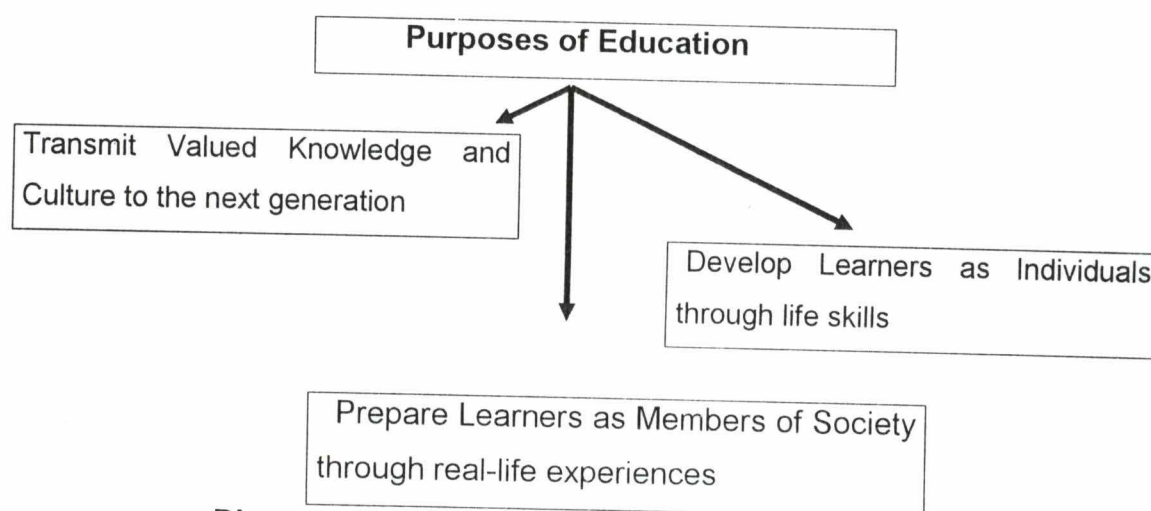


Diagram 1.1 : Purposes of Education

In the Algerian context, education is legitimately regarded as the key to a definite removal of a century-long domination and subservience, remains to a

full-fledged independence and development in the sense of enjoying greater opportunities for realising human potential individually and collectively in different areas— linguistic, individual, economic, social and political.

In effect, of all, once colonised countries, education in Algeria fared worse under occupation than before it, witness the dramatic decline of ^{the} literacy rate amongst the Algerian population from the beginning of the French domination up to independence. It is this enforced and well-planned history of domination, systematic illiteracy, linguistic and cultural alienation and socio-economic deprivation that is bound to have had a determinant and significant impact on the form, pace, direction and purpose of educational policy and strategy options in Algeria. As a clear point in case, the utmost priority consisted, in the first place, to establish language planning with the purpose of re-introducing CA to most socio-professional spheres and activities by means of Arabisation. As well as replacing French in economic and administrative domains, the educational policy tried to combat the alarming widespread illiteracy by implementing massive schooling to the whole school-age population. The planned objectives of both policies were to regain identity, ensure personality growth of the young generations and lay the ground for the learning of modern technology in order to eventually cope with the economic demands of the modern world and participate in the national development. It is no wonder that public expenditure as a percentage of gross national product (GNP) has been since independence, relatively high (nearly 5% according to the 1996 UNESCO Report on literacy in the Arab World). Investment in education for Algeria stressed a number of strategy options as shown in the diagram below:

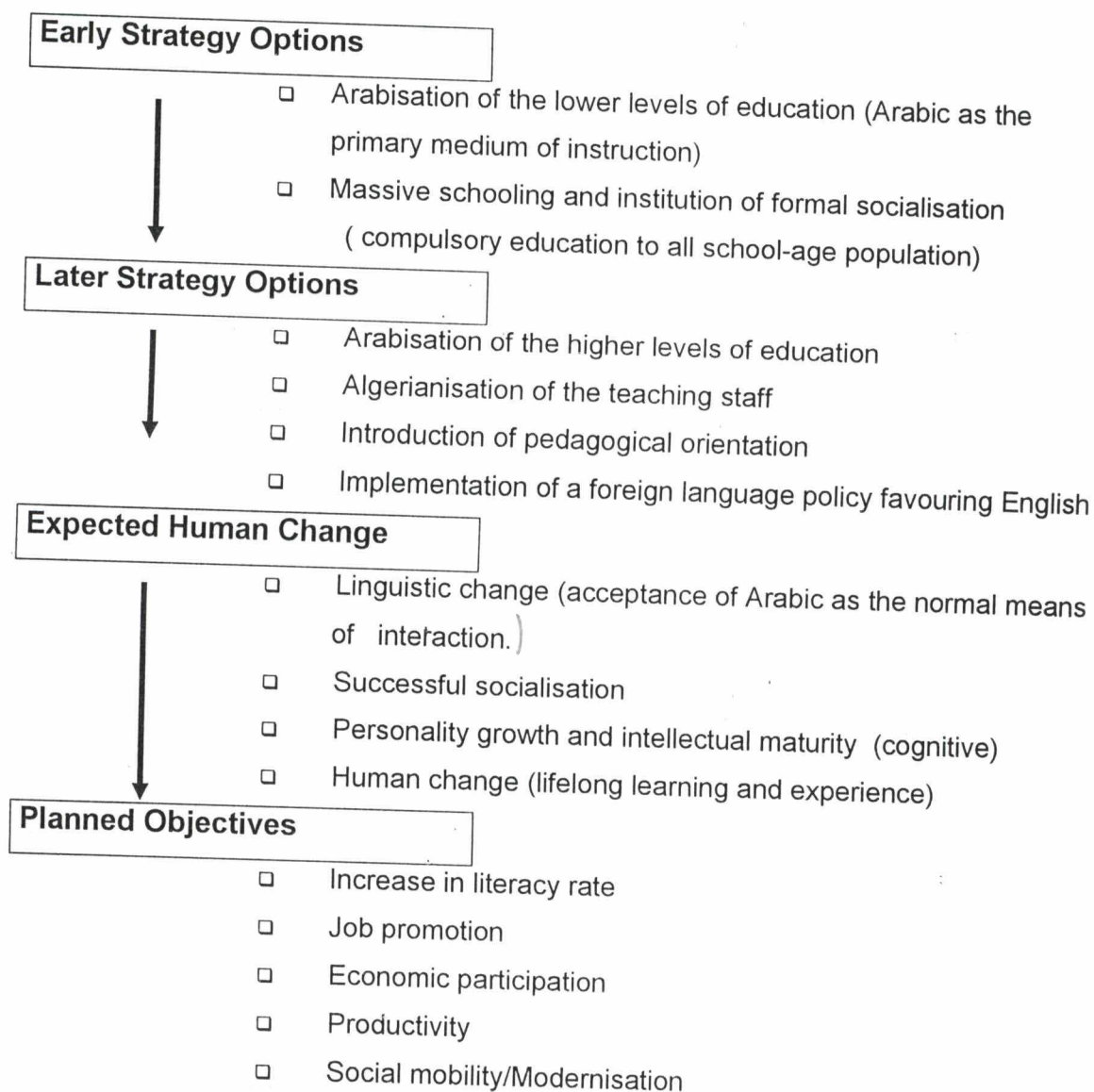


Diagram 1.2 Strategy Options and Objectives of Education in Algeria

The following recent tables provide statistical information on the number of enrolments by grade, sex, and orientation at the primary and secondary (including the Foundation) levels (UNESCO Statistical Institute, 1999).

Year	Pre-primary		Primary		Secondary	
	Entrance age	Duration	Entrance age	Duration	Entrance age	Duration
1996	4	2	6	6	12	6
1997	4	2	6	6	12	6

Table 1-1 National Education Systems

(Source : UNESCO Statistical Institute 1999)

Year	Grade								
	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1996	4674947	822810	799010	771250	773495	749392	758990	-	-

Table 1-2 Pupils by grade. Both sexes. Primary

(Source : UNESCO Statistical Institute 1999)

Year	Grade								
	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1994	2336114	586765	523991	540754	277123	167766	239715	-	-
1995	2397446	605991	525011	560559	285198	172459	248228	-	-
1996	2480168	647497	552924	562340	294574	180265	242568	-	-

Table 1-3 Pupils by grade. Both sexes. Secondary general

(Source : UNESCO Statistical Institute 1999)

Year	Total		General		Teacher training		Vocational	
	MF	F	MF	F	MF	F	MF	F
1994	2472569	1136941	2336114	1089997	-	-	136455	46944
1995	2544864	1181439	2397446	1130390	-	-	147418	51049
1996	2618242	1253576	2480168	1203850	-	-	138074	49726

Table 1-4 Pupils by programme orientation and sex. Secondary

(Source : UNESCO Statistical Institute 1999)

Year	Total	Education	Humanities	Social sciences	Natural sciences	Medical sciences	Others
1994	252334	1728	33043	59070	132083	24882	1528
1995	267142	1772	35910	66667	133125	26769	2899

Table 1-5 Students by broad field of study. Tertiary education

(Source : UNESCO Statistical Institute 1999)

Year	Total	Male	Female
1995	32557	16583	15974

Table 1-6 Graduates by sex. Tertiary education

(Source : UNESCO Statistical Institute 1999)

However, and despite the enormous financial investment and the achievement of a number of purposes, the educational project has from the start encountered a number of obstacles with regard to the lack of qualified human resources operating in Arabic and a rather hasty, and largely politically-motivated, attempt to displace by all means the qualified French-speaking teaching staff. It may be fair to argue that the major strategy options and objectives—Arabisation and massive schooling (also called *democratisation*)—have partly fallen through due to the lack of a well-organised policy capable of bringing into line schooling potential, human and material resources and the socio-cultural realities of Algeria¹. In fact, the results have been a rising rate of school repeaters and drop-outs at different educational levels, an alarming decline in teaching and learning standards, and a clear return to selection through orientation as shown in Tables 1-7, 1-8 and 1-9 below.

Year	Enrolment		Repeaters		New entrants	
	MF	F	MF	F	MF	F
1994	783415	366512	73589	28046	709826	338466
1995	824371	387137	72473	28369	751898	358768
1996	822810	386991	85158	33217	737652	353774

Table 1-7 Enrolment, repeaters and new entrants in first grade by sex. Primary

(Source : UNESCO Statistical Institute 1999)

Year	Grade									
	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1994	404201	73589	63350	70690	63046	56377	77149	-	-	-
1995	403309	72473	62599	68158	64656	57904	77519	-	-	-
1996	490314	85158	68881	76501	76259	74396	109119	-	-	-

Table 1-8 Repeaters by grade. Both sexes. Primary

(Source : UNESCO Statistical Institute 1999)

Year	Grade							
	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 8
1994	377695	55195	49112	130818	25618	13742	103210	- -
1995	409482	58860	52168	142885	29356	16132	110081	- -
1996	514466	89208	81442	170886	42157	22612	108161	- -

Table 1-9 Repeaters by grade. Both sexes. Secondary (General education)

(Source : UNESCO Statistical Institute 1999)

Thus, the once justified quantity-oriented tendency to register the whole school-age population and fill classes with as many students as possible (the average is 50 per class) has been rather made at the expense of required schooling standards as regards teaching time, adequate programmes, effective pedagogies, qualified teachers, small classes and convenient physical settings. For Aouragh (1996 :267), the apparent success of schooling is merely statistical burying a latent and serious *failure* that seriously affect the linguistic, cognitive and social development of pupils due to an inefficient educational framework. This failure can be clearly seen in the large ratio of unsuccessful pupils at the baccalaureate level and the Middle School Exam (Brevet d'Enseignement Fondamental), the problem of drop-outs (5000 each year), and the problem of orientation at (the) University level.

Accordingly, a number of key academic staff argue that it is high time that leading educational policy-makers both revisited and revised the higher education reforms of 1971 (the reforms, which stipulate that each new Baccalaureate holder must be offered a pedagogical place at a university, are based on three major axes: *Democratisation, Arabisation, and Algerianisation*), made a choice between 'excellence and democratisation' and brought quality reforms in education (Miliani, 2000). The impetus behind such reforms is the conviction that the country's future economic success and social stability depend on achieving universal norms of excellence in education; that is, two related themes should underpin the reforms—quality and standards, with a view to transforming education from an inward-looking and degree-producing system to one in which the focus is on the social and intellectual growth of learners and teachers, and on ways in which their educational performance can be raised.

1.3.2 EFL in the Different Levels of Education

The teaching of English as a foreign language in the Algerian educational system has witnessed a gradual development with regard to its role, curriculum goals, syllabus objectives and teaching methodologies since the 1960s. The results have been rather mixed due to a number of factors. With the exception of experimental attempts to introduce English as a first foreign language in the Primary Level (1993/4), English is generally taught from the 8th year of Foundation school to the last year of the Secondary school (3 AS) as a second foreign language. The starting age for the vast majority of learners is 13. EFL learning is preceded by 7 years of CA instruction and 4 years of French, as a first foreign language. The total amount of EFL learning, prior to the University Level, is five years, but most students' exposure to EFL is 6 to 7 years because of failure in the Baccalaureate or in previous years. English is predominantly used in schools, with a limited function in the wider community (business or academic). That is to say, the learners' exposure to EFL is essentially confined to the classroom.

1.3.2.1. Foundation Level

The Foundation Level, starting at the age of 12 secures the standard norm of nine-year schooling for the vast majority of Algerian pupils. It also aims at solving the issue of language instruction by keeping the use of CA as the medium of instruction, with French and English as, respectively, first and second foreign languages. The teaching of English as First FL remains experimental and is confined to few regions (General Inspectorate of English, 1988 :26)¹. The syllabus objectives tend to be somewhat ambitious. They are based on the premise that the 8th and 9th Foundation-year pupils are already proficient in French, and can therefore transfer initial learned items (Latin phonemes and graphemes, spelling, and punctuation rules) to the learning of English.

This is, unfortunately, not always the case for most pupils who either have inadequate command of the basics of French or have not studied it at all due to the lack of teachers, especially in the remote rural and southern areas. The classroom time is 4 hours per week for the 8th year and 5 hours for the 9th year for programmes consisting of 20 teaching units. These include basic structures

and vocabulary of English. What is striking is the large number of specialised vocabulary, and very few core words at such a beginning level, e.g., the units entitled *Bees*, *Greenhouse*, and *A Wonderful World*. Similarly, the selected topics and the rather lengthy texts, with a heavy urban connotation and a focus on boys more than girls, are not likely to appeal to beginning pupils whose psychological transition from a largely *ego-centric* state to a *socio-centric* and intellectual one is still not yet developed, or in Vygotsky's terms (1978), it is still a *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) (i.e., human learning presupposes a process to grow up into intellectual life). It is therefore very doubtful that a vocabulary of a scientific register is going to be effectively mastered, remembered, and eventually used.

The current teaching methodology of English as First FL is task-based and oriented towards the *learning-by-doing* approach. Pupils are constantly engaged in classroom activities around specific themes. Concerning English as Second FL, the methodology draws on structural, functional, and communicative principles. A greater emphasis is put on oral skills. Language forms and words are introduced in a linear way and are rarely reintroduced. Contextual constraints of time and examinations militate against a recycling of taught items. What is again noticeable at this level is a kind of discrepancy between the syllabus designers' own theoretical perception and knowledge of the pupils' cognitive and linguistic capabilities and the *actual* pupils' abilities, needs, and rising difficulties in addition to other contextual constraints (teacher's specific training, pedagogical resources, and teaching time).

As a matter of fact, according to the annual report of the General Inspectorate of English (1988:29), Foundation-level learners have developed a set of thinking and linguistic skills that allow them to produce only a low performance either in oral or written skills. What is more, teachers are constantly hard pressed to complete the programmes and attain the syllabus objectives, regardless of the pupils' real abilities to comprehend, let alone use and practise the taught items in the FL. What seems to matter most is the success rate in the final institutional examination (BEF) and certification.

1.3.2.2. Secondary-School Level

Secondary education lasts three years and constitutes a thorough preparation for the Baccalaureate examination, held at the end of the 3AS. In effect, most material, human, and pedagogical resources and energy seem to be geared, albeit superficially, towards the Baccalaureate, which is not only the key to higher education but a statistical index of the achievement of secondary schools. As regards EFL, it is part of the curriculum regardless of the stream—literary, scientific, or technological— and represents an additional facet to the general learning and instruction of pupils.

The First Secondary Year (1AS) forms a consolidation of the linguistic items learned at the Foundation Level. The official syllabus (1999:2-3) includes three major components : grammar, vocabulary and study skills, and recommends a 'realistic, playful and communicative' way of presenting, drilling and evaluating' the syllabus components. This focus is in line with the attempt to introduce a task-based topical approach to allow learners to do things with the foreign language and not merely 'internalise lexical items and structures' (op.cit.). Clearly, the syllabus designers assume, at the outset, that 1AS learners have developed a mastery of the basic elements of English and an ability to express themselves with sufficient fluency and reasonable accuracy. Such an assumption is incongruent with the exclusively written-examination oriented system with which both teachers and pupils have to comply. In other words, there is a clear incoherence between the syllabus objectives, teaching methodologies, and contextual realities which is bound to affect the learning process and outcome.

The syllabus objectives, though important and desirable, appear to be, as is the case with the Foundation Level, overambitious and paying little heed to the existing contextual constraints. The planned objective of and , somehow uncritical enthusiasm for, *communicative efficiency* —meaningful purpose, spontaneous desire to communicate, acceptable grammar, and reasonable fluency' (ibid. 1999 :4) seems truly to reflect the designers' unawareness of the Algerian school reality. Not only does the teacher need to confine himself/herself to the requirements of formal examinations, but he/she needs also to bridge the gap between *pseudo-communication* and *true*

Universities and, more importantly, to put an end to the growing over-reliance on part-time teachers from secondary schools. Table 3.2 shows the growth in the number of enrolled students and Department teachers from 1993 to 2000.

	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
Students	726	751	806	828	1042	1124	815	850
Full- Time Teachers	8	8	11	12	12	12	13	17
Part-Time Teachers	12	12	14	16	18	18	16	10

Table 1.13 Number of Students and Teachers from 1993 to 2001
(source: Department of Foreign Languages)

The Department students consist of Baccalaureate holders from literary and scientific streams as well as a number of transferred students from other departments, especially, exact sciences and biology. What is striking is the high proportion of female students (nearly 90%) compared with that of male ones as shown below (academic year 1999/00).

	1 st Year		2 nd Year		3 rd Year		4 th Year	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
English	31	57	33	98	17	41	7	61
French	45	85	38	136	37	65	15	49
Total	218		305		160		132	

Table 1.14 Proportion of Male and Female Students (source: Department of Foreign Languages)

individual students with severe difficulties through developmental activities such as conferencing; second, rather than working together as a team and taking part in collaborative activities (e.g., peer observation) to improve one's teaching, a number of teachers teach in isolation from each other, perhaps, because of fear of evaluation or just a result of a teaching habit ; third, due to lack of communication or request for assistance , experienced teachers rarely assist less experienced ones with their professional development; finally, except for few ones, most teachers seem reluctant to continue their professional development by taking part in research, seminars, conferences, joining professional organisations, and publishing articles in professional journals (i.e., they see themselves only as classroom teachers with the sole task of passing on knowledge or practising language forms). The absence of such vital teaching roles and responsibilities constitutes a serious contextual weakness that ought to be urgently remedied if teachers really aim at honing their teaching skills and bringing useful change in their students' learning .

1.3.3.3 The Foreign-Language Department : Some Facts and Figures

The research context is the Department of Foreign Languages, the English Language section, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Tlemcen. The Department, originally the Institute of Foreign Languages, was established in 1988 by a group of newly qualified teachers (4), among whom the present researcher, to provide undergraduate studies leading to the degrees of Licence in English Language Teaching, and Licence in French. Since its establishment, the Department has welcomed hundreds of students and helped fill in the shortage in foreign-language teachers in four main regions: Tlemcen, Ain Temouchent, Bechar, and Mecheria. It has also given an opportunity to a number of graduates to teach language skills and relied on Professors from Oran University to contribute to teacher training.

As a matter of fact, the first post-graduate course was launched in 1993 under the supervision of the group of Professors , and allowed seven (7) successful candidates out of twenty (20) to obtain the degree of Magister in Applied Linguistics. This helped to cope with the rising number of newly enrolled students, fill the void in qualified teachers at both Tlemcen and Sidi Bel Abbas

materials, and method. There is little, in fact no, monitoring of what teachers actually teach and how they teach it. The students, too, have very little choice over the content and methodology of the module. The following table indicates the kinds of responsibility that teachers hold in the current teaching setting.

Type of Responsibility	Scale	
	0	5
1. Identifying students' needs (needs analysts)		-
2. Selecting and grading syllabus content (curriculum developers)		-
3. Grouping learners into different groups according to ability	-	
4. Selecting and /or creating materials and learning activities (materials developers)		-
5. Monitoring and assessing learners' progress		-
6. Evaluating module content and instruction (researchers)	-	
7. Counselling and helping individual students with serious difficulties	-	
8. Collaboration and team action (observation, teaching together)	-	
9. Assisting less experienced teachers with professional growth	-	
10. Continuing development through critical and reflective practice		-

Table 1.12 Teaching/Learning Context Teachers' Roles (adapted from Richards and Lockhart 1996 :99)

(0 : no responsibility ; 5 : full responsibility)

As the table clearly shows, teachers, whether full-time or part-time, enjoy a wide range of responsibilities, especially in the areas of needs identification, content selection, and teaching methodology. Except for learners' grouping according to ability, most teachers determine their students' needs and use the information obtained for module planning; they develop syllabuses (e.g., reading syllabus, writing syllabus); some teachers develop their own classroom materials; and few ones conduct research related to language learning and teaching.

In contrast, the following desirable teacher roles may be said to be absent: counsellors, team members, mentors, and professional. First, some teachers are not encouraged, or perhaps unwilling, to offer extra help to

conferences). Third, there is a widespread belief amongst teachers that students' language and thinking problems can be *fixed* by the occasional provision of remedial sessions in the basics of language (grammar, mechanics, and sentence construction). This type of tacit attitude helps understand why most teachers insist on the need to be firm on language accuracy in teaching and examination (the main evaluation yardstick) and to make sure that the majority of first-year students (nearly 60%) repeat the year, which turns out to be a *remedial* rather than a *teaching* year to stamp out students' linguistic weaknesses.

It is partly in response to such a superficial solution to a serious pedagogical problem and a growing 'sense of dissatisfaction' with current practice that a number of teacher-researchers have begun to make their own teaching the subject of critical reflection and evaluation:

A starting point for any investigation into your own teaching must be a willingness to examine critically what you are doing. This might stem from a sense of personal dissatisfaction with what you are doing, a feeling that things could be better.
(Bowen and Marks, 1994 :28)

Developmental activities such as *action research* and *team collaboration* can truly make things better by progressively developing curriculum goals and syllabuses, in which the students' development is at the centre of the teaching and learning process (Chapters Four and Five). In so doing, university teaching will encourage students to shift from passive and rote learning of well-established facts to active transformation of knowledge and participation. In brief, the centre of the teaching and learning process must become the *learner*. To achieve this will constitute a radical change of attitude for the majority of teachers and should form an educational challenge to restore the hallmarks of university teaching— provision of academic life and thinking skills (to be able to think constructively, argue coherently, judge reasonably, and tackle own problems effectively).

1.3.3.2 Teachers' Roles and Strategies

In the present context, most teachers are fairly autonomous and are relatively free to make decisions concerning module goals, content, teaching

manage more or less to adjust to the *process of change*, the majority of new entrants appear unable to effectively cope with the demands of a new academic context, where rising responsibility and awareness are the key factors to success ; hence, a relative increase in the number of requests for transfer from one subject to area to another or simply drop-out during the first year.

1.3.3.1 Prevalent Attitudes and Teaching Models

University education seems to perpetuate a major weakness of the overall Algerian education system, namely, the prevalent reliance on mass lectures and magisterial modes of teaching large, mixed-ability classes, with teachers dictating and students passively copying. In other words, there is a large adherence to knowledge-telling over knowledge-transforming teaching, instruction over education, and proficiency (certification) over learning. Such university teaching, particularly when based on the traditional lecture, may be scholarly for the teachers but for far too many of their students results in superficial learning. What is alarming is that students themselves may, in fact, expect and, sadly enough, feel at home with such instruction and examination-oriented teaching, through which they have been largely socialised.

In the present learning/teaching context, probably like most other Algerian universities, a number of teachers may not be particularly enthusiastic about the introduction of change in their approaches to teaching in order to bring into line with the concept of *modern university education*: 'that in universities, learning should not be in terms of the passing on of well-established knowledge, but always in terms of not yet completely solved problems' (Elton, 2000 :34), that is, university teaching is concerned with problematic inquiry into new learning just as is research. Why is this the case?

First, as previously argued, most teachers have a tendency to lean towards approaches and classroom practices with which they already feel familiar and comfortable. There seems to be little motivation to question the rationale behind such instructional practices. Second, teaching appears to be less rewarding and motivating intellectually than research. Involvement in research offers an opportunity for development and exchange of experience and knowledge with fellow researchers through networking (seminars and

In sum, despite the differences in terms of motivational and methodological aspects the Foundation and Secondary-School levels, the vast majority of pupils end the five-year or more of EFL instruction with apparent frustrations in trying to craft correct and meaningful sentences into a paragraph, let alone to construct purposeful and coherent discourse. These learners have had a fair amount of communicative activities and an exposure to a dense vocabulary, but little systematic language practice and fewer writing tasks. Examination-driven institutional goals and overambitious syllabus objectives have, at least, converged to create a serious incoherence at the curriculum level that severely penalises the majority of learners, even those who pass the Baccalaureate. Being content-heavy and practice-light, the textbooks and methodologies tend to confuse the learners and affect somewhat negatively their linguistic, cognitive, and learning development. Syllabus designers need to bear in mind four important factors. One is limited language ability and ongoing intellectual growth (Vygotsky's ZPD, 1978) ; the second is unfamiliarity with themes and topics that are commonplace in the FL culture ; third, text types may not be accessible to all learners at such an early learning stage ; and fourth, for the thematic-functional-communicative principles to be effectively implemented in foreign-language learning, *teacher training and development* at all levels of EFL learning should be reconsidered (Cf. Chapter Five on practical suggestions).

1.3.3 EFL as a Subject Area in Higher Education

The rapid growth of the Algerian university and its initial orientation towards a mass institution may be said to have had a significant impact on the pedagogical interaction between teachers and students and the learning processes and outcomes. The university, in general, barely keeps up with the increasing number of new Baccalaureate holders. The need to offer a pedagogical place to each entrant is necessarily met at the expense of pedagogical concerns and facilities (e.g., qualified full-time teachers, adequate teaching time, small and same-ability classes, and sufficient library facilities). Accordingly, the newly enrolled students arrive at the university to face serious problems—orientation, linguistic, cognitive, material, and social. While some

Foundation Level	Secondary-School Level
❑ Clear motivation and natural drive to learn the foreign language ; ❑ Positive attitudes towards learning and discovering ; ❑ Prevalence of large classes and insufficient teaching time severely impinge on adequate practice and individual participation ; ❑ Low coefficient of English as a subject does not seriously affect pupils' motivation ; ❑ Results in English are not determinant for overall success ; ❑ Learners, in general, are able to carry out simple ritual functions like greeting or asking for something, but face rising difficulties with complex skills like comprehension and expression (especially, written) ; ❑ They tend to have difficulties with adapting to a different writing system (transcription in the Latin alphabets) ; ❑ Priority is given to the oral skills ; ❑ Remedial sessions are not officially implemented and occur once a week (one hour) ; ❑ Evaluation takes different forms : classroom , term , and end-of-term composition ; ❑ Exposure to EFL is restricted, preventing an effective learning process (adequate manipulation and recycling of taught items and functions).	❑ Most teachers complain about the overloaded programmes and insufficient teaching time to complete the syllabus objectives ; ❑ They exhibit a limited background knowledge as regards the FL culture and an alarming lack of motivation in professional development ; ❑ Insufficient classroom time compels teachers to adopt a kind of magisterial teaching by imposing a learning style and pace on all learners regardless of likely individual learning styles and leaning towards knowledge-getting rather than knowledge-transforming skills (this goes counter the newly-introduced task-based approach) ; ❑ Learners start the Secondary-School level studies with an incomplete mastery of basic structures and a very limited core vocabulary ; ❑ They tend to lack mastery of word forms and legible correct hand-writing; ❑ Pupils' performance in reading comprehension is relatively higher than that in written expression (frequency of incorrect sentences and ill-constructed paragraphs) ; ❑ A growing demotivation appears to contribute to the learners' weak performance ; ❑ Examination types and classroom activities tend to be different ; hence, the pupils' negative attitudes towards communicative activities and group work (considered as waste of time) ; ❑ Syllabus objectives do not pair the pupils' real cognitive and linguistic abilities .

Table 1-11 A Summary of the EFL Learning-Teaching Context at the Foundation and Secondary-School Levels : Processes and Outcomes

N	Reading	Correct Form	Writing	Score out of 20	N	Reading	Correct Form	Writing	Score out of 20
1	05	02,50	00,50	08	54	3,50	00,50	00,50	04,50
2	07	02	00,50	09,50	55	05	02	01,50	08,50
3	05	03	01	09	56	05	02,50	00,50	08
4	06	01	00,50	07,50	57	3,50	02,50	00,50	06,(à
5	03	01,50	00,50	05	58	4,50	02,50	00,50	àè,50
6	03	02,50	00,50	06	59	4,50	03,50	01,50	09,50
7	07	00,50	00,50	08	60	04	02,50	02	08,50
8	05	01	00,50	06,50	61	5,50	01	01	07,50
9	05	02,50	01,50	09	62	1,50	02,50	01,50	05,50
10	05	05	01,50	11,50	63	05	03	02	10
11	06	02,50	01	09,50	64	03	02	00,50	05,50
12	04	02	00,50	06,50	65	5,50	01	02,50	09
13	02	03	00,50	05,50	66	6,50	03,50	02,50	12,50
14	03	02,50	00,50	06	67	2,50	00,50	00,50	03,50
15	03	02,50	00	05,50	68	05	02,50	00	07,50
16	03	02,50	00,50	06	69	05	02,50	01,50	09
17	03	01	00,50	04,50	70	1,50	00,50	01	03
18	05	01	00,50	06,50	71	03	01,50	01,50	06
19	05	01	00,50	06,50	72	4,50	03	01,50	09
20	03	00,50	00,50	04	73	06	01,50	01,50	09
21	03	02,50	00,50	06	74	02	02	00,50	04,50
22	05	02	02	09	75	06	02,50	00,50	09
23	05,50	04,50	00,50	10,50	76	05	04	01,50	10,50
24	07	00,50	00,50	08	77	03	02,50	01	06,50
25	05	02,50	00,50	08	78	06	03	02,50	11,50
26	00,50	00	00,50	01	79	02	02,50	01	05,50
27	06	04	02	12	80	3,50	01	02	06,50
28	03	05	00,50	08,50	81	5,50	02,50	01,50	9,50
29	01,50	01,50	00,50	03,50	82	4,50	02,50	01	08
30	02	01	00,50	03,50	83	4,50	03	01	08,50
31	01,50	00,50	00	02	84	03	01	01	05
32	05	02,50	00,50	08	85	4,50	03	02,50	10
33	03	03	00,50	06,50	86	6,50	01,50	02	10
34	03	02,50	00	05,50	87	03	00,50	00,50	04
35	03	01,50	00,50	05	88	03	01,50	01	05,50
36	03	02	00	05	89	04	02,50	01,50	08
37	05	02	00,50	05,50	90	6,50	03,50	01,50	11,50
38	05	02,50	00,50	08	91	4,50	04	02	10,50
39	03	03	02	08	92	03	02	01	03
40	03	02	00,50	05,50	93	03	02	01	06
41	04,50	01,50	00,50	06,50	94	03	00,50	01,50	05
42	05	02,50	02,50	10	95	03	02	01,50	06,50
43	05	01,50	00	06,50	96	03	03	02	08
44	04,50	03,50	02	10	97	02	02	00	04
45	05	00,50	00,50	06	98	03	02	01	06
46	03	01,50	00	04,50	99	04	00	01	05
47	05,50	01	01	07,50	100	06,50	04	02,50	13
48	05	02,50	01,50	09					
49	05	01,50	01,50	08					
50	00	01,50	00,50	02					
51	04	01,50	00,50	06					
52	05	03	01,50	09,50					
53	06	04,50	02	12,50					

Table 1-10 A Sample of Baccalaureate Results in EFL , June 2000, Languages and Human Sciences Stream, Jury N 219, Tlemcen Examination Centre.

Each theme is supposed to be covered in 8 to 10 teaching hours, giving a chance to learners to use the taught functions and practise the discourse patterns.

What is quite evident is that the difficult aspects like discourse patterns (e.g., expository and argumentative rhetorical modes) are often skipped by teachers. Writing practice still follows the usual reproduction and production steps—controlled, guided, and free compositions, including expanding notes, transforming a telegram into a letter, a paragraph into a dialogue, and rewriting a passage without an awareness of the rationale behind such activities. Moreover, it seems that the syllabus designers and textbook writers have a strong faith in the learners' motivation and ability to shift from a lower proficiency level to a higher one.

It is, perhaps, taken for granted or naively expected that by the end of Secondary Education, most learners should be able to express themselves orally and in writing in a fluent, accurate, and meaningful English. In effect, the outcome, especially in the Baccalaureate, is largely disappointing with most learners achieving very low scores in written expression and displaying an inability to get their message across in clear and well-structured texts. Table 1.10 below presents a sample of the Baccalaureate results in writing and language mastery (session June 2000, Jury 219, Tlemcen Examination Centre), while Table 1.11 provides a summary of the learning/teaching processes and outcomes at the Foundation and Secondary-School Levels.

A curriculum should be based both on a formal and functional analysis and at the same time offer opportunities for experiential participation in real-life communication.'

While this balanced conception seems both appropriate given the complex and varied aims of language teaching and in agreement with the purposes of foreign language learning in most school situations, its actual implementation in the Algerian situation does not seem to follow a multi-level sequence : focus on structural control with material simplified structurally (Level1), focus on discourse control with material simplified functionally (Level2), and focus on language use with authentic material (Level3).

In 1AS, the teacher is given the opportunity to make choices amongst the set of activities in the textbook, *MY New Book of English*. He/she is expected to select learning activities according to an initial classroom needs assessment (specific needs and interests of the given language class). In 2AS, the teacher's role is to focus on the development of communication by teaching simultaneously strategies and language structures, and encouraging group work. In 3AS, having apparently built up a repertoire of necessary communicative skills, the teacher introduces learners to a systematic study of discourse patterns and language functions. The textbook, *COMET*, remains largely functional with authentic texts and a rich lexical density that are more often beyond the learners' comprehension abilities and the teacher's pedagogical explanations. The list below enumerates the suggested themes :

- ☐ Upgrade Unit 15
- ☐ Modern Life in English-Speaking Countries
- ☐ Human Rights and Racial Problems
- ☐ Great Challenges to Mankind
- ☐ Mass Media
- ☐ English in the World
- ☐ Humour and Leisure in English-Speaking Countries
- ☐ Trade and Development
- ☐ Business Correspondence
- ☐ Computing

communication, all in a very limited classroom contact time, the disadvantage of a low-coefficient subject, and with inadequate pedagogical resources. Furthermore, the teacher is advised to introduce pupils to an additional useful component, called *study skills*—how to keep notebooks, use a dictionary, cooperate with each other and to learn to be better learners. Thanks to these skills, pupils are expected to move from skill-getting to skill-using:

- develop insights into English as a linguistic system,
- develop verbal and graphic communication skills,
- learn different types of discourse,
- build up thinking and learning skills,
- understand linguistic and cultural differences between L1 and English, and
- become aware of the sociolinguistic dimensions of the foreign language (standard, dialect, register, jargon).

(Official Syllabus Objectives, 1999).

While these objectives are highly useful and desirable, their actual application inside the classroom needs to be based on empirical verification and measured evaluation ; otherwise, it may become a far-reaching goal due to the available teaching time, overloaded curricula, examination pressures, and the pupils' documented reluctance and growing demotivation (Mellouk, 2000) to spend extra effort on skills whose tangible utility belongs to the long-term rather than the short one.

Another very striking characteristic of EFL teaching at the Secondary-School Level is the use of a different method in each of the three years. 1AS is task-based and topic-oriented with a clear emphasis on the oral skills; 2AS combines a structural-functional method, and 3AS follows a newly introduced thematic and content-based method with a focus on the reading and writing skills.² The underlying conception of such a 'multi-level' curriculum is, in Stern's words (1983 :252) that:

(1) Curriculum Goals and Studies (The English Language Section)

The Licence in English Language Teaching is a four-year degree course which leads to a teaching career in the lower levels of education (Foundation and Secondary-School) provided that the graduate students pass a newly introduced regional examination for access to the available teaching jobs. The major goal of the degree is therefore to ensure that graduates have been theoretically well-assisted and trained as future teachers of English. In addition to being a professional qualification for EFL teaching, the Licence offers opportunities to outstanding students to carry out post-graduate studies and research in linguistics, literature, civilisation, or TEFL. These students are either admitted after graduation or success in a national examination. The other graduates generally teach English in the other university departments (economics, biology, or technology) or take up a career in economic or administrative activities (banking, computer-related jobs, or oil industries in the south).

The four-year curriculum consists of language skills (oral and written expression), language study (linguistics, phonetics, and phonology), literature and civilisation (American, English, and African), TEFL, psychology, educational psychology, teacher-training sessions, and Arabic. Table 3.4 enumerates the programme of each year and the amount of teaching time per week for each module.

Year	Module	Teaching Time
First	Oral Comprehension and Expression	3 hours per week
	Written Comprehension and Expression	3 hours
	Grammar	3 hours
	Phonetics	1/30
	Introduction to Linguistics	1/50
	Arabic	1/30
Total		14/30
Second	Oral Comprehension and Expression	1/30
	Written Comprehension and Expression	1/30
	Grammar	1/30
	Linguistics	1/30
	Phonetics	1/30
	British Civilisation	1/30
	American Civilisation	1/30
	British Literature	1/30
	American Literature	1/30
	Arabic	1/30
Total		15 hours
Third	Oral Comprehension and Expression	1/30
	Sociolinguistics	1/30
	Phonology	1/30
	American Literature	1/30
	British Literature	1/30
	American Civilisation	1/30
	British Civilisation	1/30
	African Literature	1/30
	Psychology (Arabic)	1/30
	Arabic	1/30
Total		15 hours
Fourth	Seminars in Linguistics	1/30
	Seminars in Literature	1/30
	Seminars in Civilisation	1/30
	TEFL	1/30
	Educational Psychology (Arabic)	1/30
	Teacher-Training Observation Sessions	1/30
Total		9 hours

Table 1.15 Curriculum Studies (Modules)

(2) Action Research Focus: Written Comprehension and Expression

Since the focus of the present action research is written comprehension and expression (henceforth WCE), it may be fit to outline and discuss in some

detail its objectives, teaching practices, and learning outcomes. For pedagogical convenience, WCE is divided into two parts: reading comprehension and written expression. The former teaches reading skills, while the latter deals intensively with written skills and strategies. As regards the first year, the official curriculum provides guidelines for the organisation and the objectives of the writing class, but leaves the teacher free to organise the module content, adapt or develop teaching material, and apply the relevant methodology. First-year students are expected to learn to produce short text types according to the rules and conventions of written English: correct use of grammatical rules and sentence patterns, meaningful use of words, logical organisation of ideas and good layout.

The main objectives for the writing class is to equip the entrant students with the necessary composition and study skills, text construction, draft processing, summary-writing, note-taking, outlining, and appropriate content organisation. In general, during the first term, focus is generally put on practice of the basics of the writing system (spelling, punctuation, capitalisation), sentence construction (mastery of the simple-sentence patterns), paragraphing (topic sentence and supporting details), and occasional remedial work (language difficulties). It is up to the teacher to plan the writing class objectives and priorities.

As a consequence, what seems to emerge is a class syllabus with distinct principles, practices, and different materials which largely depend on the teacher's field knowledge, competence, experience, involvement, and own assessment of the students' needs. In the present teaching setting, the prevailing writing syllabus and methodology are language-based and accuracy-oriented. There is, in effect, an over-emphasis on language mastery and grammatical accuracy by means of weighty language practice at the sentence level. This type of consensus stems from a widespread attitude and largely held belief that the linguistic assets of the vast majority of the new entrants are limited. It is, therefore, thought fit to spend much of the classroom time equipping them with *good language habits* (viz. accuracy), and providing the Department with students whose writing skills will meet linguistic and examination standards. In the light of such goals, the teaching of WCE is based

on the premise that what is taught and learned in the first year will help students function well (i.e., write correctly) in subsequent years. This means that the primary objective for most writing teachers is to help students to get ready for written assignments and examinations in the various modules, by producing error-free essays. The following is a summary of the two writing-teaching models applied in the present context, and probably, in other ones (e.g., Abderahim 1994 for the teaching and assessing of writing at Constantine University).

Language-Based Writing Model	Pattern-Product Writing Model
Bases: □ Syllabus tends to be essentially linguistic (structural) and teaching-oriented (applied linguistics); □ the model of language relies mainly on the categories of structure and skill. Principles: □ Recognition of the students' <i>language</i> needs; □ writing is a language skill; it reinforces grammatical structures and taught vocabulary; □ practice focuses on the sentence level. Methodology: □ Practice of language components and syntactic structures (specifically verb tense, the use of adjectives, sentence patterns, direct/indirect speech, active/passive); □ Writing exercises consist of sentence combination, sentence transformation, and language-element identification (the implicit aim is that such practice will extend the cognitive skills of students, improve the accuracy of their sentences, and eventually ameliorate their written products).	Bases: □ The pattern-product model is based on rhetorical teaching (modes of text development and content organisation); □ the model of language relies on the construction of logical texts. Principles: □ Recognition of the learners' <i>academic</i> needs with regard to logical thinking and coherent argumentation; □ analysis of discourse into paragraphs and modes of organisation; □ combination of language study and text organisation; □ emphasis on the coherence of the final product; strong concern with the formal examination-type essay. Methodology: □ Practice of paragraphing (structuring of the topic sentence and supporting details) and rhetorical development (developing a three-paragraph essay through one mode of organisation–description, comparison/contrast, etc.); practice of logical organisation (re-ordering scrambled sentences and paragraphs into a coherent text, identifying or expanding topic sentences)

Table 1.16 A Summary of the Prevalent Writing-Teaching Models in the Research Context.

(3) Research Population Profile: First-Year EFL Learners

In order to be aware of how students initially approach the task of foreign language learning and how they try to cope with their new academic context, it would be fitting, on the basis of prior experience and classroom observation, to describe and discuss their profile in terms of gender distribution (male/female proportion), background, and entrant skills (language proficiency). These factors significantly shape the students' learning perspective and the way in which they communicate that perspective at the university.

The first and most striking observation that can be made on the research subjects is the prevalence of the female population (nearly 90%). In general, girls display far better verbal abilities and a keen interest in the foreign language than do male students (it is no wonder that each academic year the most outstanding student is a female). The age range is 17-19, which means that the new entrants are now relatively younger than before (18/20). This is a consequence of the limited number of years spent at the Foundation Level (3 years instead of 4). As previously argued and despite the arrival of sky TV channels, the socio-cultural tendencies of most students are clearly nationalistic, especially in matters of language, religion, and identity. Perhaps, a major reason behind such *inward-looking* outcome is the fact that most learners (nearly 70%) are of rural and, highly Arabised, background. Hence, a great care is taken in material design, topic choice, and teaching classroom behaviour. Universal themes and useful historical information are introduced in the first year, whereas culturally-laden themes are usually postponed to the subsequent years, where students may have gone through some process of change at the intellectual and personal levels.

The second observation is that despite the five years or more of EFL learning at the Foundation and Secondary-School levels, the new entrants appear, in their majority, to have difficulties expressing themselves either orally or in writing. Low performance is readily noticeable in their inability to write well-built paragraphs, to convey a clear idea unit, or else construct correct sentences (Cf. Chapter Three, Section two: 171-183 for a formal entrant skill assessment). In fact, it becomes clear from the first encounter that English

lessons in the prior years do not always teach the kinds of reading, writing, and thinking skills that the academic context of the university is looking for. While few entrants show a certain ease in expressing themselves fluently, the others are manifestly unable to make a simple request correctly, let alone appropriately (e.g., using an indirect form rather than a direct one). There are few, if any, sentences where errors do not interfere with meaning. Often what is written is no more than a list of ideas instead of a well-organised and meaningful text. The product is rarely over 100 words long.

It may be fair therefore to argue that the general entrant level of language proficiency is low-intermediate—a basic (though not always accurate) production of writing mechanics, subject-verb agreement, use of personal pronouns, a limited vocabulary at times punctuated with anglicised borrowings from French, and an alarming tendency to write long strings of ill-constructed sentences, using repeatedly the conjunction *and* (probably a result of L1 interference). For such learners, the principal and urgent need is: to build up a linguistic foundation anew and to practise writing micro-skills (like word formation, sentence expansion, and paragraphing). That is why, teachers of language skills devote much of classroom teaching during the first term to linguistic accuracy and writing mechanics and micro-skills.

The preliminary assessment of a set of short texts (pre-assessment test to be discussed and interpreted in detail in Chapter Three), produced by the new entrants in the first two weeks of the academic year, 1999/2000, provides further evidence for the hypothesised low language proficiency, which poses a *problematic case* to the teacher and the institution as a whole. From a proficiency-level analysis, two distinct levels clearly emerge: low-intermediate (nearly 80 %) and high-intermediate (around 20%); from a writing-performance analysis: basic writers and developing writers. Table 1.7 summarises the distinctive features of each level, indicating the learners' entrant abilities, weaknesses, and needs.

High-Intermediate (developing) Level	Low-intermediate (basic) Level
Abilities : ❑ Accurate grasp and use of writing mechanics(fair accuracy in punctuation, spelling, and capitalisation) ; ❑ correct construction of different sentence patterns ; ability to write a meaningful text and to convey clear ideas, despite the problem of inadequate vocabulary) ; ❑ good knowledge of cohesive ties and discourse-organising connectors ; ❑ ability to expand short paragraphs into a whole text. Lacks : ❑ Lack of contextual knowledge (unawareness of readership) ; ❑ insufficient composing strategies (drafting and revising) ; ❑ a tendency to be prolific (free writing) without monitoring one's performance. Needs : ❑ Further focus on creating whole texts ; ❑ build up an adequate vocabulary through reading ; ❑ use of a variety of conventional discourse structures and organisation modes according to the topic, text type, and purpose ; continued practice in paragraphing and text components (introduction, development, conclusion) ; ❑ introduction of and insistence on composing strategies (pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing) ; ❑ practise of and familiarisation with important academic skills (thinking, arguing, paraphrasing, quoting, summary-writing).	Abilities : Production of short texts ; division of texts into two paragraphs ; convey ideas with clear difficulty. Lacks : ❑ Lack of control of basic syntactic structures ; Inadequate knowledge of writing mechanics ; limited vocabulary ; ❑ unawareness of useful writing micro-skills and composing strategies. Needs : ❑ Build up a new foundation in linguistic accuracy at the sentence level (learn first to write correct simple sentences) ; ❑ Plenty of work in sentence construction and expansion ; ❑ Practice of writing mechanics ; ❑ Develop an awareness of paragraphing : understand the rudiments of a paragraph as an idea unity (topic sentence and supporting details) ; ❑ Introduction of simple writing types (description and narration) in controlled and guided writing ; ❑ Insistence on pre-writing, drafting, and revising strategies from the beginning of the course to build up good thinking skills ; ❑ Encourage reading and note-taking ; and ❑ Use of remedial work whenever necessary.

Table 1.17 Language-Proficiency and Writing-Performance Preliminary Analysis

1.3.3.4 Affective Dimensions : Motivation and Attitudes

(1) Definition and Discussion

Motivation is the most studied affective dimension of language learning in addition to correlated factors such as *attitudes*, *anxiety*, and *ethnocentrism*. The reason behind the specific focus on motivation lies in the fact that it constitutes the second most important set of variables for predicting achievement and proficiency in language learning, after aptitude. The advantage of motivational orientations, unlike aptitude, is that they can be subject to a certain modification and manipulation to attain better results in learning outcomes. It is true that there is little the teacher can do to change cultural-linguistic constraints on the learner's motivation immediately, but this may be managed and modified progressively to some extent. The first in-depth analysis of motivational variables was carried out by Gardner and Lambert (1959), who found out that the learner's motivation to learn a second language (initial works on motivation focussed on English or French as a second language in the Canadian bilingual context) is motivated by his attitudes towards the target group and by his orientation towards the learning task itself (in Hamers and Blanc, 1989 :235).

The term *motivation* is generally defined as the 'effort that the learner is prepared to make in order to attain competence in L2 and his desire to achieve this goal' (op.cit.). Gardner and Lambert (1972) refer respectively to *motivation* as the 'learner's overall goal and orientation' and *attitude* as 'the persistence shown by the learner in striving for a goal'. In this sense, a motivated learner displays a number of positive variables in his behavioural learning and attitudinal orientation: energy, positive opinion, willingness to learn, persistence, perseverance, interest, enjoyment of lessons, benefits of knowing the language, and a constant drive to get good marks and succeed. Motivation and attitude are clearly intertwined and form a complex pattern of interaction which will significantly influence the affective mechanism.

The first interactional model proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972) is a linear one : attitudes influence motivation which in turn influences competence in language learning. The model distinguishes two orientations in the

mechanism. At one extreme, an *integrative* motivation reflects the learner's strong desire to belong to the L2 target group; at the other extreme, an *instrumental* motivation translates the learner's practical motives for learning L2—better job prospects, good marks, and success. Other instrumental reasons may orientate the learner, for example, the desire to acquire additional knowledge, to meet other groups, an interest in the socio-cultural aspects of the target language, and specific academic interests.

While such a theoretical distinction may be convenient, it seems difficult to draw a clear-cut borderline between the two motivational orientations in a given learner. Both types appear to function at varying degrees, depending on the status of the language (whether second or foreign) and the effectiveness of the learning environment (favourable or unfavourable). For instance, in the present context, one might immediately think that instrumental motivation is more powerful than the integrative one even though English is a second foreign language with rather limited uses in the community compared with French. For a number of university-level students, as well as obtaining the degree (Licence) in due time and starting professional life, English stands for the indispensable key to the international discourse community in knowledge and sciences, notably, by opening access to international networking. These learners, albeit a minority, may do their best to develop both proficiency and competency in the foreign language without, probably, having a particular interest in Britain or the U.S.A. Thus, the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation is far from being simple or absolute.

This state of the art has led Gardner (1985) to put forward a *socio-educational* model of language learning, which is composed of four classes of variables: social milieu, individual differences, language learning context, and outcomes. According to this model, the relationships between language proficiency and motivational orientations are likely to vary with regard to the learning context in addition to variables such as anxiety over the course results and attitudes towards the teacher.

As far as the present context is concerned, the strongest strain of integrative motivation, that is drawing closer to or actually integrating the target-language culture, seems to be, at best, untenable. It is certainly difficult to

conceive of a degree of own-culture alienation so great, or target-culture so overwhelming, that a learner would wish to disown his own context of development completely (although some isolated instances, especially in large cities like Algiers or Oran, may of course exist). It is rather more likely that specific features of the foreign-language culture may be admired or particularly valued. A case in point is the desire of a large number of EFL university students to understand and possibly perform Anglo-American pop music. This particularistic and narrowly focused motivation is actually a very positive and potentially expandable affective factor that could be usefully translated into classroom activities (Cf. Chapter Four for illustrations on the use of popular songs as reading-writing tasks). It is also an indication that, in reality, there is probably no sharp distinction to be made between instrumental and integrative orientations of motivation.

Interestingly, the two motivational orientations by no means stand in mutual exclusion or contradiction, and given a favourable learning environment, positive attitudes may be nurtured and developed towards the foreign language, its people, achievement, and culture. This is precisely a major goal of the proposed writing class curriculum development (Chapter Four), which strives to make positive attitudes happen by gradually introducing authentic and worthwhile learning material and enhancing a critical analysis of its content. In such a way, it is expected that learners will shift from narrowly perceived needs to a more positive desire to learn about a culture through its language and so continually progress in the language learning process, with no reason to feel threatened or anxious about one's identity or culture; in other words, they will *change* from inward-looking to outward-looking individuals. This is not to say that most learners are likely to become motivated in any strong sense, but low affective drive inherited from previous language experiences, especially at the Secondary Level, and the resulting *fossilisation*³ might be modified and perhaps remedied, by significantly reducing the social and psychological distance between a number of students and the foreign language.

(2) Entrant Affective Dimensions

At the outset, the majority of the new entrants appear to be fairly enthusiastic about their new university experience in language learning and specialisation. A narrowly focused motivation on the high prestige of English as an international language and its omnipresence in most technological, scientific, and entertainment fields brings about very positive attitudes towards the usefulness of learning English. Concerns about eventual unemployment due to the decline in teaching opportunities are not visible in the first year. However, clear signs of a growing anxiety and demotivation begin to be manifest as a number of students become aware of their low language proficiency, weak literacy (reading-writing), and the linguistic and thinking skills of a university-level course. What then becomes clear to an experienced teacher is the beginning of a *process of change* (Reid, 1993) in the students' affective orientations, ranging from an initial enthusiasm and great expectations to some kind of reluctance, disappointment, and eventually plain hostility on the part of weakest students. These are rather unable to adjust to the new context, where, rather than expecting the teacher to be the front of all learning, individual responsibility over one's learning and success tends to be the norm.

(3) Motivation and the Language Classroom

One is compelled to enquire about other likely reasons behind the change in the students' motivation and attitudes towards language learning in general, and writing in particular. How does the motivational mechanism function in the foreign language classroom? Are such reasons linked in some way or another to ineffective teaching methodologies, irrelevant classroom practices, teacher's attitudes and instructional behaviour, evaluation methods, and/or incongruity between the students' own needs and expectations and those of the new context? What is the relationship between affect and writing? There are certainly multiple variables that interfere in the motivational mechanism and determine the kind of affective modification and relationship with the taught skill—attitudes towards the teacher, the teacher's classroom behaviour, the degree of critical awareness, anxiety and concern about marks, methodology, proficiency, existing needs and strategies, physical setting, the learner's personality and learning style, and aptitudes.

Diagram 1.3 illustrates the interaction of such multiple variables in the learner's affective modification and change.

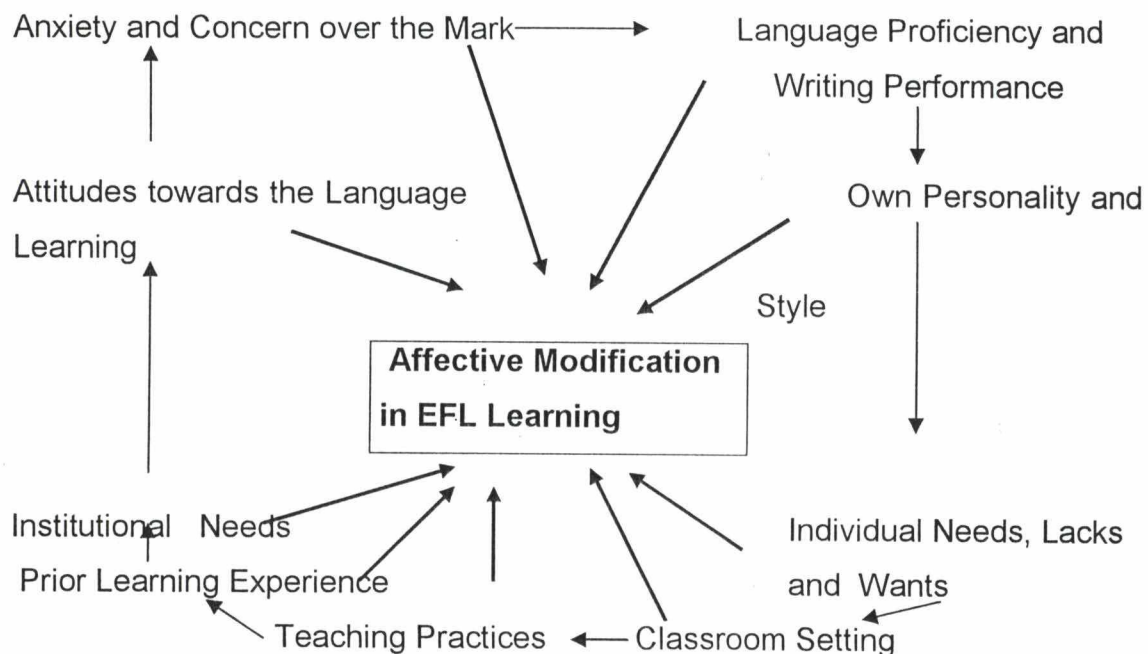


Diagram 1.3 The Interaction of Multiple Variables in Affective Modification in EFL

There is no doubt that the role of the teacher is the primary source of motivation or demotivation. Indeed, he/she assumes a huge responsibility in sustaining and harnessing the learner's motivational drive by bringing it into line with the learning-teaching context particularities. The teacher's responsibility is closely tied to his/her personality (congruence) and teaching (competence and experience). Firstly, motivation is a human behaviour, genuine and open to influence. The motivated teacher, by virtue of his/her professional competence, interest and involvement in the linguistic and intellectual development of learners, their equal treatment, and genuine caring certainly constitutes a strong motivational model that most learners will respond to positively. Secondly, motivation partially depends on the way the teacher manages the motivational mechanism inside the classroom. Research on motivation and achievement (Gardner, 1985; Williams and Burden 1997) stresses the fact that student success seems to be inextricably linked to teacher performance. The foreign-language classroom, as a communication space, makes use of motivational power to function. The highest proportion of this

power is brought by the teacher, and the remaining by the learner and the type of existing classroom interaction as shown in the figure below:

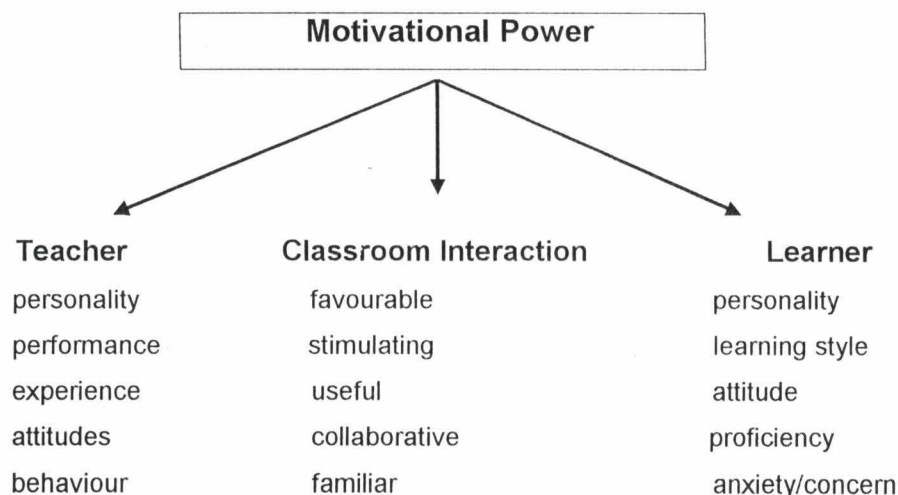


Diagram 1.4 Main Sources of Motivational Power in the EFL Classroom

The other variables also contribute to affective modification and create a wide range of motivation in the language classroom. Some students are in class merely to mark time, while others expect the teacher to be the front of all learning (a sad learning habit from Secondary-Level education). A student repeating the year (a fact for most students) has different attitudes, aptitudes, and motivation from the new entrant. It is very distressing for the teacher to have a mixed-ability class with a wide range of motivational orientations: low-intermediate level and disinterested teenagers, lone students who do not seem to like writing (perhaps even in Arabic) and keep staring out of the window , and a group of very enthusiastic serious students who work at a task or, having finished it, wait impatiently for the class to move ahead. This is to say that the existence of mixed-ability and mixed-motivation classes constitutes a serious contextual problem that may involve some kind of *streaming* (Gardner, 1985) either in selection at the beginning of the course or the development of *multi-level curriculum* (Cf. Chapter Four for this type of curriculum for the writing class).

(4) Motivation and Writing

There is a vital relationship between motivation and writing. It is now recognised that in addition to skills, writers need the *will* to read and write. When learners want to write, they do so often and with more effort:

When individuals perceive themselves as being capable of completing a specific task or engaging in a specific endeavour, and they perceive themselves as having some degree of control over that task or endeavour, then they are intrinsically motivated to engage in that task or endeavour.

(Gee, 1999 :4)

Thus, competence in writing, or at least a perception of competence, promotes writing. Let us explain this cycle: successful writers have a positive attitude toward writing, read and write more, and so become better writers. As better writers, they have a larger vocabulary, are familiar with different syntactic patterns found in texts, and have a broader knowledge base. This competence enables and motivates them to read and write more elaborated texts, and become even better readers and writers. As the cycle goes on, these successful writers develop a cumulative advantage over the years and undertake, in fact, a developmental lifelong learning. And this makes all the difference between good writers and the poor ones.

Indeed, classroom observation and experience corroborates the finding that students with poor attitudes about the context, school, the subject matter, and their classroom are poorly motivated and thus present major teaching challenges. The low marks obtained in the taught modules, more than often, result in demotivation. The frequency of errors and their fossilisation constitute an inhibiting factor in their affective orientations and a major reason for demotivation. Unlike successful students, who consider success that comes from hard work and a sense of competence as the means to sustain motivation, the demotivated ones rely extensively on *effort-avoidance* strategy and depend on content modules and Arabic to compensate the low marks obtained in the difficult language skills. Thus, it may be fair to argue that without motivation, it becomes extremely difficult to attain a certain competence in learning, whether

in writing, reading, or any other skill. Equally important is the need for EFL learners to become avid readers and writers, especially low-level ones. If they read and write more, they will become more competent and also learn more English in a reciprocal relationship. As Krashen (1993) argues, written language is simply too complex to master solely by direct instruction. The huge amounts of input (and output) that can be gained by reading (and writing) are necessary to acquire high levels of literacy.

1.3.3.5 Needs Analysis

Identifying and analysing the first-year students' varied language, thinking, and writing needs forms the basis for the teaching of writing: for creating a relevant, useful syllabus, selecting appropriate classroom tasks, and developing positive evaluation procedures. The picture concerning needs is quite complex, as previously argued, because needs are, by nature, evolving and varied. What do students need? What will they do with the English they will have learnt? What do they want to learn? These questions involve different answers and concern language proficiency, writing knowledge and performance, thinking skills, learning to learn, and developing as individuals.

(1) Language and Writing Needs

EFL university entrants have to develop a sound proficiency in language skills in order to function well in the different modules throughout the four years of study. Accordingly, there is an emphasis on equipping students with necessary reading, writing, study, and composing skills. They need to develop a mastery of, and expressivity in the foreign language. This involves, especially for the low-intermediate entrants, a command of the linguistic system of English, possession of an adequate vocabulary repertoire through reading, and an awareness of the rhetorical structures of different text types. From the institutional standpoint, such a proficiency is necessary for academic success. In particular, the language skill on which students' success will eventually depend is writing. It is through written examinations that students are normally evaluated. In fact, one of the traditional roles of writing is to provide a more or less objective way for checking on the students' understanding of what has

been taught and proficiency to express such understanding clearly and accurately. That is why, for first-year students, developing an ability to write fluently and confidently in English is a vital need and, therefore, a high priority in terms of needs analysis.

Often the new students, either due to lack of understanding of rhetorical patterns or due to lack of prior composing experiences and instruction, must be familiarised anew with the syntactic and textual aspects of writing and the processing strategies needed to create a text. Moreover, due to their low-intermediate level, most students' texts are fossilised by errors of syntax, grammar, and lexis. A major teaching task is to enable them to activate their passive grammatical knowledge to learn to edit for certain grammar errors, to develop strategies for increasing lexical accuracy, and to refrain from resorting to ineffective strategies acquired in previous learning experience such as the frequent thinking in and translating from Arabic or French, semantic and syntactic simplification, or else direct coining or borrowing from French. Students need also to change their learning habits by communicating their ideas in written form rather than a spoken one, that is, to develop an awareness of the differences between written and spoken language (as will be shown in Chapter Two).

It is true that the role of writing in English in the Algerian community is rather limited. Some students may never use English in their future professional life ; for others the list of texts to write is likely to be short, except for those who will follow more advanced studies. Letters to family or friends are not usually written in English (occasionally an informal letter to a pen pal, an e-mail, or a short formal letter to an institution). Neither are telephone, fax messages, memorandum, or personal notes usually written in English. The texts that students need to write are more probably going to be essays, reports, articles, summaries, abstracts, that is what Johns (1997) refers to as *school writing genre* . Despite such a restricted use, the primary role of the writing class is to familiarise and equip learners with micro-skills and strategies for dealing effectively with different text types and writing tasks. Most essays require careful composing strategies (planning, drafting, and revising) and thinking skills (learning to reflect critically and reason objectively).

Furthermore, research in writing and language use, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two, has focused on the writer, the writer's processes, the reader's expectations, and the use of appropriate discourse patterns relevant to the topic-type and text-type. These aspects are an important factor in the shaping of written texts, developing writing abilities, and raising discourse awareness. This means that the writing teacher needs not only to teach such micro-skills and strategies but will have also to lay the foundation for their ongoing development. Becoming a proficient writer may become a major objective for a number of students, especially for those willing to achieve long-term objectives—post-graduate studies, taking a career in global business, computer-related activities, and oil industries in the South. Therefore, even if the vast majority of students may need only a basic language proficiency, few others may decide to extend the range of their possibilities in an increasingly print-dominated world. These students need not only to write well but also to be aware of issues of discourse appropriacy and critical reflection.

It is this awareness of the evolving and varied needs of students that prompts this action research in an effort to improve the 'rationality and justice' (Kemmis, 1983) of educational practices and to cater for the needs of most students. While building up a foundation in accuracy, introducing students progressively to useful composing and thinking skills for completing a writing task and creating opportunities to write and read constantly are important aspects of EFL learning and writing. In a similar way, making explicit the types of knowledge that good writers need to possess and apply, helps learners to reflect critically on their own weaknesses, abilities, and learning habits. Thus, the key to needs analysis is to balance the needs of individual students with the class objectives and institutional needs.

(2) Reflective Learning : Metacognitive, Thinking, and Adjustment Needs

A major challenge confronting teachers and the new students during the first year at the university is how to manage the *process of change* so that students can keep up their initial motivation and learning drive. The importance of such a need is not immediately apparent nor urgent, but for an experienced and attentive teacher it is the basis of successful education and learning. For

instance, EFL students who are learning to structure a paragraph according to a particular rhetorical pattern, to pay attention to accuracy and layout, to bear in mind readership, and to convey a clear message are constantly making substantial changes in their *background knowledge* and *metacognition* (learning styles and thinking skills) (Reid 1993). The teacher in the writing class can act as a *change agent* by guiding and providing learners with opportunities to learn to think and become aware of the true nature of writing, and to offer praise and reward to hard work and effort. In such a way, he/she will build up positive attitudes and feelings towards the relationship between learning, changing, and education (op.cit.).

Metacognition is therefore relevant because it introduces students to thinking skills : reflecting upon and discussing what they are learning, how they learn best, what they do not understand, and how to ameliorate their learning through *developmental* procedures like journal-writing, portfolio, and meta-cognitive entries (Cf. Chapter Four for suggestions and application of reflective learning). In this way, students may become aware not only of what they are learning, but *that* they are learning and changing. Writing teachers are fortunate enough to enjoy numerous opportunities to ask learners to write about their own learning experiences. The results can be amazing in that even some of the weakest students do their best to write interesting texts about their individual experiences, difficulties, and expectations. It is clear that teachers need to walk a narrow line between teaching and guiding, between instructing and educating, and to always bear in mind that *learning is change*.

(3) Affective Needs : Anxiety, Concern, and Motivation

Most first-year students, especially the low-intermediate ones, appear to experience at the beginning of the year a certain anguish and anxiety towards their new studies. They obviously need a certain level of comfort and confidence within the classroom. In order to allow them to relax and keep their affective energies alive, it will be worthwhile to take time and set up a number of classroom routines to facilitate their anticipation of what will normally happen during the class, what the teacher expects, and what they will be doing. That is why, a clear statement about the writing curriculum, syllabus objectives,

instructional tasks and texts, error correction, and evaluation should contribute to lowering anxiety levels and concerns about the marks and eventual failure. Being *explicit* and *reassuring* then will likely foster a sense of confidence in the students and work to bring down the barriers to learning caused by anxiety.

In summary, the research population differs tremendously in needs, lacks, wants, and affective dimensions. There is urgency therefore to work to satisfy the most important students' needs by developing appropriate curriculum and teaching materials, and by making the classroom atmosphere one of change, learning, respect, reflection, curiosity, collaboration, and development. Motivation, satisfaction, relevance, and change are key factors in foreign language education.

1.4 Foreign-Language Policy Implications : Objectives and Perspectives of English in Algeria

The introduction of English education and the use of English in particular social spheres is a relatively recent phenomenon, one that is linked with political influences, economic opportunity, development, and globalisation. This part will examine the changing role of English in the Algerian context by highlighting the positive role that English can play in the economic, social, and intellectual development of Algeria as it undergoes major transformations. It will also consider the foreign-language policy implications of the changing workplace and economy globally for the teaching, learning, and use of English, often with speakers of other languages. This concerns especially the corresponding needs in terms of the professional development of teachers, researchers, and students who may require high levels of proficiency in English to take part in international networking—there is no new opportunity, participation, education, or partnership without effective communication. And English is the *sine qua non* of global communication—so much so that it is frequently taken for granted. In the light of such an importance, English education needs to respond to this situation on the changing workplace and higher education by developing adequate programmes (especially, the implementation of education technology) designed to better prepare students and teachers for these changes and contribute to the implementation of an

urgent knowledge economy that will be a factor of economic growth (i.e., the integration of the new information and communication technologies into knowledge economy strategy).

1.4.1 The Global Importance of the English Language

At present, the English Language is the dominant international language and the indispensable key to the changing world of science, technology, and communication. It is the primary language of computer software, of the cutting edge in scientific research, of business and management, and of politics and international networking (an increasing number of people learn and use English via global communications and in multilingual workplaces like oil industries). It is also the medium of interaction in countless activities—air-traffic control, world organisations, prestigious higher studies such as MBA, academic conferences, research and publication. Even the international pop music relies on English for boosting its sales and spread just as space sciences and computing games. It is therefore no wonder that English is the national language of a large number of the Commonwealth countries, where English education has a long-standing history, and the first foreign language in many other countries, with different constellation of linguistic, cultural, and political influences. (The British Council Workshop on Language and Development, 2001).

Algeria, like the rest of the world, is well aware of such a key role, especially, the importance of English-dominated communication in development, i.e. seeking and enjoying greater opportunities for realising benefits in terms of participation, education, and partnership. It attempts, accordingly, to implement language and educational policies that lay emphasis on the instrumental role of English as is clear in the experimental attempt to make it a first foreign language in the lower levels of education (1993) and in prior political decisions like the one in The National Charter (1976) :

A means to facilitate a constant communication with the world, to gain access to modern sciences, modern technologies, and to foster creativity in its universal dimensions. (Translation)

The recognition of English as a factor of economic and intellectual growth has prompted policy makers to make English part of the official curriculum at all levels

of education (Primary, Foundation, Secondary-School, and University). The major goal is to enable the younger generations to develop sound proficiency in the foreign language, to gain access to the huge and inexorable wealth of scientific and technological knowledge stored in English, and communicate effectively in international networking, and/or multilingual workplaces. This vital goal is part of the current Algerian economic policy which tries to generate greater opportunities for development by building up partnership with the United States, Britain, and other English-speaking countries.

1.4.2 Implications for Knowledge Economy : Objectives and Strategies

The implications of foreign-language policy may be divided into four main types, educational-scientific, economic, and cultural, which together can be woven into an integrated *knowledge economy strategy*. These objectives, summarised in the diagram below, form the bases of knowledge strategy and knowledge acquisition, with both short-term and long-term impact on individuals (outward-looking and lifetime learning) and society as a whole (socio-economic development).

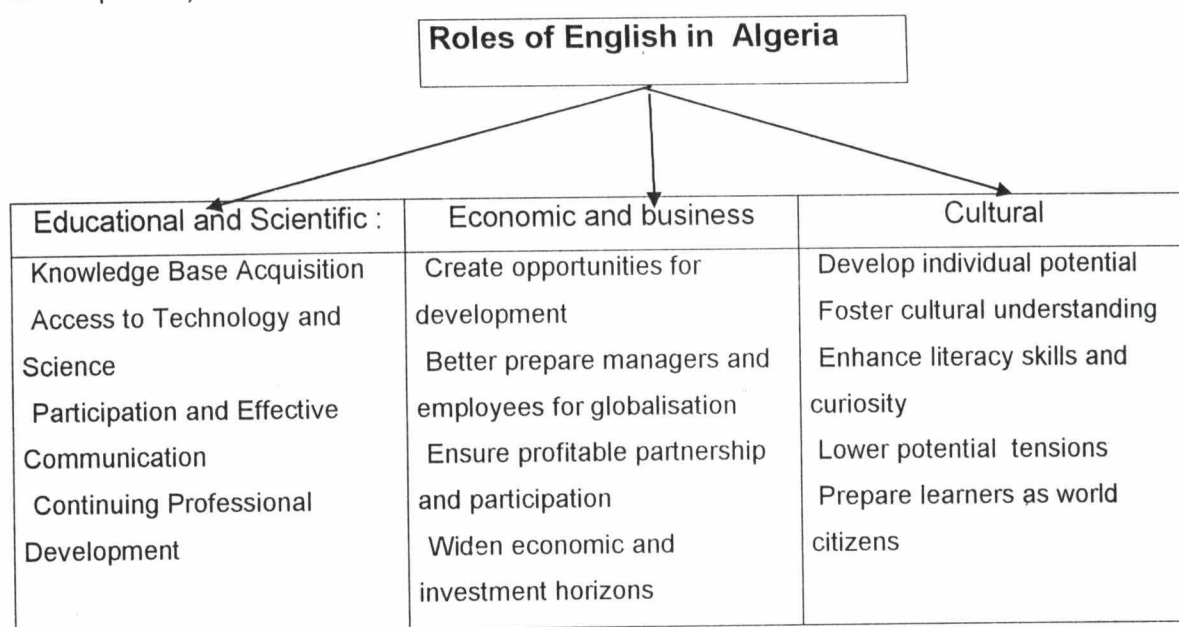


Diagram 1.5 Objectives and Roles of English in Algeria

1.4.2.1 Educational and Scientific Objectives : Education Technology

The educational objectives consist in preparing learners to develop into responsible, productive members of society by equipping them with

personal, interpersonal, thinking, information, and academic life skills to both perform and communicate effectively in a variety of situations (social or/and workplaces). These skills are indispensable to cope with the complex literacy demands of the modern Information Age and Globalisation, and avoid being merely a spectator or consumer. The implication is to learn and use information retrieved skills and strategies in order to benefit the most from the available data bank in almost all vital domains. Whether it be about the synthesis and analysis of information from journals, CD Rom, or the Internet, there are bound to be many choices and instances which will require a great deal of thoughtful decision-making and critical reflection.

There is an opportunity now for making major changes in education to foster such critical skills and improve learning, with *technology* as the leading factor. Education Technology is increasingly available to teachers of English at the university level. The spread of computers, network communication, and emerging computational technologies should be expanded to all levels of education to improve the learners' knowledge and information skills and to bring a project-based pedagogy to language classrooms. Curriculum development, especially at the university level, should embed such technology into the everyday experiences of students and teachers. Thus, the challenge is how to take advantage of and exploit effectively this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attain the objectives of English Language education in Algeria and to aim for international standards of excellence: to cope with literacy and information demands, to handle information carefully and critically, and to participate in knowledge creation.

Of society's institutions, universities are among the most permeable to the influence of the English-dominated education technology. The Algerian university has regional and international as a declared goal in its policies. That networking takes different forms, with a number of graduate students and lecturers gaining their degrees or continuing their professional development in the U.S.A, or keeping scientific and academic links with British and American educational and cultural institutions. The importance of such networking stems from the awareness that much of modern science and knowledge is accessible largely through English. Researchers in any domain and students of

engineering, medicine, management, computing, and information have all a high stake in learning and using English if they ever wish to have access to and take part in international networking.

It is perhaps this reason which has made EFL learning very popular in the current Algerian educational context. Not only has the number of newly opened English Departments increased significantly (more than 10 departments compared with 4 over a decade ago), but English is taught as a subject of study (module) across all university curricula and given due importance in the formal evaluation of students. What is more, there seems to be a *boom* in the EFL teaching field with a growing number of private language schools, offering English courses at different levels and a rising demand for manuals and books in language skills, computer sciences, and technology, albeit at very high prices. What is most striking is that the demand for English language courses comes from a wide range of socio-professional and age groups for men and women alike—bank accountants, managers, medical doctors, social workers, security forces, engineers, unemployed graduates in addition to students and teachers.⁴ It may be fair to say that English is currently enjoying an unprecedented pride of place and a great growth activity in Algeria, as in the rest of the world.

1.4.2.2 Economic Objectives

The introduction of English education is closely linked with economic opportunity, development, and globalisation; it aims at generating greater opportunities for realising economic potential and setting up beneficial partnership. The main economic functions conferred on English can be listed as follows:

- to play a significant role in economic development ;
- to ensure effective communication with foreign partners as a tool for participation and partnership ;
- to contribute to knowledge economy and its role as a factor of economic growth ;

- to better prepare future negotiators and business managers and help them become effective economic actors ;
- to help Algeria diversify its economic and business relations and generate further economic opportunities ; and
- to ensure access to scientific, technological, and research information.

These objectives are necessary for Algeria to gain a decent place in an increasingly complex and reckless globalisation whose rules are fierce competition, tight negotiations, and innumerable economic and business contacts. As the unquestionable world's language, English will by all means contribute to the integration of Algeria in the world economy and enhance economic opportunities with a variety of partners. In fact, such is the importance of English that leading strategic national companies have set up their own language courses (i.e., workplace-oriented programmes) to enable their managerial staff and employees to communicate and interact effectively in multilingual workplaces. As an illustration, Sonatrach (the Algerian State Oil Company), by virtue of multiple contracts with English-speaking oil firms, has had regular work-oriented courses for a number of years. In like manner, the Algerian Institute of Petroleum (IAP) uses English as the medium of instruction to equip future engineers and technicians with a solid background in technical English and an effective communicative ability.

1.4.2.3 Cultural Objectives

In accordance with the general educational and economic objectives, English education tries to cater for the cultural needs of the Algerian learners by allowing them to enjoy greater opportunities for realising human potential, individually and collectively. New opportunities can only be offered or created as individuals communicate with other people, accept differences, and participate in international networking, cross-cultural dialogue and activities.

The focus on the 'target culture' is being increasingly supplemented or replaced by a focus on a range of cultures and an emphasis on cross-cultural understanding. The ability to negotiate meaning with other second-language speakers

and an awareness of a range of cultural norms are now essential requirements for the English language learner (Wilson, 2001b: 7).

Such a participatory process starts and grows with outward-looking, open-minded individuals, eager to learn and develop as world citizens. This is why, a major objective of English education ought to be *cultural awareness* (Kramsch and Stempelsky, 1993) and *cross-cultural understanding* (Bencherif, 1998) with the purpose of encouraging interaction with and empathy towards other people's culture without fear of misunderstanding, or *cultural shock*. More importantly, cultural understanding will likely lessen potential tensions and refine generalisations and stereotypes.

In summary, it may be fair to argue that English, as other foreign languages, is an important factor of development. This importance will keep growing by virtue of the emerging computational and communication technologies. As such, government officials, policy makers, education institutions, and major companies will have to perform a substantial review of the delivery and support of learning to ensure maximum impact on development. To be truly a factor of growth, the following suggestions on English education should be taken into consideration:

- developing knowledge economy strategies through education technology,
- setting up an industry/university collaborative approach to language education and learning by developing workplace-oriented programmes,
- keeping abreast of worldwide trends in the e-learning market and education technology to enhance the teaching and learning of English,
- encouraging the use of English via global communications (internet) in education institutions and vocational schools at all levels, and
- developing adequate language training programmes to better prepare teachers and learners for changing workplaces).

To end this first part of Chapter One, Diagram 1.6 below offers a summary of the systemic description of foreign language education in Algeria and the most influential contextual constraints.

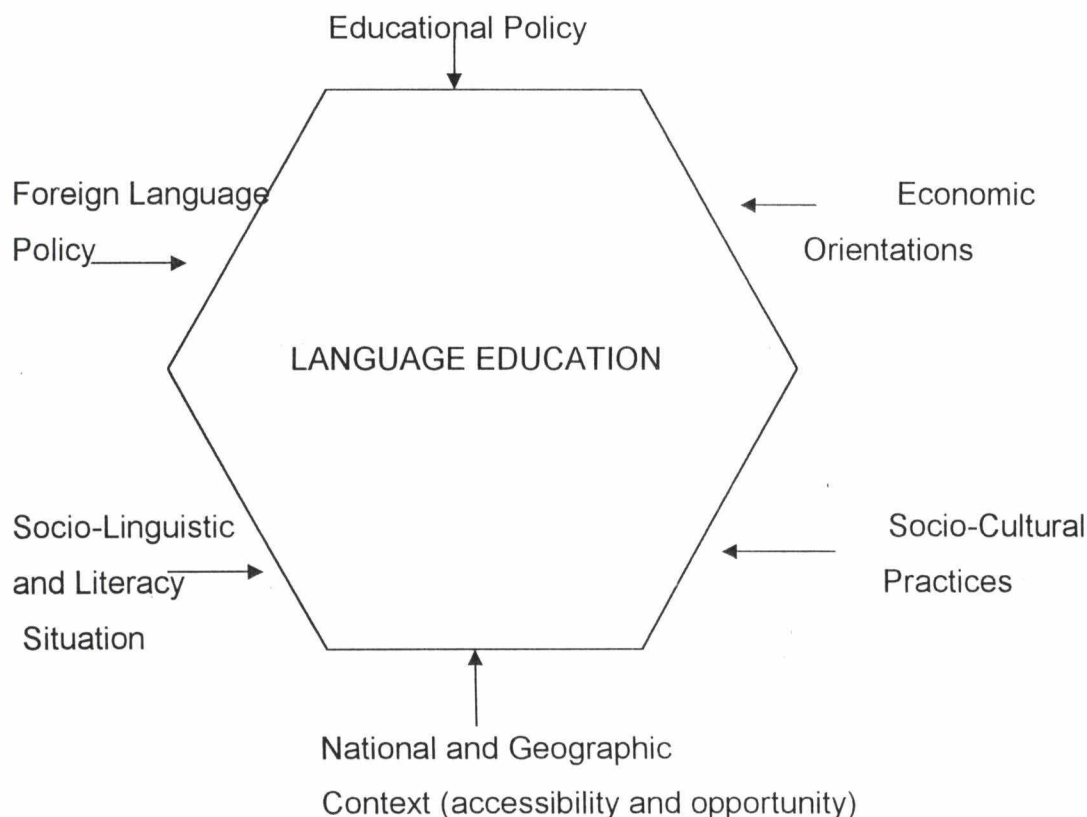


Diagram 1.6 System Description and Situation Analysis Summary

1.5 Action Research Methodology : Reflective Conceptual Framework and Triangulation Analytical Tools

The present *classroom action research*⁵ is part of a *reflective* conceptual framework, which includes also a set of related significant trends in foreign language education: *learner independence*, *teacher development*, *own curriculum* and *material development*, and *education technology* (Maley1991). This conceptual framework is envisaged as conferring two important benefits. Firstly, it encourages the teacher-researcher (i.e., practitioner) to reflect on his practice, and therefore leads to potential change. It plays an important part in reflective teaching, where personal and professional development occur when a teacher reviews his experience and teaching processes in a systematic way

(Wallace, 1991; Richards and Lockhart, 1996, Wilson, 2001b)). It is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken in a specific educational setting in order to improve the rationality of classroom educational practices and bring about desirable change.

**The conducting of action research as a means of critical reflection on teaching and on the socio-political context in which teachers find themselves has the potential to be a major component in the continuing struggle to improve language teaching
(Grook, 1993:8)**

In order to ensure empirical verification and measured evaluation, the research paradigm makes use of multiple sources of data for triangulation. The use of at least three distinct but complementary analytical tools is likely to correct biases and help develop theoretical constructs (i.e., variables specific to writing knowledge and performance) during this teacher-led small-scale investigation. In effect, both qualitative (interpretive) and quantitative (experimental) procedures can result in meaningful (and not merely statistical) research findings, highlighting the existing contextual constraints and the learners' writing and thinking needs. Improved validity will, by all means, make the study more useful and potentially applicable.

1.5.1 Qualitative Research

The qualitative research is composed of the following procedures : three questionnaires (learners, Secondary-School level teachers, and University-Level teachers), semi-structured interviews with small groups of learners, pre-assessment of the subjects' entrant skills in writing, and teacher's classroom observation diary. The learners' questionnaire is used to examine the entrants' affective orientations, language proficiency, perceived needs and lacks, degree of metacognitive awareness, and own opinion for improving their writing performance and thinking skills ; the second questionnaire investigates the 3AS teachers' views on the official syllabus objectives, classroom practices, textbook usefulness, and the preparation of learners to cope with university studies ; the third questionnaire looks at the Department teachers' attitudes towards and assumptions on the entrants' language proficiency, thinking skills,

and literacy (reading-writing) performance. It is expected that the three questionnaires will clearly illuminate the host of factors that interfere and somehow shape the learners' language and writing development.

The semi-structured interviews are employed to determine the extent of the informants' critical reflection on their learning experience, writing development, and metacognitive awareness. They are useful in allowing a better understanding of the learners' evolving needs and expectations. In a similar way, the classroom observation diary helps record the informants' interaction, types of collaboration, employment of specific strategies in task completion, comments on, and reaction towards the writing texts and tasks. Finally, the pre-assessment test tries to pinpoint statistically the writing performance of the research population in completing two written tasks at the beginning of the course. It evaluates the occurrence of discourse-based micro-skills and processing strategies (lexical cohesion, syntactic complexity, rhetorical development, paragraphing, textual patterns, planning, drafting, and revising).

1.5.2 Quantitative Research

Because action research in foreign language learning is deeply embedded in empirical verification and critical reflection, quantitative evidence is usually expected. Therefore, the present investigation makes use of three main quantitative procedures: textual analysis of authentic texts, critical-discourse-awareness instruction, and textual analysis of the subjects' written texts (50) using both macro-level and micro-level data analysis and interpretation.

The textual analysis of text types and genres is carried out in Chapter Two, firstly, to describe and quantify the textual rules, discourse conventions, and thinking processes that are conducive to text creation, and, secondly, to make an inventory of the most pedagogically relevant constructs in terms of writing resources (both micro-skills and strategies). The aim of the descriptive paradigm is therefore to systematically explore authentic samples of written discourse to see how they are structured at different levels (lexico-grammatical, textual, and rhetorical), and in ways that can translate findings into concrete

In this regard, teacher education needs to support teachers through this fundamental shift from teaching formal knowledge to fostering students' awareness of the learning process and making them active, autonomous, and responsible. It is hoped that the proposed research framework and methodology will be useful in providing the critical, conceptual, empirical, and interpretive constructs that are required to develop relevant and useful curriculum for the foreign language class. Similarly, the research insights and findings on learners' needs, difficulties, and achievements can be translated into planning tools to be used for promoting learner development. The success to improve the learning/teaching situation and solve the most pressing pedagogical problems depends, therefore, on careful reflection and teacher-led research. This has to do not only with the improvement of the students' performance in the foreign language, but also with the teacher-researcher's own professional development and involvement. As a change agent, the teacher needs to develop contextually-appropriate models of curriculum innovation and empirically-based tasks for understanding how best to translate intentions into practice, thus revealing an affiliation towards a reflective approach to foreign language education.

Notes to Chapter One

- ¹ The latest evidence that Algerian schools have been somehow failing a large number of their pupils came with the release of the 1996 UNESCO Report on Education and Literacy in the Arab World. According to its estimates, 45% of the Algerian population is illiterate (the second highest rate after Egypt (48%) whose population far outnumbers that of Algeria) and a large number of graduates are functionally illiterate, unable to perform simple literacy tasks like filling an airport form, a postal cheque, or writing a short application letter without making so many linguistic and rhetorical mistakes.
- ² In the Tlemcen region, English as a First Language has been experimental from 1993/4 in five primary schools: Abou Techfine, Imama, Hennaya, Nedroma, and Bab El Assa. Unfortunately, and despite encouraging results, the experiment is due to end in the session 2000/01.
- ³ According to Littlewood (1991:20), 'these three kinds of curriculum have been characterised in "ideal terms" and, in practice, we are likely to come across various kinds of blend': structural, functional, and experiential.
- ⁴ *Fossilisation* is referred to as *pidginisation*, or what is generally known in error analysis as *interlanguage* (Corder, 1973) is the result of persisting social and psychological distance between the learner and the foreign language (Hamers and Blanc, 1989:235).
- ⁵ The present teacher-researcher has been teaching adult learners of different socio-professional groups for a number of years at the University of Continuing Training. (Open University)
- ⁶ The idea of *action research*, originally *teacher-led research*, developed in secondary education in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The term 'action research' was adopted to describe a small-scale investigation undertaken by a class teacher. Kemmis (1983) describes it as a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social and educational practices, their understanding of those practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out.

CHAPTER TWO

CRITICAL REFLECTION: DISCOURSE AWARENESS AND WRITING PERFORMANCE

- 2.1 Introduction**
- 2.2 Writing System and Linguistic Knowledge**
- 2.3 Syntactic Knowledge**
- 2.4 Discourse Knowledge**
- 2.5 Spoken and Written Discourse**
- 2.6 Micro-Level Textuality : Cohesion**
- 2.7 Macro-Level Textuality : Coherence**
- 2.8 Writing Styles and Registers**
- 2.9 Discourse and Culture**
- 2.10 Composing Knowledge**
- 2.11 Conclusion**

CHAPTER TWO

Critical Reflection: Discourse Awareness and Writing Performance

2.1 Introduction

The major premise of Chapter Two is to consider *effective writing performance as a result of critical reflection and discourse awareness*—that is language that has been produced as an act of communication between a writer and a reader, processed by critical reflection and mediated through a text with a specific purpose; hence, *critical discourse awareness*. The chapter will attempt primarily to provide a systematic answer, based on a thorough literature survey, to a fundamental question: What do we mean by *writing and discourse*? The answer to it will help to illuminate the manifold complexities involved in creating purposeful written texts and becoming successful writers. In order to move the discussion forward, two related questions will be discussed: 'Why should writing pose so many difficulties to EFL learners?' and 'What exactly are those difficulties?'. These are clearly not linguistic in any straightforward sense since they are not solved by the acquisition of *linguistic competence*¹ as decades of intensive linguistic-based writing instruction have demonstrated. There is no doubt that other types of complexity and strict demands come into play and call for due consideration, namely, *critical reflection, language and discourse awareness, and composing strategies*.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to look anew at writing by discussing theoretical models, current research and classroom practices that take into account the true nature of texts. In fact, the more one can learn about how authentic texts are created and how the process of creating them is accomplished at various levels (from the smallest graphic and lexical units to

the largest textual patterns), the more one is able to make informed choices when it comes to creating relevant teaching material and introducing useful tasks and texts. Even though no coherent theory or approach has yet emerged to guide this area of research in all its aspects, there are serious attempts to put forward a comprehensive framework for the analysis of authentic texts and the description of text creation. In fact, the analytical tools and concepts needed for investigation are already available as a result of research in the evolving fields of discourse analysis (specifically, written discourse analysis or text linguistics), writing pedagogy, educational linguistics, rhetoric and schema research theory (also called cognitive psychology).

Research in these closely related disciplines has yielded invaluable insights into how writers belonging to a particular discourse community communicate the way they do, what strategies and linguistic forms and discourse conventions they use to express their intents and achieve their own goals as well as mutually desirable goals. It has highlighted the fact that at the heart of *effective writing*² lies the ability to bring together in a successful fusion content and form to fit a specific context—that is ensuring that the writing is under control of a purpose whereby an intended meaning is successfully conveyed to an intended reader. In other words, writing, as a purposeful and contextualised communicative interaction, involving both the construction and transmission of content, depends on the writer's awareness and application of complementary types of knowledge: lexico-grammatical, discourse, composing and content.

Accordingly, what is needed in this Chapter is to carry out a careful and systematic appraisal and discussion of such insights and concepts to bring them into line with the classroom research action objectives—that is to transform them into informed implications and relevant applications in the form of developmental activities, discourse awareness strategies and writing tasks that exploit the teaching/learning potential of a wide range of genres, text types and rhetorical modes of organisation. In so doing, it may be possible to reduce the gap between what tends to be traditionally presented as classroom experience of EFL writing (essentially, essay-writing orientated towards formal

examinations) and the actual use of writing as *performance*₃ (to do things with texts) outside the classroom.

2. 2 Writing System and Linguistic Knowledge

Written language generally demands an accurate writing system and lexico-grammatical knowledge with regard to graphics, mechanics, lexis, and syntax. Such knowledge allows the writer to put together the interrelated pieces of the text and choose correct language forms. That is to say, the writer needs the skills of selecting appropriate vocabulary, using linguistic cohesive devices, punctuating meaningfully, constructing sentences and organising them into a well-structured text. This important aspect of writing can be usefully called *crafting* (Hedge, 1988:89). It lays emphasis on the linguistic features that a piece of writing has and the degree to which the language user has mastered the linguistic code (vocabulary, grammar, spelling and texture).

2.2.1 Writing System: Graphic Knowledge

The writing system makes use of a wide range of graphic conventions: spelling, punctuation and spatial organisation. Although these conventions are not, strictly speaking, the text itself, they help convey the desired meaning and information. Being minimum requirements, they ensure that communication is efficient. Hence, '*good writing implies a knowledge of the conventions of the written code*' (Rivers and Temperley, 1978:264) as well as '*the ability to use them*' (Heaton, 1985:138). Poor spelling can promote ambiguity and create a bad impression, while inaccurate punctuation can affect meaning and distort communication. It matters therefore that the writer should master both spelling and punctuation (i.e., writing mechanics).

2.2.1.1 Spelling

Spelling is a conscious, deliberate process which requires awareness of linguistic structure of words with a good visual memory. It is a conventional representation of a sound, regulated by certain phonetic rules. The essential identity of words is conveyed by the correct selection and sequence of *graphemes* (letters). The need for making room for an obligatory phonological

stretches of written language to be read in a coherent way by separating successive units (e.g., sentences by full stops, or a series of items by commas). Second, it specifies language function (e.g., the use of apostrophe for genitive case or question mark for a question). Despite certain variation, rules of punctuation are conventionally laid down and expected to be used consistently.

The functions of punctuation can be divided into three main ones: boundary-marking, status marking, and relation markers (Halliday, 1989:33-34). The first, boundary-marking, serves to separate units of grammar (sentences, clauses, phrases, words) from each other. The grammar of every language is organised through a small hierarchy of units of different size: in English, sentences, clauses, phrases, words, and morphemes. The writing system makes use of full stops (.) to mark off stronger boundaries (sentences), and colon, semi-colon and the comma to mark off weaker boundaries (words, phrases and clauses); the colon has a *cataphoric* (forward-referring) implication.

The second function, status marking, indicates the speech functions of sentences—statement, question, exclamation or quotation. The full stop identifies a statement, the question mark a question, and the exclamation mark a number of speech functions including commands, suggestions, offers, exclamations, calls and greetings. These last functions are not actually exchanges of information but offer expression of opinion or establishment of social contact (*What a mess!*). The quotation mark serves to ascribe some part of the text to someone other than the writer: either a quotation (for example, something said by a character in a narrative) or a citation (for example, a word or phrase cited as an example in an academic text, or a highlighted word such as a technical term in a scientific text). It is signalled either by single or double quotation marks.

The third, relation markers, sets up a close link between units of a sentence. This includes the hyphen which indicates a compound word or a word consisting of two morphemes; the dash, which signals that the following element is to be taken in apposition with the preceding one; parentheses, which add minor elements to the sentence; the apostrophe, which points to a

possessive case or indicates an informal variant through omission of a letter (*I won't go.*). The hierarchical organisation of units can be classified as follows:

- the individual letters within a word;
- the parts of a word independent enough to be separated by a hyphen;
- the individual words separated by a space;
- the dependent units in sentence structure (usually phrases or clauses) separated by a comma;
- the non-parenthetic appositive units separated by a colon;
- the independent units (usually clauses) separated by a semi-colon;
- the sentences separated by a full stop and a following capital; and
- the paragraphs separated by switching to a new line of writing, often intended.

(Quirk and Greenbaum 1996:458)

From a functional perspective, the three main functions of punctuation in English as a writing system can be tabulated as follows:

Function	General Unit	Specific Unit		Name	Mark
Boundary Markers	Grammatical Units	Word		Space	#
		Phrase		Comma	
		clause	Closing	Semicolon	; S ;
			Opening	Colon	:
		sentence		Full stop	.
Status Markers	Speech function	exchange	Statement Question	Full stop Question Mark	. ?
		Other functions	Command, Offer, suggestion, call exclamation, greeting	exclamation mark	!
	Projection	Quotation, Citation	First order; or meaning	Single quote	' '
			Second order;	Double quote	" "
	Any unit	apposition		Dash	—
Relation markers		digression		Parenthesis	()
	Compound word	linkage		Hyphen	-
	Possessive, negative	omission		Apostrophe	'

Table 2-1. Functions of Punctuation in the English Writing System (Adapted from a functional description by Halliday 1989:35)

Learners need to develop an awareness of the conventions of writing as a system: spelling, capitalisation and punctuation. The adherence to such conventions gives a clue as to how much the writer cares about what he or she has written. Unattractive writing, where care has not been taken with mechanics, suggests that the writer does not care whether or not his message is received or whether or not the reader finds the decoding of that message a pleasant or a less than pleasant experience. In other words, the writer does not consider writing as an act of involvement which counts. As Winch and Wells (1995:81) explain:

Neatness and accuracy in writing have an aesthetic value which discloses the extent to which the writer values writing and values the reader.

Learners really need to learn the graphic system and be able to spell and punctuate according to the conventions of the language if they want their texts to be comprehensible and acceptable to the reader. Moreover, a control over the mechanics of writing enables them to focus on other equally important aspects of text structure.

2.2.2 Lexical Knowledge

Lexical knowledge refers to the writer's mental storehouse of information about words and their use to fit the meaning and the message of the text for writing is primarily conveying meaning and sending a message by selecting relevant lexical items and putting them in a written form⁴. Lexical items function as units of meaning signalling and unifying the text. As such, vocabulary is undoubtedly the largest single element in tackling a foreign language for learners. The lack of an adequate amount of words is consonant with a major aspect of difficulty that learners are bound to face in learning to write. In fact, even granted the availability of a satisfactory size of words, as should be the case at the university level, the problem remains in using them to build a meaningful text. Successful writers take full advantage of the richness and variety of vocabulary to build up meaning upon meaning in such a way to form a clear *lexical cohesion* conducive to the overall meaning of the text.

The challenge is therefore to bring the discourse dimension into vocabulary teaching alongside traditional instruction in word formation and word choice— learning simple words, compound words, core and non-core words, complex words (idioms, phrasal verbs) and their meanings. These words are the smallest meaningful units in a language, but, for the most part, writers communicate in sentences and texts, which also have meaning. The meaning of a sentence or text depends on both the meaning of its words and how these words are structurally and textually combined (i.e., lexical cohesion). Therefore, we will look at research into vocabulary in extended texts in writing and consider useful implications to give a discourse orientation to vocabulary

teaching by improving the learners' text-creating abilities and providing them with more varied contexts for using and practising vocabulary in a whole text. To do so, we will first enumerate the different types of lexical items and meanings and then discuss the specific relationships between vocabulary choice, context (in the sense of the situation in which the discourse is produced) and co-text (the actual text surrounding any given lexical item) which together determine the lexical cohesion of a text.

2.2.2.1 Categories of Lexis

The intimate relation of text creation to vocabulary can be clearly seen in the useful distinction drawn between a word being *core*, *subject core* and *non-core* (Carter, 1988: 171-172). There is a level of vocabulary which is core as far as the organisation of the lexicon as a whole is concerned, and another level which is core to a particular field of study (e.g., linguistic metalanguage). Subject-specific vocabulary is associated with a specialised topic and is not neutral. Core vocabulary is neutral in the sense that it neither indicates degrees of formality nor signals a field of discourse. Learning and use of vocabulary involves more deployment of non-core vocabulary as the writing is expressive of the subject. Therefore, in terms of text creation, using only neutral vocabulary will significantly limit expressivity as well as affect the text lexical cohesion (text-appropriate lexis). A balance should then obtain between neutrality and expressivity in writing—that is, between writing appropriate to a specific subject and writing which expressive of the writer as an individual. As an illustration, vocabulary choice depends on awareness of the scale of formality that holds between words belonging to the same family of meaning so as to signal the expected type of writer/reader relationship: formal, neutral or intimate. Consider the following lexical items:

Formal	Neutral	Informal
Offspring	children	kids
Abode/residence	house	home
Alcohol	drink	booze

Moreover, core words tend to occur far more frequently in a wide variety of contexts than do non-core words. For instance, in a lexical set which includes

the words *offspring*, *children* and *kids*, the word *children* is the most frequently used word as it could be used to define all the other words in the set but the opposite is not the case. In like manner, *fat* could be used to clarify the other in the set; it forms an immediate antonymy with *thin* while the antonym with *pudgy* is less obvious. *Obese* is clinical and conveys a medical diagnostic. *Fat* could also be used metaphorically (e.g., a fat chance) as well as in different classes with distinct meanings (e.g., to flatten, a flat tyre or fat for frying).

On the other hand, subject-core vocabulary tends to be used in formal contexts (e.g., examination essays), narrowing the frame of reference for the learner and specifying the genre of writing. Terms like *explicitness*, *experimentation*, *abstraction*, *contextualisation* and *exhaustiveness* are likely to occur across a narrow and well-specified text types having to do with scientific disciplines such as linguistics. Widdowson (1983:92) refers to this type of vocabulary as 'schematically bound words', while Halliday (1985:38-39) employs the concept 'closed registers' to indicate the 'configuration of meanings that are typically associated with a particular situation.'

2.2.2.2 Lexical Patterning: Discourse-Organising Vocabulary

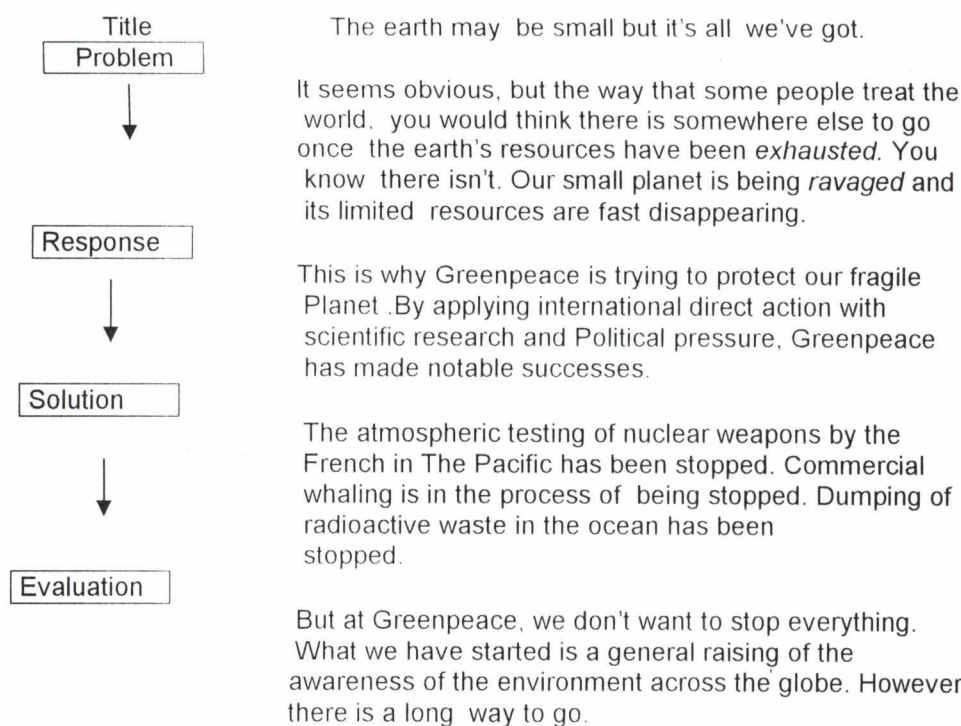
Traditionally, a distinction is made between lexical items and grammatical items. Lexical items are often called 'content words' (or open sets of lexical items). Technically, they are items (i.e., constituents of variable length) rather than words in the usual sense, because they may consist of more than one word: for example, carry out, come up, stave off and other phrasal verbs all function as single lexical items. They are *lexical* because they function as open lexical sets and belong to the major categories of parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs). Grammatical items form a closed system, i.e., the sets of items are closed off and include limited units such as articles, prepositions, conjunctions and pronouns. When describing a house, a writer can make use of an indefinite number of open lexical items (room, hall, house, entrance, gate, door, ceiling, floor, window, roof, wall, etc.); however, he/she can only use a closed set of grammatical items belonging to the category of pronouns (I, me, my, mine, he, she, his, her, ours, us, it the like).

There are, however, a number of words in the vocabulary that seem to share the qualities of both the closed system and open sets. They function as signalling words in a text and can identify the structure of the text, e.g., 'This *research* is going to be discussed and the *outcome* published'. Both words (research and outcome) do a lot of lexical work but one has to seek elsewhere in the text to lexicalise them fully—that is, to find out what the research is and subsequently what the *outcome* is. By operating predictively and retrospectively, such words form a lexical patterning which significantly contributes to the *cohesion* of the text; hence, the appropriate label, discourse-organising vocabulary (Carter, 1991:75). They build up expectations as regards the development of the discourse and improve textual cohesion and organisation. It is convenient therefore to identify words that often occur in the environment of the elements of specific text patterns like problem-solutions and make them available to students:

Text pattern

Problem	concern, difficulty, dilemma, drawback, crisis, , obstacle, problem
Response	change, combat, come up with, develop, find, measure, respond, cope with
Solution	answer, consequence, effect, outcome, solution, resolve, agree, consensus
Evaluation	effective, efficient, manage, overcome, succeed, viable, work, appropriate

Discourse organisers often contribute to our awareness that a problem-solution pattern is being realised. Here is an example



(Greenpeace advertisement, Newsweek, 1996; Author's classroom writing material)

The text writer chooses to develop the topic of earth protection as a problem-solution discourse pattern, i.e., presentation of the problem followed by response, a solution and an evaluation of the solution. This is explicitly signalled by the underlined discourse-organising vocabulary. The work of such words helps to build up expectations concerning the development of the whole discourse by signalling the writer's intent and guiding the reader to decode the whole text as closely as possible to that intent. That is why, developing lists of discourse-organising vocabulary will certainly assist both the teacher and learner build up an awareness of lexical patterning (e.g., the use of anaphoric nouns like *abstraction*, *analysis*, *approach*, *assumption*, *attitude*, *belief*, *theory*, *vision*, *view*).

In text construction, these words are used both predictively and retrospectively: if a discourse organiser does not already have its lexicalisation in the earlier part of the text we expect it to come later. Learners frequently have to tackle quite daunting examples of such lexical items in some lessons, especially in linguistics. Most of these terms, found in argumentation and expository texts, are in origin Graeco-Latin, which tends to present learners,

whose L1 (Arabic) is linguistically quite distant, with enormous difficulties even after the first university year. Accordingly, learners can be brought to an awareness of the discourse function of vocabulary by regularly examining textually-based lexicon—that is, vocabulary that regularly occurs in similar textual patterns.

2.2.2.3 Modality

A class of words which also contributes to the discourse patterning of a text is that of *modality*. The study of vocabulary in naturally occurring discourses finds out the all-pervasiveness of modality in written language. Modality is traditionally studied and taught as part of the closed class of modal verbs (must, can, may, could, will, should, etc.) and treated as grammatical units, but a large number of lexical words (nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs) convey similar meanings as the modal verbs. In addition, to *epistemic* modality (concerned with degrees of certainty and possibility), to the *root* modalities (volition, permission, obligation), other types of vocabulary expresses modality (e.g., appear, assume, doubt, guess, look as if, suggest, think, actually, certainly, inevitably, obviously, possibly).

The importance of these words lies in their discourse function as information-conveyor about the writer's attitude and view towards the text message; they convey attitudes such as assertion, tentativeness, commitment, detachment and the like. Work in discourse analysis (Halliday 1978; Halliday and Hasan 1985 ; Carter 1988, 1991; Hoey 1991) has demonstrated that modality is fundamental in the creation of discourse; all effective writers choose some degree of modality, even if it is only to make a neutral choice. That is why, learners need to be aware of the discourse potential of the larger vocabulary of modal lexical items and how they help carry particular *interpersonal meaning* and message rather than being simply grammatical items.

2.2.2.4 Lexical Cohesion: Sense Relations and Sentence Meaning

Related lexical items across clauses and sentence boundaries in written text are a major characteristic of coherent discourse. This relation of vocabulary

in texts is referred to as *lexical cohesion* (Halliday and Hassan 1976; Halliday and Hasan 1985; Halliday 1989). The term *lexical cohesion* specifically refers to the reiteration and collocation of lexical items in a text:

[The] exact repetition of words and the role played by certain basic semantic relations between words in creating 'textuality', that property of text which distinguishes it from a random sequence of unconnected sentences.

(McCarthy, 1991:65)

Reiteration means either restating an item in a later part of discourse by direct repetition or else reasserting its meaning by exploiting lexical relationships that exist between words: for example, *rose* and *flower* are related by hyponymy; *rose* is a hyponym of *flower*. *Picture* and *drawing* are related by synonymy. Repetition of words is rarely found, and considerable variation is very often found from sentence to sentence in writing. Such variation can add new dimensions and nuances to meaning, and serves to build up an increasingly complex context, since every new word, even if it is essentially repeating or paraphrasing the meaning of an earlier word, brings with it its own connotation. In the case of reiteration by a super ordinate head word (e.g. *furniture*—*chair*, *sofa*, *bookcase*, *desk*, *tables*, *curtains*), there is often a summarising function in the choice of words, bringing various elements of the text together under one, more general term. In this regard, writers make conscious choices whether to repeat, or find a synonym, or a super ordinate.

Learning to observe and use lexical links in a text seems therefore to be both important and useful for language learners for different reasons. For one thing, it encourages them to group lexical items together according to particular contexts by looking at the lexical relations in any text. It also fits nicely with composing strategies, especially, brainstorming and note-making, when writing about a particular topic. An awareness of learning synonyms and hyponyms for

text creating purposes may significantly help learners to come to terms with lexical patterning in a text. To do so, they need to learn the different sense relations that characterise lexical relations in authentic texts in English.

Eveline

She stood among the saying crowd in the station at the North Wall. He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again. The station was full of soldiers with brown baggage. Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat, lying beside the quay wall, with illuminated potholes. She answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold and, out of a maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty. The boat blew a long mournful whistle in the mist. If she went, to-morrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres. Their passage has been booked. Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer.

(James Joyce, *Dubliners*, 1914/1996:42, Penguin Classics); Author's classroom material

(1) Sense Relations

Sense refers to the way words are related to each other within the framework of a text (Crystal, 1987:102). There are several types of sense relations between lexical items. Some result from the way lexical items occur in sequences (syntagmatic relationships); others from the way in which they can substitute for each other (paradigmatic relationships). Perhaps the most detailed analysis of sense relations in English semantics is that carried out by Lyons (1977:270). Table 2 summarises the main types of cohesive sense relations.

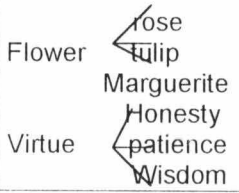
Types	Definitions	Examples	Comments
Synonymy	the relationship between two lexical items sharing the same sense	world / universe / begin commence fall/autumn picture/ drawing	Linguists point out to the fact that there are no real synonyms: not two words have completely the same meaning.
Antonymy	The meaning of a lexical item is the opposite of another in one of the following ways : binary, converses, gradable.	Binary: dead/alive Converses: Parent/child Own/belong to Gradable: tall/short Clever/stupid	The term antonym is generally used to refer to the relationship between items in many-membered sets such as the names of the days of the week.
Hyponymy	A lexical item is included as part of another head word, i.e., the meaning of one word is included in that of another	Flower  Virtue	Hyponymy is a very important aspect of lexical cohesion since it is frequently used in reiteration, allowing the writer to avoid repeating the same words.
Polysemy	A case of polysemy is one word having several very closely related senses. There is a core word with all the other meanings deriving from it.	<i>System</i> (group of things working together as a whole): -person's or animal's body;-set of ideas; -orderly way of doing things; -the system: the traditional practices and rules existing in a society or an institution; -system (idiom) get something out of one's system;-system analysis: analysis of all the steps in an operation in order to decide how to perform it efficiently (Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopaedia, 1988, 1992: (25-26).	In practice, it is difficult to draw a clear line between polysemy and another sense relation, homonymy (e.g., bark of a dog and of a tree). Polysemy is likely to be a major source of lexical difficulty for EFL learners. The majority of English words have more than one meaning. Any word that has such meanings is bound to cause lexical problems to learners. Misunderstanding may arise when apparently familiar words are used in specialised senses by writers. Learners need therefore to be aware (i.e., trained and alerted) to the existence of various meanings of a word and to be careful in meaning choice.
Homonymy	It refers to two different lexical items having the same shape (graphic and/or phonic)	Flour flower Lead lead Rest rest	Linguists differentiate between words having the same spelling: homographs (lead/lead) and words having the same pronunciation (flower/flour).

Table 2-2. A Summary of Sense Relations Relevant to Text Creation

(2) Sentence Meaning

Even though knowledge of individual lexical items and their sense relations is important, it is not sufficient to account for the whole meaning or what Leech (1974, 1986, 1990) calls the *communicative value* of words within a sentence. That is why, attention is equally devoted to the different aspects or layers of sentence meaning whose patterning contributes to the overall discourse, especially, collocation (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, 1985). Here are the most relevant aspects of sentence meaning to lexical cohesion.

Aspect	Meaning Conveyed	Example	Comment
Thematic	Thematic meaning is what is communicated by the way in which a writer organises the message, in terms of ordering and focus (units, lexical items and modality).	The police shot and killed twenty black youngsters. Twenty young black people died in a clash with the police. (The choice of passive or active voice conveys a different message.)	The choice between alternative lexical items and grammatical patterns conveys different meanings and confers a specific communicative value to the sentence (message)
Connotative	Connotation refers to the meaning of a sentence in relation to the assumptions with the real world (	It is a fox. He is a fox.	Conceptual Meaning (an animal); Connotative meaning (a hint of admiration for being cunning)
Collocative	Collocative meaning refers to the association that a word acquires in relation to other words that co-occur with it: one lexical item collocates with another in the same context.	He shivers with cold. He shivers with fear. Handsome man Beautiful woman	The selection of lexical items which frequently combine together is done for the purpose of lexical cohesion rather than communicative value. Every useful collocation is another step towards understanding the meaning of a word from context.
Social (affective)	The meaning of a sentence depends on the social context in which it occurs.	Would you please refrain from smoking? Stop smoking!	Each sentence conveys different attitudes (polite, rude, formal, etc.), depending on role-relationships.

Table 2-3. Aspects of Sentence Meaning (Based on Leech semantic description)

With regard to lexical knowledge and text creation, Rivers and Temperley (1978:202) translate the above sentence meanings into three major levels that learners need to extract and use: *lexical meaning* (the semantic implications of words and expressions), *structural or grammatical meaning*

(which is expressed at times by semantically empty function words, but also by interrelationships among words), and *socio-cultural meaning* (the evaluative dimension which English-speaking people give to words and groups of words because of their common experiences with language in their culture). They argue that while lexical and structural meanings could be partially handled with analysis of complex words (to label parts of speech correctly and to understand how words are produced by affixation and by combining two independent words), the socio-cultural meaning is most difficult to penetrate, let alone to use appropriately. Such meaning constitutes one of the thorniest lexical problems for EFL learners because it is derived from shared experiences, values and attitudes.

2.2.2.5 Lexical Extension : Meaning Transfer

Lexical extension refers to the transfer of meaning from literal to figurative by means of metaphor, idiomaticity, and polysemy. What is significant about such lexical extension is that it is not a special use of language but ^acharacteristic of most linguistic interaction, including writing (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). It is a very complex aspect of language system knowledge that is likely to pose enormous problems to language users in general, and EFL learners in particular. Studies in literary semantics (stylistics) and cognitive linguistics have revealed the complex task of understanding and using what constitutes figurativeness (Leech 1986; Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

(1) Metaphor

Metaphor, a typical case in point of figurativeness, is a form of comparison— that is, a word or phrase associated with a particular concept or object is applied to another. Such comparison aims at offering new insights and capturing the attention of an audience. As a result, metaphors are 'norms of communication, not an exception' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). In effect, they pervade all language use by virtue of their effectiveness as a means of expression, used equally by highly professional writers and ordinary users (even EFL learners enjoy using metaphors to express their ideas, albeit inappropriately due to L1 cultural interference). Effective writers use metaphors

to improve their text and help the reader grasp the picture they are describing. Consider the following creative metaphors: 'Anguish as a Second Language' (Ann Raimes 1983), 'Hope is the thing with feathers.' (Emily Dickinson), and 'The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave.' (Joseph Conrad).

In communication, these metaphors provide a creative means of expression and further explanation; yet to interpret them we need to know and understand the literal meaning and facts about the world. For instance, Raimes' witty metaphor comparing English learning to *anguish* captures a widely shared feeling—the complexity and anxiety of learning to write in a second language (times of sighing, pencil-chewing and intense thinking and composing); the reader is alerted right from the beginning of such a tedious task. According to Lakoff and Johnson (op.cit.), this type of metaphor is possible in language because it is present in the mind (i.e., cognitive in nature). To illustrate this point, they explain how the concept of *argument* is customarily employed in terms of *war* in English:

<i>Your claims are <u>indefensible</u>;</i>	<i><u>He attacked</u> every weak point in my argument;</i>
<i>I <u>demolished</u> his argument;</i>	<i>I've never <u>won</u> an argument with her.</i>

The cognitive metaphor (argument of war) is accomplished by transferring the war lexemes to the domain of argument. Such transfer signals the way language users cognise reality and reveals their ways of thinking, showing that metaphors are deeply rooted in the cultural of specific language users. Accordingly, metaphors tend to present culture-specific differences across languages. In all evidence, all languages are rich in metaphor (i.e., it is a universal linguistic phenomenon), but metaphors, what they stand for and how much they should be used in communication may be different across cultures.

With respect to writing, what is salient is that metaphors are not presented as casual occurrences but as part of a coherently structured metaphorical pattern. The metaphor functions as a kind of frame for the text. For instance, text titles are usually used as a frame to be developed throughout the whole text as is the case with the cognitive metaphor of *anguish* in Raimes' article on writing. The message would be incomprehensible to any reader who

is not able to activate the complexity metaphor and to understand its connection with the process of learning to write and create texts. This is an example of how necessary it is to understand culture-specific connotations with regard to other aspects in order to correctly interpret even simple everyday texts and, in turn, to write similar ones. The relevance of metaphors in language learning lies then in the contribution to the overall coherence of the text, presenting a single frame of reference (guiding the reader) and fostering target-culture awareness. By identifying different layers of meaning of a lexical item, the learner is building up an ability to look at the world in more or less the same way that native speakers do.

(2) Idioms

An idiom is a phrase whose meaning is difficult to recognise from the familiar meanings of the words it contains. It is a pattern to be learned as a whole, and not as the sum of its parts. Idioms have often a fixed form. For example:

As a matter of fact (in reality, to tell the truth) not as a matter of truth;

To make up one's mind (to decide); A change of heart (to change feelings)

Idioms are usually rather informal and include an element of personal comment on the situation. It is important to know that they are rarely used and only when they are worth learning and using. This is especially true for our learners who have a tendency of using extensively idioms, perhaps, to impress more than to inform the reader.

Thus, Lexical knowledge fills a gap in the writer's knowledge of the language. It is thus both a salient aspect and the basis of the writer's lexicogrammatical knowledge, which determines word choice to create an effect, to develop a topic, to communicate precise meanings and to convey an intended message. This selection involves an adequate amount of lexicon, core and non-core vocabulary, sense relationships, aspects of sentence meaning and a heightened awareness of how lexical items contribute to text patterning by means of discourse-organising words, lexical cohesion and lexical extension. In this light, the study of vocabulary in discourse focuses on the patterns in text generated by the vocabulary relations that are found over phrase, clause and

sentence boundaries, the role of certain words in organising discourses and signalling their structure, and the relationship between these features of textuality and the register of the end product.

Such an approach may help to come up with solutions to confront the task of building up lexical knowledge and an awareness of lexical cohesion, which constitute one of the biggest problems facing language learners. It certainly offers an alternative motivation for learners to study and collect items along discourse-functional lines, something which becomes more and more important as they embark on text creation, composition writing and argumentation in general. It also calls for teachers and material writers to pay greater attention to the insights offered by the study of natural authentic texts. Finally, if lexical knowledge is seen as having a significant impact on organising and communicating meanings within a text, what of knowledge of clauses and sentences? What role does syntactic knowledge play in text creation and discourse organisation? It is to this question that the following part will turn now.

2-3 Syntactic Knowledge

The present part attempts to make a link between grammar and discourse by dealing with aspects of syntactic knowledge such as sentence construction, syntactic maturity, semantic links between clauses and sentences in written discourse, pronoun, conjunction, given information (theme), new information (rheme), reference and anaphoric. The objective is to reiterate the fact that without a command of the rich and variable resources of the grammar offered by a language such as English, the construction of natural and purposeful discourse remains unattainable. Similarly, structuring the individual clause, the larger units of discourse and creating textual coherence are ultimately inseparable. By bearing in mind the contextualised uses of structures and grammatical items, we may be able to consider whether the teaching of writing needs to broaden its orientations to cover important areas at present still under-represented or simply ignored.

2.3.1 Grammar and Syntax

It may be helpful, at the outset, to clarify the terms *grammar* and *syntax*. In its broader sense, *grammar* refers to the general study of language structures. In its narrower sense, it is the second linguistic level, concerned with the identification of the recurrent language elements and the accurate description of all the possible patterns in a language. In formal linguistics, the terms used for the levels, or *strata*, of a language are phonology, grammar, and semantics. Grammar may be described as consisting of all the possible sentence patterns in a language and a system of rules governing the correct arrangement and relationship of elements (i.e., the arrangement of content and function words into phrases and clauses) in sentences. In this sense, grammar is the primary prerequisite for constructing texts '*which are correct and cohesive as a linguistic artefact*' (Widdowson, 1982).

The term *syntax* is used to refer to the way in which language elements are arranged to show relationships of meaning in a sentence. That is to say, it amounts to the actual construction of a sentence structure, in which most grammatical relationships are expressed. The realm of syntax is still the sentence and the word as grammatical units and the fundamental unit of organisation remains the clause. In this light, syntactic knowledge denotes the writer's ability to construct and analyse a variety of sentence structures and organise information so as to convey the intended meaning and message as well.

2.3.2 The Sentence

The *sentence* is generally considered as a distinct syntactic structure, able to stand on its own, arranged according to specific syntactic rules (viz. word order) and expressing a meaning. It is the largest unit to which syntactic rules apply and constitutes a significant border post, which is why writing systems are sensitive to it and mark it off. Graphically, then, a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (or some other mark of final punctuation), while syntactically it consists of a subject and predicate and typically occurs in the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) pattern with inversions in case of a question (Quirk and Greenbaum 1973, 1996). To be a sentence, a

word group must contain a subject and a predicate and must express a complete thought. In the following sentences, the predicate is written in bold and the subject underlined.

1) The student wrote an excellent paper.

2) Our teacher gave us an assignment.

The subject of the sentence is closely related to the topic or theme of the sentence (what is discussed), the predicate states or conveys information about the subject. Second, the subject determines concord (agreement), whether singular or plural.

3) The book is worth reading.

4) The books are worth reading.

Third, the predicate is a more complex unit, containing auxiliary and predication:

5) They should have worked hard.

6) They were talking aloud.

Grammatically, a sentence may be recognised as consisting of five units, called elements of sentence structure: subject, verb, complement, object and adverbial. Here are the main patterns of combination of the five units:

7)SVA The teacher is in the classroom. 8) SVC The mother is kind.

9)SVO Zidane scored the goal. 10)SVOA The librarian arranged the books on the shelf.

11)SVOC The Congress found President Clinton not guilty.

12)SVOO The very kind granny buys her nephews nice gifts. 13)SV The baby cried.

Sentence elements can be realised by different linguistic forms. The verb is always a verb phrase. This may be finite (showing tense, mood, aspect, and voice) or non-finite (not showing tense or mood but indicating aspect and voice).

7) He wanted to be a student of foreign languages.

8) Carefully thinking, planning and drafting, he wrote an outstanding thesis.

The subject of a sentence may be a clause but it is usually a noun phrase:

9) Booker Prize-winning author Ben Okri, 34, writes from a study above Trinity Street in Cambridge. (The Observer 1993:67)

10) The American ideal of free public schooling for every child led to a movement for free public libraries. (ETF broadsheet: Writing, Books and Libraries, 1994)

2.3.2.1 Sentence Structures

There are three types of sentence structures in English: simple, compound,, and complex. The simple sentence consists of one independent clause, functioning alone:

- 11) My room is the happiest one in our home (first-year student; author's data,1999)

Although very brief simple sentences are often effective in learning to construct texts, the other ways of structuring sentences (co-ordination and subordination) also help to express and develop complex ideas, especially, at an advanced level. In co-ordination, clauses are of equal grammatical status and linked by co-ordinators: *and, but, for, nor, or* and the semi-colon (;). Co-ordinators help ideas to flow smoothly in a paragraph by joining two complete thoughts together so that they both are equal in importance and strength.

- 12) My room is the happiest one in our home, and I love to spend time in it.

- 13) At my brother's wedding ceremony, I had nothing smart to wear, and this posed a serious problem all night. (First-year student; author's data, 1999).

In subordination, one clause functions as part of another (the main clause). There is a relationship in which one of the two clauses (ideas) is stressed more than the other. Grammatically, one is independent and the other dependent. Only the writer can decide which part of the sentence is less or more important. The elements that bring about the subordination in a complex sentence are called *subordinators*, e.g., *because, when, if, as, so, that, as long as, before* and the like. They express a set of meanings and signal clause relationship within a sentence: contrast, cause, condition, time sequence, place, and reason.

- 14) Time Young graduates will be able to find work as soon as the situation improves.
 15) Condition If a child lives with encouragement, he will learn confidence.
 16) Cause Teachers do their best because they feel a special sense of duty.
 17) Contrast Although football is sometimes dangerous, it can be very exciting.
 18) Relative Clause In order to work in Britain, the foreigner needs a work permit, which must be applied for by his future employer.
 19) Noun Cause What makes a successful society is education and discipline.
 (First-year students, author's data,1999)

Knowledge of such structures and the ability to weave a text by both simple and complex sentences, long and short ones, are referred to as *syntactic maturity* and lie at the heart of effective writing.

2.3.3 Syntactic Maturity

In order to develop ideas and express meaning within a text, a writer needs not only to know the basic structural principles of sentence construction, but he/she also needs to combine and expand them to create coherent stretches of discourse. This ability to manipulate syntax is called alternatively *syntactic maturity* (Hunt, 1965, 1970, 1977) in Witte (1982:171), *syntactic automation* (Widdowson, 1982), and *thematization* (Halliday, 1985b). Simply put, a writer should be able to shift, with a purpose and perspective, from the simple sentence to the compound and complex sentences by arranging elements of a clause. Such a shift makes it possible to express similar ideas in different forms and from various viewpoints, with conscious differentiation of meaning and function.

In addition to co-ordination and subordination, syntactic maturity manifests itself through patterns such as complex noun groups (NPs), increased nominalisation, reduction of clauses to participial and prepositional phrases and changes in the patterns of subordination. Tables 2.4 summarises the main aspects of syntactic maturity that should be taken into account when developing a writing curriculum.

Aspects	Clarification	Illustration
1. Complex Noun Phrase (NPs)	A noun group consisting of a head noun modified by adjectives or other words which may precede or follow it.	<i>Further information about any of the plans outlined in the portfolio is available from the 2001 Development Office.</i> (Professor Sir Graeme Davis, University of Glasgow, 1 May 1999)
2. Nominalisation	A complex NP made of the occurrence of two or more nominalisations (generally made up of verbs)	<i>That the internet will continue to grow in popularity is virtually beyond question.</i>
3. Prepositional and Participial Phrases	A group of words used to qualify nouns, placed before or after them; the problem with these phrases lies in deciding where to attach them.	For thousand years all books were written by hand, <i>painstakingly copied, illustrated, and richly devorated.</i> (Writing, Books, and Libraries, ETF)
4. Co-ordination	Co-ordination involves the linking of independent units (clauses); clausal co-ordination is achieved by <u>and</u> , <u>or</u> , <u>but</u> , or semi-colon.	Founded in 1895, the New York Public Library is the largest city public library in the United States, according to the number of volumes it contains <i>and</i> the number of branch libraries it includes. (ETF broadsheet)
5. Subordination	Subordination is a non-symmetrical relation, holding between two clauses in such a way that one is a constituent (i.e., dependent on). It serves to give one part of a sentence more stress than another. Only the writer can decide on the important sentence part.	This business of being out for a walk, coming across something of fascinating interest and then being dragged away from it by a yell from the master, like a dog jerked onwards by the leash, is an important feature of school life, <i>and</i> helps to build up the conviction, so strong in many children, <i>that</i> the <u>thing</u> you most want to do are always unattainable. (George Orwell, <i>Such, Were the Joys</i>)
6. Lexical Density	It refers to the addition of modification and elaboration of details by means of reduced clauses.	This will be a year of <i>celebrating the achievements of the past and looking forward to the challenges of the future.</i> (Sir Graeme Davis, University of Glasgow, 1 May 1999)

Table 2.4: Aspects of Syntactic Maturity

Accurate manipulation of such syntactic patterns adds to the expression of ideas (i.e., employing different forms) as well as works out the effect a writer is aiming at; in contrast, a lack of experience with, or unawareness of these forms may become a source of unnecessary complexity and, perhaps, inaccuracy and clumsiness. This is clearly shown in the following teachers' comments on their students' attempts to write long syntactic patterns:

20) Your expression is very often repetitive, loose and inept. Your sentences could often be shortened without loss of sense, with a gain in precision.

21) Your expression is sometimes extremely awkward because of long and overloaded sentences. The ideas you are trying to express are largely unclear.

(Author's data: 1999)

In fact, it seems that most students' attempts at using syntactic complexity to create a certain effect generally result in what Widdowson (1982) calls 'a different kind of *failure*' by burying the meaning and rendering the reader's task difficult. This means that some kind of failure may occur whenever there is an inaccurate use of syntax; it also means that rich syntactic elaboration, which weaves the texture of discourse, is not only a typical feature of the English text (Halliday, 1985) but it also distinguishes the written work of a professional craftsman from that of a novice or developing writer. X

In this light, Rivers and Temperley (1978) recommend that learners be sensitised to the risk of being unnecessary long when the ideas they are trying to convey are somewhat complex. Students who are trying to develop an ability to write complex and compound sentences may well make errors in their choices of connectives, relative pronouns, or in the order of clauses. To avoid such likely pitfalls, they are advised to divide a complex idea into a series of simple affirmative statements which represent the facets of its meaning. Then, they try to rebuild these statements into complex or compound sentences which obey the rules of combination and modification (this type of very useful textual practice will be incorporated in material development in Chapter 4). By working with syntactic structures, learners can gradually become better readers and writers, can better understand the syntactic aspects of much mature writing, and gain insight into writing style. In other words, syntactic maturity or automation is conducive to writing effectiveness (Widdowson 1984:42).

Research from the field of applied linguistics on syntactic maturity in the discourse of students and professional writers is, in this sense, very insightful in that the findings provide a theoretical basis for cohesion practice in sentence construction and combination. They lay emphasis on the assumption that (a) NES readers prefer a style that is full of subordination and free modifiers (phrases), and (b) writing sentences that are more syntactically complex encourages students to discover and demonstrate relationship between ideas (Reid, 1993:28). The ability to handle and use sentence subordination is expected to extend both syntactic maturity and enhance cognitive strategies of students, improve the sophistication of their sentence structures, and eventually lead them progressively towards a better writing performance.

2.3.4 Functional Syntactic Structures: Information Ordering

Ordering information in a sentence is relevant to the text as a message conveyor. That is to say, the sentence is *functional* as long as it fulfils a function in the overall communication process of the text. This requires the structuring of sentences in such a way that the information is so presented that its connection with the previous sentence and the precedent one is made clear. Moreover, the way sentences are organised influences the progression of the reader's thoughts and understanding by signalling what is important and orientating to what is to come. In written English, by having a special status assigned to one part of it, the sentence is organised as a message. There is regularly a notion from *given* (the point of departure of the clause) to *new* information (information which is being presented as newsworthy) (Fries, 1997:230). Writers have a tendency to associate the placement at the end of the clause with importance to make their written language flow naturally. Consider, for example, the following teacher's comment:

22) 'Your essay is full of vague and misconstructured sentences. I'm afraid that you won't be able to pass this module *until you learn how to express yourself clearly and accurately.*'

The subordinate clause at the end of the sentence receives the focal attention and clearly conveys the teacher's intended message, viz. success condition.

Within this functional syntactic framework, the sentence carries two types of information: given and new. Given information centres round elements that have appeared prior to a point in a text or that refer to things that are known to all with normal experience (Kopple, 1997:216). For instance, a descriptive text on a house might naturally begin with reference to common parts of houses: the floors, the curtains and the kitchen. All these references would be treated by readers as conveying given information. The new information will give details about the location, situation, and the writer's attitudes towards the house:

30) Booker Prize-winning author Ben Okri, 34, writes from a study room (given information) above Trinity Street in Cambridge ... (new). (The Observer, 1992)

New information is information that has not appeared to a particular point in a text or that does not refer to things and processes in the world that are known to all with common experience.

In English sentences, usually the portion bearing given information precedes the portion conveying new information. In addition, given information is conveyed in a weaker manner. Since given information tends to appear in an attenuated manner, many sentences in English move from a relatively short subject through a larger predicate. A sentence will be relatively easy to comprehend if its given information is easy to recognise:

23) Founded in 1895 (given), the New York Public Library is the largest public library in the United States (new), according to the number of volumes it contains and the number of branches it includes. (ETF broadsheet 1993; Classroom Writing Material)

Several grammatical structures enable writers to express given information before new information by moving words and phrases around within sentences. Table 2.5 displays the most frequently used syntactic functional strategies.

Strategies	Clarification	Illustration
1. The Passive Voice	passives are good choices when the agent is either obvious or unimportant. They often can help writers to express given information at the beginning of sentences.	The little telegram had come up to the farmhouse at ten that morning; it had been brought down to the beach by Willy and Pauly. (John Le Carre: <i>The Little Drummer Girl</i>)
2. Reversals	With some verbs (such as forms of be, lie, rest, hover, and stand), writers can reverse the position of elements that would ordinarily appear early and late in a sentence.	A challenge to traditional stylistic analysis was especially noteworthy in the essay. Especially noteworthy in the essay was a challenge to ... analysis.
3. Fronts	In some case, writers take an element that would ordinarily appear late in a sentence and front it or move it to the beginning.	Talent, Mr. Micawber; Capital, Mr Micawber has not. (Mrs. Micawber says that coal trade needs talent and capital.) (Charles Dickens: David Copperfield, 52)
4. Expletive There	Use of <i>there</i> to introduce a sentence in which everything after the <i>there</i> is new information (to draw attention).	There are three main objectives regarding syntactic maturity.
5. What-Cleft	In <i>what-clefts</i> sentences, all the elements of <i>to be</i> carry given information and those after the form <i>to be</i> convey new information.	What he is suggesting is that there is a direct relationship between the meaning of a sentence and the text meaning.
6. It-Cleft (1)	Another sentence pattern that highlights new information is the it-cleft.	It is the very lack of control that forms the basis of creative reading.
7. It-Cleft (2)	Given information does not precede new information: knowing that readers already have the given information but have difficulty grasping the new one.	It was George Orwell who wrote 1984.
8. Marked Emphasis	When information appears repeatedly in a text, subsequent appearances will usually take different forms.	Chomsky distinguished between <i>competence</i> and <i>performance</i> . Chomsky distinguished the <i>innate linguistic knowledge</i> and the <i>actual use</i> of language in real-life situations.

Table 2-5: Typology of Syntactic Functional Strategies

What relevance do such strategies have for EFL learners? Their relevance lies in highlighting the need to become sensitive to what students write—to the signals they give their readers on the relative importance of each piece of information conveyed. It is reported that non-native speakers of English experience difficulty ordering the words in their sentences (Fries, 1997:230). That is why, the above typology of syntactic strategies, albeit representing tendencies rather than absolute, can help all those who wish to increase their reflective skill in analysing and constructing English texts. They can help reflective students to write and understand a wide range of syntactic patterns more fully. Furthermore, they offer practice in reading others' writing and crafting their own with critical and sensitive eyes and mind. Most EFL learners spend much time mastering the structure of clauses, i.e., where subjects, objects, and adverbials are placed in relation to the verb, and what options are available for ordering words in the most typical structures. Discourse analysis is interested in the implications of these different structural options for the creation of texts that resemble naturally-occurring data. While sentence structure may be adequately covered in grammar teaching and writing, some of the syntactic strategies are still underrepresented in language material and syllabus design. Learners, especially the low-proficient ones, may be trapped in erroneous patterns owing to limited grammatical resources. Awareness of the part of teachers and syllabus designers is therefore necessary to ensure that natural production using the wide resources of discourse-organising structures is actually taking place.

2.3.5 Discourse-Organising Structures

As argued above, sentence-level knowledge and production are but elementary prerequisites to knowing how to use or interpret a structure in written discourse. In effect, when to use the sentence and for what purposes constitute critical reflective knowledge for the writer (Celce-Murcia, 1997:185). This holds true for EFL learners who may be unable to make use of their grammatical knowledge in writing due to the learning of grammar in isolation. Apart from the few context-free rules in English (subject-verb agreement, prenominalisation at the clause level), the vast majority of grammatical choices

that a writer makes represent *rules* that depend on certain conditions being met in terms of meaning, situational context, and/or discourse context (ibid.). As an illustration, the following structures of English grammar tend to be sensitive, at least in part, to discourse context: use of passive voice, indirect object alternation, prenominalisation across clauses, position of adverbials, use of cleft-sentence, tense/aspect/mood choice, fronting of constituents and use of logical connectors and discourse markers (Fries, 1997; Kopple, 1997; Celce-Murcia, 1997).

It follows that the writer's ability to produce the forms in question accurately is but a part of a much larger process in which the semantic and discourse appropriateness of the construction itself is also judged with respect to the context in which it is used. Grammar is therefore viewed as dependent upon the meanings the structure is meant to carry, not just the rules. Formal features of sentences '*are not ends in themselves but means for achieving particular ends*' (Johns, 1997:31). In other words, grammar becomes a part of a larger interrelated functional whole, which then includes meaning, accuracy, and discourse —when to use the structure, how to order information, and for what purpose to fit the whole text framework. X

2.3.6 Discussion and Implication

It is clear that learning to write successfully can provide unique insights into the structure and fabric of language, into the relative formality of written syntax and the subtle interplay between word choice, word order, and the nuances of meaning within a particular context. It offers a solid foundation in the linguistic system of the foreign language. most of all, perhaps, it trains learners to think beyond the immediate context and to consider language as a tool for crafted communication, used for specific purposes. That is why, this part has taken a selection of grammatical concepts and has attempted to show how a discourse perspective may contribute to the understanding of the relationship between local choices within the clause and sentence, and the organisation of the discourse as a whole. When writers are creating a text, they are, at the same time, constructing clauses, organising information, and monitoring the development of the larger discourse. Their choices at the local level can be

seen simultaneously to reflect the concerns of the discourse as an unfolding production, orientated towards an audience (McCarthy, 1991). Within reflective practice, a discourse-based grammar would suggest not only a greater emphasis on contexts larger than the sentence, but also a reassessment of priorities in terms of what is taught about grammatical aspects which have a direct role in welding clauses and sentences into cohesive discourse.

The immediate implication is that learners need to be taught how to make critical choices from the linguistic system and to match the text to the audience in such a way to ensure maximum impact. This is a prerequisite if they ever wish to create acceptable texts in the foreign language and achieve their goals. Rivers and Temperley (1978:264) make a list of what learners are expected to learn to become effective writers and what teacher need to take into account when developing material and designing tasks:

They must learn the graphic system and be able to spell according to the conventions of the language... They must learn to control the structure according to canons of good writing. They must learn to select from among possible combinations words and phrases those which will convey the meanings they have in mind, and, ultimately, they must be able to do this so that nuances in the appropriate linguistic register are expressed through writing.

This is clearly no easy task since it involves a mastery of the writing system (writing down the code in terms of mechanics) and the written language (the available linguistic system choices and options). Learning to write partly consists in coming to grips with such demands or, more technically, *micro-skills* (D. Brown 1994):

- Produce graphemes or orthographic patterns of English ;
- Produce an acceptable core of words and use accurate word order patterns ;
- Manipulate varied grammatical categories and patterns ;
- Express the intended meaning by means of a variety of grammatical forms ;
- Use cohesive devices and discourse markers in written texts ;
- Build up a repertoire of lexical items along discourse-functional lines ;
- Convey links between events as main and supporting ideas ;
- Order information functionally to fit the purpose of the text ; and

- Use the appropriate register (i.e., functional variety) according to the context

(Based on Brown, 1994)

These linguistic micro-skills of writing, which make it a suitable and effective vehicle for the expression of meaning and conveyance of a message, are thus located simultaneously on the graphic, lexical, syntactic and textual levels of the text. They are the means whereby a writer organises sentences into paragraphs, uses cohesive devices, punctuate meaningfully, selects relevant vocabulary and arranges ideas into a specific text type. The function and interrelationship of the different micro-skills can be summed up in the diagram below :

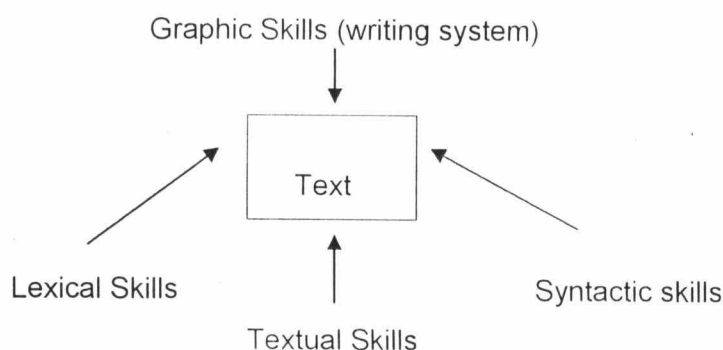


Diagram 2.1 : Linguistic Knowledge and Text Production

Perhaps it is this type of varied exigencies that get into the learners' way when embarking in text construction. In effect, EFL learners appear to experience a number of problems with each set of skills. In most cases, they do not know how to use the conventional patterns of organisation which are typical of text types. Nor do they necessarily know how to make correct and appropriate choices from the grammatical and lexical options on offer. For Widdowson (1984 :65), the problem is basically textual in nature in that EFL learners are largely unable to textualise discourse in a different language—to bring together the different micro-skills in such a way to construct a clearly recognisable text in English.

As a matter of fact, a close look at our students' writing readily highlight difficulties that have to do with an inadequate command of the linguistic system. This comes in the form of uncertainty with the previously learned grammatical structures as well as a clear unawareness of the rich lexico-grammatical

resources on offer. Syntactic problems stem from the lack of attention to the relative merits of using different sentence structures to express the same ideas (either sticking blindly to the simple sentence or resorting to long strings of phrases); such a weakness displays the learners' failure to bridge the gap between grammatical knowledge and writing ability resulting in the construction of unnatural (i.e., stilted) texts :

Teaching is to show somebody how to do something. He will be later able to do it. Teaching is a very nice and serious job ; the person who teaches students is intellectual. He has a great important important place in the society. He is respectful from his students and other people. (First-year student; author's data, 2000)

Other problems that might prove less dangerous to the reader but equally confusing concern the fact that even when students manage to express an idea, they fail to use the appropriate syntactic and cohesive devices :

8th March is a woman's day. We take this opportunity to discuss and ask about our dead situation in Algeria. Today, woman wants to speak about her position and value. In addition, they suffer from many responsibilities : look after children, work hard out and in home and they are dependent in a family. (First-year student ; author's data, 2000)

The constant preoccupation with the correctness of syntactic form coupled with the fear to make mistakes appear to skew the students' attempts at constructing sentences that develop logically. The grammatical structures and cohesive ties that they have previously learnt (Fundamental and Secondary-School levels) were likely taught in isolation. This means that even an eventual understanding of the operation of grammar through intensive practice may not necessarily guarantee that learners will use it effectively in writing. As Johns (1996 :31) puts it, grammatical rules 'are not ends in themselves but means for achieving particular ends'. In other words, language-system knowledge goes well beyond the basic structural aspects of writing ; it is a part of a larger interrelated whole. There is also the widespread hazard, among a number of our students, of constantly resorting to long strings of poorly structured sentences, with no regard to the relationship between main and subsidiary points. These learners generally come with a widespread

misconception concerning good writing strategies—they assume that long and complex sentences will make a good impression on the reader (i.e., the teacher) as is the case with Arabic. In effect, they tend to rely on L1 structure (specifically, the frequent use of conjunctions) to express meaning and organise ideas in a single sentence in English :

Dear Nadia,

I want to be helpful and you should apply for the
job of engineer which was advertised in the evening
newspaper. Factory looks for serious experiment
person in engines and you had your Baccalaureat
in technic which you obtained with a very good average...

(First-year student ; author's data 2000)

Similarly, lexical difficulties are likely due to limitations of vocabulary. Probably, the biggest handicap facing most learners is the dearth of an adequate number of words. This is clearly evident in the day-to-day classroom call for help with vocabulary rather than structures and request for ways to enrich their vocabulary. Another lexical problem has to do with the ignorance of the means whereby a writer can repeat in English. Learners tend to juxtapose the same lexical item in adjacent sentences, causing further redundancy. They are unaware of strategies such as complex repetitions: *to develop/this development, to satisfy/such satisfaction, to grow/the growth*. An increase in the use of morphologically complex words rather than mere repetition of a simple word is an important index of a writer's lexical and syntactic growth.

What kinds of implication do the above difficulties hold for a writing pedagogy? Perhaps, the first thing to bear in mind is that FL writing should always have a twofold aim: not only should it help poor writers become better with regard to their writing strategies; at the same time, it should help all developing writers create more effective texts in English by integrating their linguistic knowledge into an evolving writing ability and fostering their awareness of how it can be effectively employed for the specific demands of language in writing (cohesion, coherence, topical structure and other larger patterns of discourse). Learners should be encouraged from the very beginning of their university studies to constantly assess how successfully the language

they have chosen conveys their intended meaning and fulfils their expected purpose. They should be guided to think of their language along discourse-functional lines, something which becomes more and more important in the remaining years (and probably beyond the university) as they will have to embark on composition writing and appropriate text construction.

This part has attempted to reiterate an important point, namely, that without a command of the rich and variable resources of the English language system, the ability to construct natural and purposeful discourse will remain a far-reaching aim, let alone a concrete writing classroom objective. The use of correct writing micro-skills are inseparable from the structuring of larger units of discourse. However, knowledge of the linguistic system *per se* may not necessarily guarantee that learners will use it in text creation. That is why, it seems that the time is fit to suggest a greater emphasis on contexts larger than the sentence as well as a reassessment of priorities in terms of what is taught in the writing classroom so that it will be possible to set up a link between linguistic knowledge, discourse knowledge and writing ability.

2.4 Discourse Knowledge

In order to make the link between the lexico-grammatical aspect of writing and discourse, it may be noteworthy to begin by reiterating a fundamental premise that without a command of the rich and variable resources of the linguistic system offered by a language such as English, the creation of effective discourse is simply an unattainable objective. However, it may be argued that punctuating meaningfully, selecting lexis, constructing sentences, arranging clauses, organising the larger units of discourse and creating textual coherence are ultimately inseparable. It is this tight relationship that the present part attempts to examine by looking at what the evolving field of discourse analysis can tell us about the contextualised uses of structures and their implications for larger textual patterns such as paragraphs and for the progression of whole texts. In this respect, the following questions will be discussed :

- ❑ What norms do writers adhere to when creating whole texts in varied contexts ?
- ❑ Is there a recognisable hierarchy of discourse units in organising meanings in a text ?
- ❑ What knowledge do writers and readers who communicate using texts appear to share ?
- ❑ Is there a likelihood that discourse norms differ from culture to culture ?
- ❑ What are the potential implications of a discourse model for the teaching and learning of writing?

If reliable and satisfactory answers can be found by examining authentic data and their constituents and if they can be shown as elements that may pose problems for learners, then the consideration of a reflective writing curriculum developed from a discourse perspective may open up avenues for the application, in specifiable ways, of discourse insights to the teaching and learning of writing.

2.4.1. Discourse

In general, the term *discourse* refers to language that has been produced as an act of communication. While linguistic knowledge accounts for the writer's ability to combine words into correct and meaningful sentences, discourse knowledge allows him/her to combine and develop sentences into larger units to express complex thoughts and ideas. More specifically, *discourse* refers to the process of creating, relating, organising and realising meaning in a text beyond the sentence level (Riley, 1985 :2). It consists of a set of underlying patterns of meaning that are given expression through the observable medium of text. These patterns are recognisable and conventional norms for organising thoughts and formulating intentions⁷. Put simply, they represent the deep-seated rules that writers adhere to ^{to} create whole pieces of communication, specifying how texts are to be organised (i.e., linking and developing information, ideas or arguments in a rational and appropriate sequence and taking into account the reader's needs).

In this light, the notion of *discourse* lays great emphasis on how the process of creating written texts is accomplished and built up at various levels, from small units (clauses) to larger ones (paragraphs and texts). Such

emphasis is based on the premise that texts are not merely strings of sentences but are groups of hierarchically organised functional discourse units which bear various informational and interactional relations to one another (Grabe 1997 :2). That is to say, texts are assumed to display mutual dependence holding between discourse units and occurring in sequence to produce coherent stretches of language. Halliday and Hasan (1976 ; 1985) refer to the ties that realise mutual dependence and bind sentences and their meanings together as *cohesion* and the relationships between ideas and concepts as *coherence* (both concepts will be defined and discussed in detail later on), enabling the reader to make plausible inferences about the underlying meaning of the text. Thus the discourse model has in its apparatus a basic functional unit (communication of meaning) and a set of interrelated units and relationships (cohesion and coherence) developed through conventional (and cognitive) patterns to organise the text, convey the intended meaning and allow the reader to infer such meaning. It follows that learning to write implies both an understanding of these conventions and an ability to put them into use—developing a knowledge and use of the functional value attached to discourse units within a text.

Another significant aspect of the discourse model is its exclusive interest in *language use*—how real people use real language to communicate. Basically, language serves two essential functions: *transactional* and *interactional* (Brown and Yule 1983 :2) (or *experiential* and *interpersonal* (Halliday, 1985)). The former serves to convey factual or propositional information. As such, the writer is primarily concerned with the efficient transference of information, rendering language message-oriented. It is important that the reader gets the informative detail correct ; for instance, a researcher describing an experiment should make what he/she writes very clear. The latter serves to establish and maintain social relationships. Hence, within a discourse perspective, the concern is with what writers using language are doing as well as accounting for the linguistic features in the discourse as the means employed in what they are doing. Brown and Yule (1983 :1) explain this operation as follows :

The analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of language forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs.

The primary emphasis is then on what people actually do with language when they write (or speak)⁸. Language is seen as a dynamic, social and interactive tool, involving complex exchanges, in which the participants' beliefs and expectations, the shared knowledge about each other and the world and the context of situation all play a significant role. This view is clearly put by Kramsch (1993 :11) :

The view of language that best captures the dynamics between [these] various opposing forces is that of language in discourse. It is on the level of discourse that [they] find both their justification and their realisation.

In summary, the *discourse* model considers *text* as an observable record of a dynamic latent process in which language is used as an instrument of communication in a context by a writer to express meanings and achieve intentions. That is why, rather than considering the above-mentioned factors as opposing forces, they may be best seen as mutually interrelated, contributing together to the creation of a text and the shaping of context to communicate. Such synthesis would only reflect an intrinsic aspect of discourse : 'the inseparable notions of text and context' (Halliday and Hasan, 1989 :17). If, indeed, using language in communication means shaping contexts of discourse, then we need to look closely at how this shaping process actually takes place in naturally-occurring data (i.e., authentic data) : the patterns whereby linguistic patternings of discourse units are built up for the construction of text, shaped as it is in response to the context of situation . The main advantage of a discourse model is that it provides us with a descriptive apparatus capable of describing the patterns of discourse units in terms of textual structure, cohesion, coherence, topical structure, style, rhetorical organisation according to text type and the main differences between written

and spoken discourse ; in other words, the apparatus embraces both micro-level and macro-level textuality that shape the process of text creation and comprehension as shown in the diagram below (adapted from Hoey 1991:213):

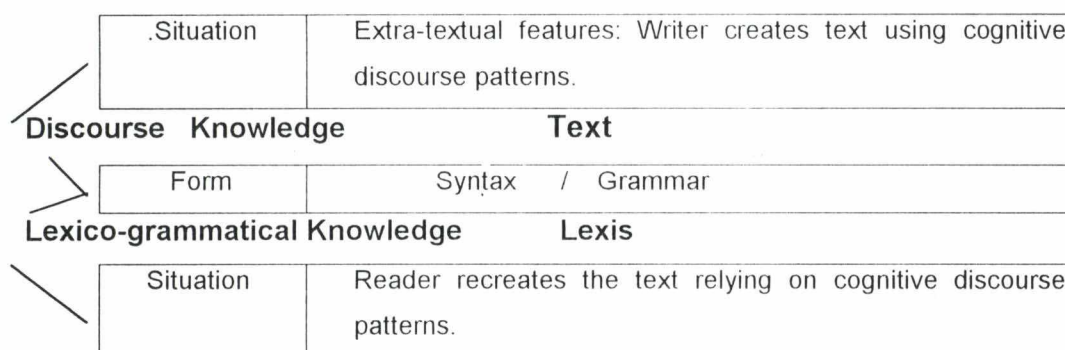


Diagram 2.2 Discourse Model : Process of Text Creation and comprehension
(adapted from Hoey 1991:213)

2.4.2 Text

In general, *text* is an observable linguistic production, made up of linguistic elements and discourse units which are strung together according to strict rules of the lexico-grammar of the language as well as to the conventional discourse norms, generated in a context of situation with specific communication aims⁹. Accordingly, 'the structure of texts is determined by the use to which they are put and the communicative context in which they occur' (Lyons 1981 :227). That is to say, when constructing a text, the writer initially aims at communicating to the reader a number of facts , a story, or an argument. He/she needs to choose where to start, what sequence to follow and which aspects to stress within the text. Such choices (textual strategies) are made with a view to conveying the intended meaning and convincing the reader (s) of the writer's claims (they aim at convincing the credibility of certain propositions in the reader's mind (Mauranen 1993 :5)).

In a technical (text-linguistic) sense, the structure of a text refers to the complex network of relationships holding between sentences within a text¹⁰. Each sentence takes its value from the other surrounding sentences and in turn helps to give value to them. This means that textual structure is the structure of underlying ideas, and the connections the writer makes between them. Its elements, or preferably units, are the rhetorical acts¹¹ the sentences perform by virtue of their functional value within the text. The constraints of textual structure

are the topic, the writer's purpose in writing, and the expected audience. These contextual constraints determine both text type and text structure. In this sense, text becomes a form of exchange of ideas, composed into a written structure adapted to the needs of the reader and the goals of the writer, i.e., a co-operative exchange and a relationship between writer and reader, operating within a common context. Halliday (1985:10) considers text as 'language that is doing some job in some contexts, as opposed to isolated words or sentences (even though a text may be composed of one sentence as is the case in instructions and public notices, texts are customarily made up of a sequence of sentences).

What is characteristic of the nature of a text is that, although it looks as though it is formed of words and sentences (linguistic elements), it is really constituted of discourse units larger than the individual sentences and carrying interrelated meaning. Being a discourse entity, a text needs to be considered from two complementary perspectives, both as a product and as a process :

The text is a product in the sense that it is an output, something that can be recorded and studied, having a certain construction that can be represented in systematic terms. It is a process in the sense of a continuous process of semantic choice, a movement through the network of meaning potential, with each set of choices constituting the environment for a further set.
(Halliday 1985a :10)

According to this perspective, which is adopted in the present research, text comes closer to the connotation of discourse in that it is increasingly seen through the processes that readers and writers go through in their attempts to make sense and produce texts. In this light, text is a complex multidimensional structure, involving syntactic, semantic, discourse and cognitive elements, i.e., it is both an observable product and an underlying process of organisational patterns and strategy choices.

On the basis of such a multidimensional structure, we may make a synthesis of the underlying principles of texts in English as described by a number of text-linguistic studies:

□ The language of a text refers to a reality beyond the text and represents a certain relationship of the text to its content, e.g., how the text positions itself vis-a-vis its readers, established *genres*, and what it considers important to say and not to say. Text is therefore a set of choices conducive to communication (Widdowson 1984 :150).

□ The meaning of texts is inseparable from surrounding texts be they illustrations, footnotes or graphs. The relationship that texts have to one another, both those that are close and those that are distant in time and space, have generated what de Beaugrande and Dressler (1980) call *intertextuality*, i.e., a prior knowledge of text and text types.

□ Texts attempt to position their readers in quite specific ways by evoking worlds, mental representations or schemata that they assume are shared between them and their readers (Kress 1988 :17). They do this at both micro- and macro-levels. At the micro-level, they employ a range of textual and discourse devices (especially, cohesive ties) that have been extensively analysed by text linguists such Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985), Fairclough (1989), MacCarthy (1991), Hoey (1992) and Celce-Murcia (1997). At the macro-level, textual structures are relational; they are selected to relate one text, event, or fact to another through discourse patterns (especially, coherence) such as problem-solution-evaluation pattern and by means of discourse markers like causality, concession, comparison and contrast (MacCarthy 1991).

□ Texts might be culturally sensitive in the sense that discourse patterns and rhetorical choices reflect the ways of thinking and judging of the discourse communities to which readers and writers belong (Kaplan 1966, 1972, 1997; Swales 1990; Mauranen 1993; Connor 1996). They are a result of socially-built conventions, acting as constraints on 'What can be discussed?', 'What is evidence?', 'How can the evidence most effectively be organised?' and 'To whom may a text be addressed?' (Kaplan 1997 :19).

These underlying principles pinpoint the fact that there is no artificial separation between what is in a text, the roles of the writer and reader, the function to which language is put, and the context in which the text is created. As such, texts are vehicles of communication. Form is purpose-serving and cannot be considered separately from the other aspects of texts as shown below :

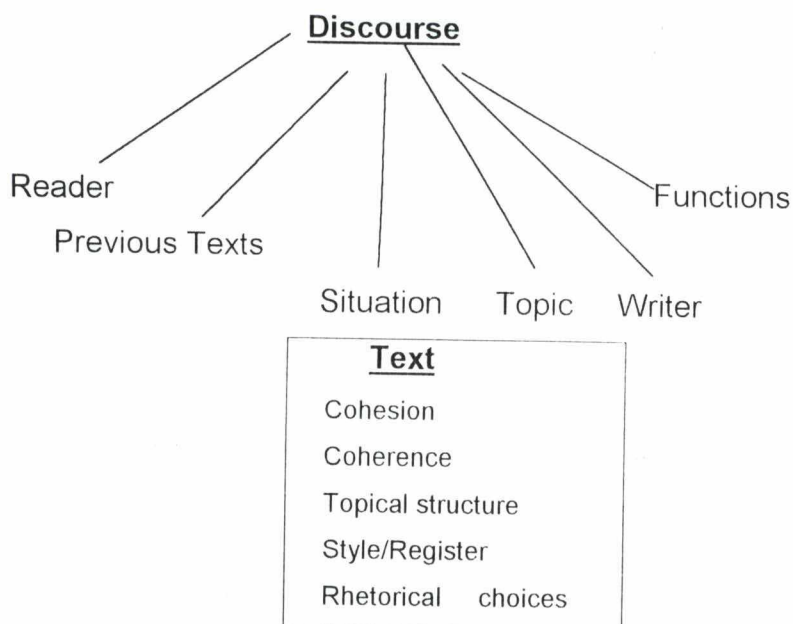


Diagram 2.3 Discourse Constraints

2.4.3. Text and Context

Text has been defined, so far, as a more or less conventional response to a particular task type, accomplishing a purposeful and contextualised communicative function. How do writers and readers then identify texts by names and establish their purposes and reader and writer roles? One way is to recognise recurring features of the context, '*the sphere of human activity*' in which texts from a recognisable genre are being repeatedly produced and processed' (Bakhtin, 1986 :65 in Connor, 1997). *Context*₁₂ refers not merely to a physical place, such as classroom, but to all of the non-linguistic and non-textual elements that contribute to the situation in which writing is accomplished. In other words, *context* is not static but dynamic, referring to the ongoing events when writing as well as to the involved purpose, setting and audience— '*the total environment in which a text unfolds*' (Halliday, 1985a :5) : '*the identities of participants, the temporal and spatial parameters of the communicative event, and the beliefs, knowledge and intentions of the participants in that event*' (Levinson, 1983 :5).

Depending on the context, then, writers structure their experience by means of lexico-grammatical elements, negotiate the interpersonal relationship they wish to have with their readers, draw on background knowledge, and refer

to prior texts and decide what to leave unsaid. They can choose a more orate (informal) or more literate (formal) style of writing that will in turn affect the distance they want to establish between the text and their readers. Context helps to make predictions about meanings that are being exchanged between reader and writer. This prediction is made possible by virtue of the contextual constraints that typically reoccur in our life experience. We lean towards publications, events, places and readers that are identified with familiar discourses over and over again. For instance, as avid newspaper, magazine and journal readers, we feel familiar with the different articles and eager to make predictions about their discourse purposes and textual features. We feel confident and expect that the writers have taken into account our reading habits, interests and shared knowledge. For Brown et al. (1989), this mutual understanding of past contexts and their genres is a kind of *situated cognition*, i.e., a sense of text transferred to comparable contexts. Thus, what appears to be a novel context is in fact a repeated discourse context (hence, the notion of *genre*).

An awareness of the reader's expectations and prior knowledge is important even in the simplest forms of writing. When we fax a letter, for instance, we choose between whether we refer to the recipient by first name, first and surname, or name and designation; we need also to take into account his/her previous knowledge as regards the contents of the letter (information). This sensitivity to what a reader does or does not know is an important element in writing as expressed in the words of Goodman :

Texts are shaped as much by the writer's sense of characteristics of their readers as they are by the writer's own characteristics. This is as true for a shopping list or a letter as it is for a newspaper report or a novel.

(in Brookes and Grundy, 1990 :20)

Clearly, readership is an integral element of writing; when writers are producing discourse, they are at the same time paying attention to lexis, syntax and monitoring the development of larger discourse and anticipating the reader's shared knowledge. A writer's context knowledge makes it then possible to write appropriate texts for particular readers. He/she is aware of the identity

of the reader, his knowledge beliefs and intentions, the temporal and spatial parameters of the communicative events. Indeed, context knowledge helps the writer to activate his/her lexico-grammatical knowledge and to select appropriate wordings for a particular communicative purpose, that is the results that the writer hopes to achieve in producing a text. This may be a general purpose such as *to entertain, to inform, or to persuade* or may be very specific, for example, to obtain information from a given university. The extent of a writer's knowledge of the way in which context influences the *genres* of writing that are typical of specific communicative events (i.e., a moment of communication which can easily be distinguished from another moment) is crucial in writing. Successful writers need to be able to make appropriate choices from the language system and to match their text to their readership in a way which ensures maximum impact. Oxford (1990) refers to this fundamental ability as *discourse competence*: 'the ability to combine ideas to achieve cohesion in form and coherence in thought'. What is advantageous about this conception of text creation is that it allows a systematic way of analysing any sample of language use:

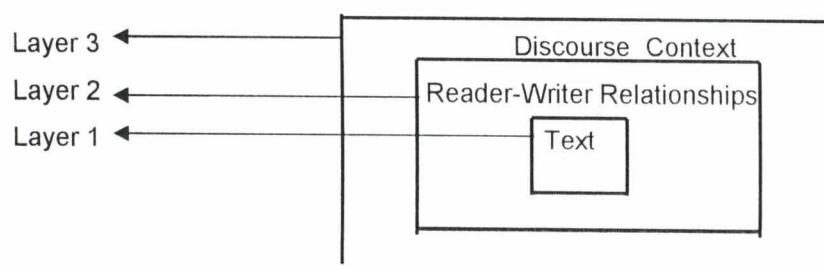


Diagram 2.4 Discourse, Text and Context (Source :a simplified version of Fairclough's model of language use (1992))

Layer 1, *text*, represents the aspect of language as an observable product, in grammatical patterns at sentence level and beyond. Text carries two interwoven types of meaning: what Halliday (1985) calls ideational (ideas or content) and *interpersonal* (reader-writer relationships). These meanings in the text derive from layer 2 of the model: the writer's and reader's shared knowledge. Layer 2 represents what people actually do with language (i.e., the pragmatic function): the way they use its resources to convey particular meanings to particular readers in particular social contexts. Layer 3 represents

the way in which discourse conventions for particular types of writing are shaped by dominant views of the nature of knowledge and the assumed relations between readers and writers.

In this view, language forms cannot be considered independently of the way they are used to communicate in context. Language use is dependent on the social forces which have set up the convention of *appropriacy* for that context. To quote again Halliday and Hasan (1989), 'Text and context are inseparable notions' that ought to be taken into account in analysing samples of language use and developing pedagogical material for the writing class. Writing ability, both as knowledge and performance, is thus defined, in part, as a fit of text to its context, which includes the writer's purpose, the discourse patterning conventions and the knowledge of the audience. In this sense, text is constructed as a social interaction, involving two participants, content, purpose, time, place and type of writing. According to Kaplan (1997:18), writers recognise text types and their text structures, and therefore their text production is constrained within that knowledge. Kaplan (op. cit.) sums up the nature of text in the form of a question: 'Who writes what to whom, to what end, why, when, and how?' (a similar question was formulated by Dell Hymes (1972) in defining *communicative competence*. This view of text suggests ways of potential applications in the teaching of writing as will be shown later (Cf. coherence structures: 137-143).

2.4.4. Text and Schemata

Texts attempt to position their readers in quite specific ways by evoking mental representations that they assume are shared between them and their readers (Kress, 1988:17). These representations are called *schemata* (a concept originally coined by Bartlett who believes that our memory for discourse is not based on straight reproduction but on a construction process of information through negotiation (in Coirier, 1996:64)). They represent generally accepted ways of constructing and organising ideas, which provide a predictable basis for reader's expectations of how a text will develop. As such, schemata constitute organised knowledge structure which facilitates the process of constructing and interpreting discourse. Schema research theory

divides schemata into two major types : *background knowledge* (declarative information about objects, ideas, persons and facts) and *procedural knowledge* (how to organise and do a particular task/problem-solving activity). Both types share common features and perform a variety of functions as summarised in the table below.

Features	Functions
1. Schemata are relational : they are created by relating one text, one event, one fact to another through semiotic links (contiguity, similarity or metaphor) or through logical links. 2. Schemata are culturally sensitive. They reflect the ways of thinking and judging of writers' and readers' discourse community. 3. Schemata are co-constructed mental models, i.e., they are interactionally constructed through the talk that surrounds the interpretation of texts. 4. Schemata are rhetorical constructions. They represent the choices made by writers among the many potential meanings that could be actualised through, both on the macro-level of text structure and on the micro-level of the word and clause.	They ensure the text coherence by allowing the reader to generate inferences on the implicit information. They define the different relations that contribute to the structural organisation of a text. They establish the importance of an idea or a piece of information. They allow the reader to anticipate the overall structure of a text, predict the necessary elements in the logical sequence of ideas and decide whether the text is complete. They supply the reader and writer with a stable structure, allowing the storage and use of information. They allow cognitive empathy ; good writers can anticipate or read their own writing from the perspective of the reader (anticipate the audience general knowledge, culture and how their text will be interpreted).

Table 2.6 Features and Functions of Schemata in Text Creation

It is admitted then that without these types of knowledge, we would experience serious difficulties in text creation (as will be discussed in some detail in later parts). Our stored knowledge helps to grapple with various writing tasks by ordering knowledge and thinking efficiently about the most convenient strategies ;hence, the term *metacognitive* (knowing something about One's own learning and knowing). It also allows to develop an explicit *theory* of writing to

better understand and control one's writing by relying on their mental processes to generate texts.

2.5 Spoken and Written Discourse

To better appreciate the relevance of the discourse approach to text creation and comprehension and the eventual implications for a pedagogy of interpretive and strategy-based practice in the teaching and learning of writing, it would be worthwhile to both specify and clarify the scope of discourse analysis¹³. By and large, discourse analysis, as an analytical and interpretive field, makes room for both spoken and written discourse. The overall aim is to arrive at a much better understanding of exactly how spoken and written language looks, sounds and functions. To do so, we need to answer the following questions: 'What are the recurring features and principles of spoken and written discourse?', 'What are the typical functions of each discourse modality?' and 'To what extent, therefore, are they different in complexity and exigency?'. With a more accurate and authentic picture of natural discourse, we will be in a much better position to grasp the types of complexity that each medium displays and, by the same token, to specify the kind of demands made on the language user, specifically the writer, so as to figure out what our learners need to know to cope effectively with the written language.

There are three main respects in which writing and speech exhibit clear differences: form (formal features), function (use) and discourse (text-creation processes). With regard to the formal aspect, the spoken medium makes use of paralinguistic and phonological systems which have no counterpart in the written language. The speaker can use facial expression, postural and gestural movements, suprasegmental devices like pitch, tone of voice, intonation and speed of delivery. This exploitation helps to reinforce the meaning and adjust the utterance. Moreover, the speaker has available the interlocutor's presence which makes it possible to monitor his/her speech performance and the extent to which it is acceptable or accessible to the hearer. Clearly, the availability of an immediate feedback is an advantage for the speaker to adjust what he/she wishes to say and the way to say it.

In contrast, the writer cannot rely on those resources to adjust his/her text due to the lack of an immediate visible context and instant feedback. As Rivers and Temperley explain (1978 :263) :

The operation of writing, unlike speaking, must be performed as it were in a void, in response to a personal internal stimulus...The writer needs to compensate for the absence of external contextual elements by the deliberate inclusion and elaboration of explanatory details which the speaker would omit.

It means that writer's task is linguistically and cognitively far demanding than that of the speaker : to anticipate the reader's reaction and write accordingly. To do so, he/she needs to fully exploit the resources of the writing system and make convenient use of time to compose the text (think carefully, plan adequately and change whenever necessary). Such a distance between the writer and reader exerts a strong pressure on the former to include enough information in a text so that it can be as well understood as possible. The writer creates and recreates experience for a distant audience.

Furthermore, spoken and written modalities make use of different kinds of complex formal patterns and elements. The complexity of speaking tends to be grammatical—very long sentences are generally produced once speakers depart from the rapid delivery of texts (Martin, 1989 :27). In writing, the complexity is lexical in that written language tends to be more highly coded and lexically very dense (large numbers of content words are typically packed into a single clause. According to Halliday (1989 :62), the difference is in terms of *density* in that the information presented is dense in written language and sparse in spoken language as shown by these written sentences with a spoken counterpart into a form that would be more likely to occur in speech (not the colloquial variety) :

2) Investment in a rail facility
implies a long-term commitment.
(lexical :7. Grammatical :3)

3) A grey-faced dr. Coffin
unlocked the door.
(L. : 6 ; G. 2)

If you invest in a rail facility,
this implies that you are going
to be committed for a long term.
(lexical :7 ; grammatical 13)
Dr. Coffin unlocked the door,
and as he did so his face was
grey.
(L. :5 ; G. :9)

The written sentences include a higher number of lexical words, while the utterances tend to have a higher ratio of grammatical words.

Secondly, there seem to be different functions to which each medium is appropriate. Despite some overlap, the two media fill distinct roles in society, especially, a literate one. The relative permanence of written language makes it ideally suited for such functions as recording facts and communicating ideas. The storage of information is best illustrated by the genre of report. There is access to far more information through reading than other sources (even with current electronic media). That is why learning to access information which is stored in books and other written forms is a very important skill which needs to be encouraged in any developing writer (Martin, 1989:10). The immediacy of speech makes it ideal for social or *phatic* function¹⁴. Writing is space-bound, static and permanent—the result of a situation in which the writer is distant from the recipient. Such permanence permits the development of careful organisation and more structured expression. By contrast, the spontaneity and rapidity of speech reduces the opportunity of preplanning. The result is that written language tends to be more formal than spoken language and is more likely to provide the standard or norm that society values. As a matter of fact, the standard descriptive grammars of English (e.g., Quirk et al. 1972) typically describe features of the written medium, or that form of the spoken medium which is highly influenced by the written language (i.e., the shift from the oral to the visual domain). In this light, certain written modes of expression have achieved prestige in many societies as is the case with *formality* :

Formality is a common property in many societies of practices and discourses of high social prestige and restricted access. It is a contributory factor in keeping access restricted, for it makes demands on participants above and beyond those of most discourse, and the ability to meet those demands is itself unevenly distributed. It can also serve to generate awe among those who are excluded by it and daunted by it.

(Fairclough 1989 :65)

If we take this view for granted, it becomes less surprising that many experienced writers, let alone learners, often fail to cope with the requirements of formality. In effect, one of the most striking differences between speech and writing is that writing tends to be impersonal. As a rule, writing discourages the overt expression of feelings and emotions. And when they are expressed, they must be explicitly justified and explained. This is especially true for *analytical exposition* whose rhetorical function is to persuade the reader(s) that some judgement is correct. It is this restriction on the expression of feelings and attitudes which characterises writing, and *expository* mode, in particular, as impersonal. In the Anglo-Saxon culture, traditional strictures against writing exposition in the first person are part of this pattern. Expository writing is supposed to be rational, leaving no place for emotion which is felt to be diametrically opposed to reason (Martin, 1989 :21). This may stem from the prevalent assumption that analytic thinking comes from the acquisition of written language, which clearly enables man to separate words, to manipulate their order and to develop forms of reasoning.

Thus, writing and speech are in practice used in different contexts for somewhat different purposes (though with a certain overlap). It may be said that while speech essentially serves an interactional function, with the obvious purpose of establishing and maintaining human relations in social interaction, writing is better suited (but not exclusively as suggested in Brown and Yule 1983 :14) for transactional function (transmission of well-organised information). As a result, a number of written genres evolve that are rarely used in speech. We may suggest a tentative list of written activities according to the type of purpose :

Action	Information	Entertainment
Public signs	Personal correspondence	Comic strips
Product labels and instructions	(letters, cards, notes...)	Light magazines
Recipes	Business and formal correspondence	Fiction books
Maps	News Articles	Poetry
TV and radio guides	Adverts, brochures, leaflets	Newspaper features
Bills Menus	Reports	Games
Telephone directories	Guidebooks Websites, E.mail	Play
Computer manuals	Essays	
Monitors and printouts		

Table 2.7 : Written activities and Purpose

This list is not clear-cut, but it gives a fair sample of the enormous possibilities offered by the written medium. It also implies that people who cannot read or write properly (i.e., illiterate) will be at a serious disadvantage. They will certainly lose a number of actions and privileges that only effective writers and readers can afford. As Martin (1989 :51) remarks :

The most prestigious users of language become writers, Not speakers. And written language is prized above speech. Written language is taken as the model for all language use.

But what about writing itself ? It is suggested that even highly educated people, including many teachers, actually write very little. This may be so since for a large proportion of language users, the main environment for writing has been the school. Such a picture may have been oversimplified. It may be that writing has been defined rather narrowly, as written composition in certain specific registers (academic/school) and genres (expository essay). Whether we write or not, once becoming functionally literate, we are participating in the exchange of meanings through written language, rarely or frequently. This is significant since the kinds of meaning that are transmitted in writing tend to be somewhat different from those conveyed through speech in that they have to meet certain social and informative acceptability (viz. conventional discourse norms).

Thirdly, there is the point which holds specific significance for the present study : that speech and writing differ in terms of discourse processes. The spoken text is a direct and immediate linguistic reflection of the actual interactive process and is simply contingent on the discourse. Once a particular discourse is enacted in spoken exchange, its traces in text disappear unless recorded for some particular reason. It follows that in spoken exchange, the text as such does not matter to the participants : it simply is the consequence of discourse. Focus is put on the discourse process rather than the textual product (Halliday, 1989 :40). Hence, spoken text tends to be untidy, to exhibit syntactic complexities and irregularities, incomplete and overlapping expressions, and false starts. With written text, however, the case is different. The text is not contingent but essential to the recreation of discourse. It is in a sense a tidy, correct and well-formed artefact deliberately fashioned for the use of others (i.e., meeting certain standards of social acceptability) (Widdowson, 1983 :42).

This conformity to correct and conventional norms becomes an essential condition for creating acceptable and appropriate discourse. Obviously, constraints of correctness will vary in their force on the reader one is exposing oneself to. The writer will be aware of them (i.e., discourse awareness) to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the audience and the context. For instance, a letter to a friend will not require strict textual composition, whereas an academic text, such as the present dissertation, will certainly have to conform to formal and conventional exigencies. The public and formal nature of print commands respect for what is socially acceptable.

Moreover, whereas in spoken discourse, the interactive process of negotiation is typically overt and reciprocal, in written discourse it is covert and non-reciprocal. In a spoken exchange, the participants alternate in open negotiation of meanings, each taking *turns* and making *moves* (Coulthard 1977) to contribute to the interaction. The writer, however, is solitary ; he/she has to conduct the interaction with a presumed interlocutor, absent and to some degree unknown, and at the same time attempt to facilitate the reader's task in recreating discourse. The writer's problem is twofold : the likelihood of over-textualisation (verbosity) or under-textualisation (obscurity), along with the need to produce a text which is correct and cohesive. Clearly, his/her task of

rendering discourse as text is so much more difficult than the reader's interpretation of text as discourse. The writer must make allowances for all kinds of possible reactions, designing well-formed textual patterns which the reader may well ignore. The solution lies in applying the *co-operative principle* (Grice 1975) — to impart certain information for some purpose, to inform, to impress, to direct— by preparing the ground and setting up conditions favourable to the reception of such information ; hence, the importance of shared knowledge of the world of facts and awareness of appropriate rhetorical organisation of discourse to fit the purpose of the exchange).

In sum, speaking and writing are then distinct ways of interacting and creating discourse. They constitute different modes of expressing linguistic meanings and performing communicative purposes. In fact, each derives its features from the medium and the function it serves, that is exploiting the linguistic system and social conventions differently and gaining power in alternative ways. However, what is noticeable is that the written medium tends to display far more difficulties than the spoken medium. This means that learning to write demands an ability to cope with such complexity. In the first place, the learner needs to be aware of the production of text as a reflection of the discourse process. Secondly, he/she needs to produce a text as an acceptable product. Both requirements highlight the conventional nature of writing as discourse. Language use is primarily communicative involving the conveyance of information through interactive negotiation ; it is also indexical presenting self as a social person aware of rules and conventions. An awareness of the differences between the typically written and the typically spoken is therefore essential to learners whose ability to write in a variety of styles—whether it is the informally conversation style of a personal letter, the dense formal academic essay, or something in between will certainly increase their effectiveness when it comes to addressing different audiences.

Aspect	Spoken Language	Written Language
Nature	Moves in real time	Fixed and permanent ;
Explicitness	Little need for explicitness : the real-time situation and shared knowledge implies that some information can be assumed and need not be made explicit.	A greater need for explicitness to make clear the context ;
Density	Little density ; the information is conveyed through repetition and fillers ;	High density through careful use of lexical items (lexical knowledge) ;
Context	Occurs in immediate interaction with known listeners and constantly available feedback ;	The writing of a text is detached in time and space from its reading ; the writer normally works alone, and may not be acquainted with the reader ; he/she needs to recreate discourse al)
Organisation Of discourse	A speaker needs to alter his/her speech according to the ongoing interaction, making necessary self-corrections and adjusting to the listener's disorganised flow of speech ;	A written text is expected to be organised and carefully formulated, given the availability of time to compose ; the written text is an artefact that conforms to conventions of discourse.
Use	Typical use in conversations and encounters of daily life (i.e., predominantly interactional) ;	Mostly used in formal contexts for formal purposes (transactional) ;
World-view	Creates a world of happening because it gives a dynamic account of reality.	It creates a world of things because it gives a careful and effective account of reality.

Table 2.8 : Summary of the Main Differences between Spoken and Written Discourse

2.6. Micro-Level Textuality: Cohesion

Micro-level textuality is concerned with the surface marking of semantic links between individual clauses and related discourse units in a text. Textual analysis has shown that written discourse displays connexions across boundaries by means of semantic and syntactic ties or markers. This type of connexion has been defined as *cohesion* (Halliday and Hasan 1976). Like markers of various kinds, cohesive devices—transitions, repetition of key words and phrases, pronouns, references—mark the surface of a text by creating links

between clauses and chaining together items that are related. In doing so, cohesive markers allow ideas to flow logically and provide ease in reader comprehension. They establish discourse relations, that is, larger structures in a text which are not directly expressed by the sequence of sentences, and which support the overall *coherence* of the text.

De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) list cohesion (together with coherence) as the seven standards that a text must meet if it is to be regarded as communicative. They argue that cohesion concerns the ways in which the components of the surface text (the actual words that we see) are mutually connected within a sequence. As such, cohesion is 'a property of the text' (Hoey 1991:12), objective and capable in principle of immediate recognition. It demonstrates the way certain words or grammatical elements of a sentence can connect that sentence to its predecessors or successors in a text. Accordingly, a text is in part created, in part organised, by the presence in each sentence of these elements that require the reader to look to the surrounding sentences for their interpretation. Cohesive ties are thus *explicit* linguistic devices that act as signals to the reader in order to help him./her make connexions with what has already been stated or soon will be stated. This textual connectivity, also called texture, occurs in the form of reference, ellipsis/substitution, and conjunction.

2.6.1. Anaphoric Reference

Reference items in English include pronouns (e.g., he, she, it, him, they, etc.), demonstratives (this, that, these, those), the article *the* and items like *such as*. Reference could be usefully divided into three types: *anaphoric*, *cataphoric*, and *exophoric* (McCarthy 1991). Anaphoric reference involves looking back in texts to find the referent of a pronoun. Usually items such as *he/she* or *them* can be decoded without major difficulty; other items such as *it* and *this* may be more troublesome because of their ability to refer to larger stretches of text. The following example of how reference items refer to segments of discourse is given by Halliday and Hasan (1976:52):

36) It rained day and night for two weeks. The basement flooded and everything was under water. It spoilt all our calculations.

Here, *it* seems to refer to the events of two weeks, or the fact that it rained and flooded, that is, the situation as a whole rather than any one specified entity in that situation. Matters cease from being simple when we look at pronouns in natural discourse:

37) Would-be luvvies attending a new exhibition at London's Globe will find cubicles in which *they* can huddle to be cast into a happy company of thespians. *They* can play leading roles in a selection of Shakespeare's most famous scenes. As Karaoke combines with the bard, *they* can ham *their* way through Hamlet, do as *they* please in As You Like It...*It* sounds like wish-fulfilment. But could *this* new exhibition prove more practical than *that*.

(The TIMES, February 3rd, 2000:27; Author's data and classroom material)

While the recognition of *they* is fairly obvious (reference to would-be luvvies), the use of *it* and *that* may be problematic. *It* and *that* appear to refer back to the whole paragraph (the possibility of the audience performing and singing in Shakespeare's plays). It is helpful therefore to consider reference as discourse or functional rather than mere sentence relation, and to see the writer as faced with a number of strategic choices as how to relate units to one another and how to present them to the reader.

The following student's text also shows this relationship between grammatical choice and discourse organisation:

38) If we ask anyone about the meaning of intelligence, he will say that *it* is the ability to get a good score and excellent marks in tests. However, intelligence is more than *that* because the ability of getting *those* scores are only parts of intelligence.

(First-year student, 1999; author's data)

The use of reference items is significant in that it relates individual sentences (grammatical choice) to larger discourse organisation. The above example clearly belongs to a high-proficient level student; however, problems can, and do, arise when less experienced learners tend to overuse (repeat) references as is the case in ^{the} following sample:

39) I'm a girl and Laurie a boy [reference to Shirley Jackson's short story 'Charles'] . This character expresses. A lot of things as that boys and girls have opposite behaviour. The first day of my entering in the kindergarten was terrible; I remember *it* as *it* has just happened.

(First-year student, 1999; author's data)

The main point is that individual grammatical choices are seen as significant in the staging and organisation of the discourse as a whole, and not just as local problems to be resolved within the bounds of a single sentence.

2.6.2. Exophoric Reference

Exophoric reference functions in two main ways. First, it directs us to the immediate available context:

39) Please, do not replace *the* books on the shelves. Put *them* on *the* tray.

(Notice about books at the American Cultural Center Library)

Here, the reader is expected to know which books are concerned, the shelves and the available tray, that is, the physical context is fully explicit. It would be truly odd if a reader enquired '*Which books, please?*'. Second, exophoric reference assumes, in the absence of an immediate context, that the writer and reader possess more or less a shared knowledge about the context. In English, the determiners often act in this way:

40) A referendum on whether Britain should join the single currency is still some years away, but the starting gun for the campaign will be fired on 1 January when *the euro* is launched by 11 other European Union countries...Mr Blair will use *the occasion* to change *the Government's* policy to one of 'not if, but when...'

(The Independent, December 1998:8; author's classroom material)

It is assumed that the reader shares the same knowledge about *the euro*, *the occasion* and *the government*, that is, he/she would know what euro is and which government is involved. The same type of exophoric reference is commonly used when referring to well-established referents such as *The City* (the financial centre of London), *The Queen* (Queen Elizabeth II) or the newly-built *The Dome* (London's new touristic site to celebrate the millennium).

Exophoric reference could be troublesome for EFL learners, whose L1 is Arabic, since Arabic makes use of the definite article extensively. Learners may develop a tendency to use indiscriminately, rather than selectively, definite articles:

- 41) *The boys and girls* differ in their expectations, aspirations and also in the rate of development. However, this is not an obstacle that prevents them from living and working together.
- 42) When I saw *the life* through the eyes of a child, it was a paradise.
- (First-year student, 1999; author's data)

It is evident that both learners misuse the definite article, being unaware of its function as a reference to an immediate context or a shared one. Exophoric references will often be to a world shared by writer and reader of the linguistic message, regardless of cultural background, but, equally often, references will be culture bound and outside the EFL learner's experience. They direct the reader out of the text and into an assumed shared world. They enable us to evaluate to what extent any discourse is self-contained, supplying its referents internally, or to what extent it depends heavily on external, culture-specific real-world referents. Accordingly, it seems important that EFL learners be gradually familiarised with the cultural context of the foreign language so as to ensure the referential burden is not too great on learners.

2.6.3. Cataphoric Reference

Cataphoric reference looks forward with the aim of engaging and holding the reader's attention, that is to read on and find out. Examples of cataphoric reference are often found in the opening sentences of the text making use of pronouns and definite articles:

- 43) *It* may be small but it's all we've got. It seems obvious, but the way some people treat the world, you would think there is somewhere else to go once the *earth's* resources have been exhausted... You know there isn't.

(Greenpeace Advertisement)

The text does not establish what *it* is until the last part of the second sentence. Forward-looking reference of this kind aims at capturing the reader's attention and interest. That is why, cataphoric reference is frequently used in accounts and stories:

44) Life after Death

The whole world knew *she* was troubled. We knew that *she* struggled with bulimia; was more fickle even than the tabloids that stalked *her*, and that *she* alternated between bouts of insecurity and dazzling star power. Those who immersed themselves deeper in the turbulent life and times of *Diana, Princess of Wales*, even heard about her tendency to throw herself down stairs.

(TIME, September 13, 1999:67)

Cataphoric reference is the reverse of anaphoric reference and is relatively straight-forward, but learners usually lack confidence or awareness to put it into use in constructing narrative texts. There is, too, the hazard of its overuse or its use in unnatural contexts. It seems relevant therefore to constantly train learners to observe features of language above sentence level.

2.6.4. Ellipsis and Substitution

Ellipsis is the omission of elements normally required by the grammar which the writer assumes are obvious from the context and need not be raised. It is recognised by the structure having some missing element. It is a writer's choice made on a pragmatic assessment of the situation, not a compulsory feature when two clauses are joined together. As a cohesive tie, ellipsis is retrievable from the surrounding text similar to the way that anaphoric and cataphoric references are for example:

44) The Algerian and the English societies are totally different. The first difference is the religion: Algerian society is Muslim while the English one Christian.

(First-year student, 1999; author's data)

where *is* is supplied from the first clause to the second (verbal ellipsis). This type of main-verb ellipsis is anaphoric. There are broadly three types of ellipsis: nominal, verbal and clausal. Nominal ellipsis often involves omission of a noun headword, for example, '*Where did you see the car?*', '*In the street.*'. Substitution is similar to ellipsis in that it operates either at nominal, verbal or clausal level. The elements commonly used for substitution in English are: *one* (s) (e.g., He was offered a grant. He said he didn't want one.), *do* (e.g., Did she write that essay? She might have done.), *so/not* (e.g., The learner's needs

should be considered; in so doing, motivation will rise.), same (e.g., He chose the first topic; I did the same.).

2.6.5. Conjunction

Conjunction contributes to textuality by presupposing a textual sequence, and signals a relationship between segments of the discourse. It plays a significant role in creating discourse but it is subject to restrictions. Despite the difficulty in listing definitely all the items that perform the conjunctive role in English, Halliday (1985b:302-9) attempts to classify conjunctive relations by including phrasal types as well as single-word items such as *and*, *but*, *or*, etc. A pedagogically simplified list, based on Halliday's original list which contains over forty conjunctive types), may include only broad three categories of *elaboration*, *extension*, *enhancement*.

The concept of *cohesion* has contributed to our understanding of the relationship between local choices within the clause and sentence and the organisation of discourse as a whole. One of the major contributions of discourse analysis has been to emphasise, by means of authentic data, the significance in textual and communicative terms of such small words and their function as discourse organisers. Therefore, a discourse-oriented approach to writing (and grammar too) would suggest not only a greater emphasis on contexts larger than the sentence, but also a reassessment of priorities in terms of what is taught about such things as word order, articles, ellipsis, tense and aspect and other syntactic and lexical patterns. In this respect, it is noteworthy to reiterate a basic finding of discourse analysis, namely, the fact that very few devices of grammar are completely context free. In fact, the vast majority of grammatical choices that a writer makes represent rules that depend on certain conditions being met in terms of meaning, situational context and text (Celce-Murcia, 1997:175). This is the case of the following structures which are sensitive to discourse context: passive voice, prenominalisation across clauses, article/determiner choice, position of adverbials in sentences, use of existential *there*, tense-aspect-mood choice, theme/rheme, use of cohesive ties and discourse markers and use of *it-clefts* and *wh-clefts* (ibid.: 176).

The writer's ability to produce the form or construction in question accurately is then but a part of a much larger process in which the semantic, pragmatic and discourse appropriateness of the construction itself is also judged with respect to the context in which it is used. It means that construction cannot rest there. Important as cohesive ties may be, the creation of text as discourse involves another equally important aspect, viz. *coherence*. When writers are producing discourse, they are at the same time busy constructing clauses, making contextual syntactic and lexical choices and monitoring the development of the larger discourse, which includes shared knowledge, the audience and the purpose of the text. In other words, concerns with micro-level (local) choices (cohesion) parallel those with macro-level (coherence) choices as an unfolding production. Such a process is truly tedious and extremely difficult but it reflects the true nature of text construction and discourse creation, giving little heed to one aspect or another results in writing failure.

Let us explain this type of failure. A cohesive text consists of sentences that are linked together in a sequence. But the sequence does not automatically result in any structured text; the text does not seem to be going anywhere. In this sense, it lacks *coherence*. As readers, our first tendency on beginning to read any piece of writing is to assume that it has something to communicate (this is the fundamental assumption underlying the present work), and we immediately set off to make sense of the text, in other words, to make it coherent. If the text displays cohesive ties (reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction in addition to lexical cohesion), we assume that they are there to create textuality by organising sentences into a larger discourse pattern. However, if these devices only serve to stick sentences together in a sequence, the text is then not coherent. It is without purpose; it lacks an overall structure and develops no argument. Hence, despite all our efforts, whatever sense we make of it, it remains fairly restricted. Cohesion is therefore only a first step towards discourse; the second and complementary one is coherence. Both are conventions which typically characterise discourse: conventions concerning the accepted ways of organising thought and formulating intention. Learning to write implies, in fact requires, an understanding and awareness of these conventions and an ability to use them in texts.

2.7 Macro-Level Textuality: Coherence

2.7.1. Coherence and Discourse Unity

While cohesion is regarded as the more limited term (surface-level lexico-grammatical devices), *coherence* is seen as the broader-based concept, encompassing the whole organisational structure of discourse. Widdowson (1978:28) defines *coherence* as the relationship between *illocutionary acts*¹⁵, stressing the purpose or the *rhetorical force* (i.e., the function effect on the reader) of the text as a communicative event. It means that the function of a text determines how information is to be organised. In a similar way, de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981:4) argue that:

Coherence...concerns the ways in which the components of the textual world, i.e., the configuration of concepts and relations which underlie the surface text and are mutually accessible and relevant.

Coherence constitutes then a property of text unity to which writers are sensitive. For Hasan (1984:181), '*Textual coherence is a relative, not an absolute property, so that it is possible to rank a group of texts on a cline from most coherent to least coherent*'. In other words, there is a certain variation in coherence, with the pedagogical implication that novice writers need not produce absolute unity (complete organisation) but need to try to give their text more or less a kind of conventional unity (appropriate organisation in form and intent).

The notion of *appropriateness* suggests that *coherence* is a text quality that is only measurable in terms of a reader's assessment (with regard to the context). For Hoey (1991:12), it may be assumed that '*cohesion is a property of the text, and that coherence is a facet of the reader's evaluation of the text*'. Stated simply, cohesion is objective, capable in principle of immediate recognition, whereas coherence is subjective, underlying meaning patterns, varying from reader to reader. Thus, the presence of cohesiveness signals and predisposes a reader to find a text coherent, that is, it contributes to coherence. It is this meaning which seems to be most relevant to our purposes in text analysis and writing development. It fits our general assumption of discourse as

being manifold in macro-level patterns to which a constellation of local lexico-grammatical choices contribute (cohesion). Indeed, coherence acts as an underlying framework which helps the writer to make his/her material unified and meaningful as discourse. In other words, the overall discourse will become consistent and not contradicted either explicitly or implicitly. This expected consistence and logical flow of ideas will provide ease in reader comprehension.

2.7.2. Writer-Reader Shared Discourse Knowledge

To be coherent, a text needs to make sense to the reader. This is attained by relying on writer-reader *shared discourse knowledge*. The former applies larger discourse patterns to construct a text and the latter makes use of existing background knowledge (schema) to make sense of the text. It is assumed that the efficient reader will activate the necessary discourse framework in decoding the text being read. The frameworks are not only knowledge about the world (content knowledge of natural phenomena, culture, events and behaviour), but also about texts (how texts are typically structured and organised (content and formal schema).

What is clear then is that effective readers are constantly attending to the text, using both micro- and macro-level segmentation of discourse. They also predict what is to come, both in terms of the next few words and in terms of larger patterns. The text will be seen as an artefact arising from a context and a particular set of assumptions of world knowledge, and as an unfolding message in which the writer has encoded a lot more than just content, with cohesive devices acting as signposts and coherence patterns at various stages to guide the reader around. This type of guidance can be regarded as the co-operative principle (Grice 1975; Cf. 102).

Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987, 1992:105) usefully divide the co-operative principle into five criteria: *clarity* (Make everything clear to the reader but do not give more information than is necessary), *reality* (Assume that your readers know how the world works and do not need to know everything), *relevance* (Keep to your topic and your purpose of writing) and *honesty* (State only what you can provide evidence for). Clearly, the application of such a

principle is rather staggering; it requires a good command of lexico-grammatical skills and a control over the various text type structures. Yet, the ability to conform to the co-operative principle is an integral part of any text and a clear sign of its coherence. It constitutes the basis of the reader's expectation about what will happen next.

Thus, while informational texts make use of different combinations of rhetorical modes, the organisational text structure remains much the same; otherwise, it might be extremely difficult to make sense of texts since there would be no room for predictability and inference. That is why, discourse knowledge is specifically suited for providing a framework for building up expectancies of how texts unfold by means of frequently used discourse patterns specific to text types (i.e., information-structure framework).

2.7.3 Text Types and Genre

It may be useful to draw a distinction between *text types* and *genre* so as the relationship between them may be exploited in the classroom. In a large-scale corpus-based study of twenty-three genres and just under one million words, Biber (1988) attempted to distinguish genre from text-type. The former categorises texts on the basis of external criteria, while the latter represents grouping of texts which are similar in linguistic form, irrespective of genre. Thus, the term *genre* describes types of activities such as songs, poems, prayers seminars, expositions, lectures, recipes, manuals, service encounters, news-broadcasts and sermons 'which regularly occur in society' (Dudley-Evans 1989:77), and 'are considered by the speech community as being of the same type' (Richards et.al 1992:156). Swales (1990:58) defines *genre* as

a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes which are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community.

Swales' definition clearly focuses on closely-knit groups such as academic community and conventional genres like scientific articles. For convenience, genre may simply be defined as a communicative event which uses texts in predictable ways to achieve agreed communicative purposes.

Text types, on the other hand, refer to groupings of texts which are similar in terms of co-occurrence of linguistic and organisational patterns. As an illustration, Hoey (1983, 1991) identifies common patterns such as problem-solution, general-particular, matching-contrast, and hypothetical-real texts. Hedge (1988) presents text type categories like static descriptions, process description, narratives, cause-effect, discussion, compare-contrast, classification and reviews. Thus, the terms *genre* and *text type* represent slightly different, yet complementary, perspectives on text organisation (e.g., the genre of recipe requires a procedure organisation type; a student's essay may need an argumentative type).

Similarly, text types may be associated with more than one genre: problem-solution texts can be found within the context of advertisements, scientific discourse, short stories and novels; general-particular texts within the context of poems, scientific texts and novels; and matching contrast texts within the context of letters-to-the-editor.

Given the increased attention being given to the concept of *text type* in ELT, several proposals have been made to set up a typology of text types for the writing curriculum (e.g., Rivers and Temperley, 1978; White, 1980; Hedge 1988; Kaplan, 1977 amongst others). The following classification is a synthesis of the most relevant and authentic text types as well as an attempt to take into account the learners' writing needs (i.e., what learners need to write) in our own learning-teaching context. Moreover, the proposed typology may become a useful checklist from which it will be possible to draw relevant items and organise a writing course, moving from form to function and introducing, along the way, different discourse patterns.

own/personal?

Writing Types	Text Types	Main Characteristics
1. Personal Writing	Diaries, Journals, Shopping lists, Reminders, <u>oneself</u> , Recipes, Aide-memoires	It refers to writing for oneself; it is <u>Usually</u> carried out in 1 st or 2 nd language, but introducing them in FL-writing (e.g., journal writing) may foster motivation.
1. Public Writing	Letters of- <u>C</u> <u>R</u> Enquiry, <u>complaint</u> , <u>request</u> , Form-filling, Applications	It is generally carried out as a member of the general public to organisations or institutions; it involves discourse and contextual awareness (conventions, rules and style).
3. Creative writing	Poems, Stories, Drama Songs, Autobiography	It is essentially for oneself but can be shared with friends and classmates. The main advantage of creative writing is to help personal and imaginative development, self-esteem and improvement of writing skills by means of narratives.
4. Social writing	Letters, Invitations, Notes-of condolence, Thanks, congratulations, Telephone/ Net Messages, Instructions	The main purpose of social writing is to set up and maintain social relationships with friends. It is useful for learners to learn the correct and appropriate formats and formulas.
5. Study writing	Making notes, Taking notes from lectures, Summaries Synopses, Reviews, Reports, Essays, Agendas	It is specific to university-level learners, who need to make notes, summarise and write reports.
6. Institutional writing	Reports/Reviews Business letters Posters Applications Curriculum vitae Academic essay Abstract Dissertation	Its aims are professional (teachers, researchers, advanced students). It involves a familiarisation with the conventions of academic English.

Table 2.9 A Synthesis of Text-type Typology Proposals

The above typology is comprehensive enough to allow us to make a careful selection according to our learners' and institution's needs and to devise

interesting and authentic writing activities. It is true that apart from the specialist learners, who tend to have precise writing needs, it may be difficult to gauge what types of written texts are most useful (letters, essays or articles) for the general language learners. However, both the distinction and classification of text types could be usefully exploited in the writing classroom by providing learners with a complete and explicit view of the discourse components of texts: generic structure (based on its genre category membership), text-type pattern (information organisational structure), and rhetorical function (communicative purpose).

2.7.4. Text Patterns

Discourse patterns refer to the writer's use of conventional ways of organising meanings in texts. As organisational features, they reoccur time and time again in a text and become deeply ingrained as part of the writer's discourse knowledge. The following patterns have been extensively described and illustrated: problem-solution, hypothetical-real, narrative, question-answer and general-specific. What is significant about larger patterns is that they constitute information-structure models (text-type) as a whole with parts rather than as a range of parts as the illustrative texts readily demonstrate.

2.7.4.1 Problem-Solution Pattern

The most common pattern in texts is problem-solution: Situation-problem-solution-response-evaluation. This sequence may be varied, but we do normally expect all the elements to be present in well-formed texts. For example:

46) Invaluable advice for school leavers

Coming face to face with the real world is a tough task for every school leaver. Whether he or she is continuing into further education, or embarking on a career-the transition is still a traumatic one. It is to make the school leaver's path as trouble-free as possible that Bank of Scotland brought out "Move into the Future with a Friend", an important and highly informative guide.

Choosing a career, handling job applications, finding out what college life will be like, making a good impression at interviews-these are just some of the subjects dealt with in this highly readable booklet. "Move into the Future with a Friend" is literally brimming with inspired hints that really make a difference to performance and morale. The chances are, that a little practical advice on managing finances will also go down well. Our special booklet is full of tips on successful budgeting, obtaining financial guidance and running a bank account.

All in all, "Move into the Future with a Friend" is an exceptional guide no school leaver should be without. And because we're pleased to have as a customer, we're offering it to you FREE- for your children or those of friends or members of the family.

(source: Bank of Scotland, 1988; classroom writing material)

Meta-Discourse Descriptive Card:

TextPattern: Solution-Problem-Evaluation

Text Type: Advertisement

Rhetorical Function: Persuasion

Paragraph 1: Situation (transition from school to college)



Problem (traumatic transition)

Paragraph 2: Solution (Bank-guiding booklet)



Paragraph 3: Evaluation/Response (exceptional free guide)

In this text, a situation is first established which contains a problematic fact—facing a new world for school-leavers (making a transition from school to college). The problem is then stated explicitly in a clearer way: 'the transition... is a traumatic one'. A solution is afterward proposed, along with evaluation to support it (an exceptional free package of tips on financial management). Pedagogically, the above meta-discourse pattern can be transformed into a classroom worksheet:

Situation: What is the present situation facing a new School-leaver?

Problem: Is it a serious problem? What is it?

Solution: Is there a solution to the problem? What is it?

Evaluation: How good is the proposed solution?

(Worksheet 1: classroom writing material)

An understanding of the underlying organisational pattern of the text can be very useful to students who will, in turn, learn to use it in their own texts, moving from smaller to larger texts.

2.7.4.2 Question-Answer Pattern

In question-answer pattern, a situation is set up which contains an unanswered question. This also constitutes the topic of the text and the topic sentence of the first paragraph. Gradual answers are then offered, along with evidence or authoritative support for them. Here is an example:

47) From Chicago to Seattle

What was the Seattle eruption? A movement more plural than singular, its elements not only diverse but frequently divergent. Anti-sweatshop activists have been mobilising for a couple of years, mostly quietly; local environmentalists and indigenous groups, however, invisible, never went away.

What draws these groups together is their insistence on some measure of popular control over major decisions governing our vastly unequal world. Some of the activists are better informed than others, some more careful, some more reckless, some calmer, some more paranoid. Most exaggerate the powers of World Trade Organisation.

The WTO stands for every closed-door decision by every national, corporate or multinational board that cuts a swath through lives, leaving people with the seasick feeling that they've lost solid ground.

(source: Professor Todd Gitlin, New York University, in Newsweek, December 13, 1999, p.2)

Meta-Discourse Descriptive Card

Text pattern: Question → General Answer → Specific Answer → More Specific Answer → General Answer

Text Type: Argumentative Essay

Rhetorical Function: Argumentation

General Question 1: What was the Seattle eruption(situation)?

General Answer: diverse interests And groups

Specific Answer: call for justice

More Specific Answer: Nature of Groups and worries

General Answer2: Power of symbols

Worksheet 2 (writing worksheet; classroom material)

2.7.4.3. General-Specific

General specific patterns can be found in reference texts, aiming at exposing and explaining a given topic (encyclopedia, textbook, newspaper and magazine articles). As an organisational principle of informational writing, general-specific pattern can be used for a wide variety of purposes. Generalisations are therefore very important in writing and very useful in starting off a piece of writing. They are very powerful statements, representing a large number of specific details, supported by examples. Their textual function is clearly shown in the following article on the benefits of apples.

48) Apple of the Doctor's Eye

If the editors of the 1826 edition of Thomas Culpeper's *Complete Herbal* have an opportunity to listen in heaven to research workers of the Medical School of St. George's Hospital they will be thrilled.

The five-year study at St. George's confirms Culpeper's opinion that apples are good for the lungs. He, or his 19th century followers, recommended baked apples for asthmatics and roasted or boiled apples for those with tuberculosis or other inflammatory lung diseases. At St. George's, tests have been shown that as few as five apples a week can increase lung capacity by 138mls. This increase can prove valuable to the young but breathless when it comes to climbing hills.

Culpeper found many other uses for apples in medicine, and noted that it also has an effect on the bowels...

(source: The TIMES, February 2000, p.15)

Meta-Discourse Descriptive Card

Text pattern: general statement (situation)→ specific statement (major detail)→specific statement (evidence)→further specific statement (evidence);

Text type (generic structure): expository article

Rhetorical function: explain and report

The text first establishes a situation (daten scientist's name, book title, modern medical school). The general statement learly states the topic (medical benefits of apples), supported by a series of specific statements giving authoritative evidence .

General Statement (situation): confirmation of The medical benefits of apples
 ↓
 Specific Statement (evidence): similar results Of the past and present
 ↓
 (increase in lung capacity)
 ↓
 More Specific Statement (further Evidence): benefits for breathless Youngsters

Worksheet 3 (writing worksheet; classroom material)

2.7.4.4 Claim-Counterclaim Pattern

Claim-counterclaim patterns occur frequently in academic settings, especially in humanities and the social sciences, and in the letter-to-the-editor pages of newspapers and magazines. They are appropriate for debating and arguing a case or a conflicting topic. The text below illustrates discursive writing in which the writer arrives at a conclusion by reasoning through claims and counterclaims. The psychologist considers various aspects of his topic (intelligence) and then proceeds to make a contrastive statement of his own carefully thought-out opinion about the matter.

49) Intelligence

When we talk about intelligence, we do not mean the ability to get a good score on a test or even the ability to do well in school. These things are only indicators of something far more important. By intelligence we mean a way of behaving in various situations, particularly new and problematic ones. The true test of intelligence is not how much we know how to do, but how we behave when we do not know what to do.

The intelligent person, meeting a new situation, opens himself up to it and grapples with it imaginatively and hopefully. He thinks about the problem, rather than what it might cause to happen to him. Even if he fails, he looks without shame at his mistakes and tries to learn from them. This is intelligence. Clearly, its roots lie in a certain feeling about life. It is a total set of attitudes.

Bright and dull children, then, are very different. The bright child is curious about life and eager to get involved in it. The dull child, however, is less interested in the real world, more inclined to live in worlds of fantasy. The bright child likes to experiment, to try things out. If he can't do something one way, he'll try another. However, the dull child is usually afraid to try at all. If he fails, he will give up.

The bright child is patient. He can tolerate uncertainty and failure, and will keep trying until he gets an answer. Very often he doesn't want to be told how to solve a problem or solve the puzzle he has struggled with. In contrast, the dull child cannot stand uncertainty or failure. To him, an unanswered question is not a challenge or an opportunity, but a threat. If he can't work out the answer quickly, it must be give to him.

For the dull child, then, the world we live in is senseless, unpredictable, and worrying. He feels that he can never tell what may happen, particularly in a new situation, except that it will most probably be bad. The bright child, however, feels the world to be reasonable, fascinating and comfortable place.

(Adapted from John Holt. 1974. *How Children Fail*. Pp.163-64)

The writer displays a genuine interest in the subject under discussion (intelligence) and offers an adequate amount of information and explanation on it; he makes a claim, immediately followed by a counter-claim. The text is argumentative in that it explains both types of behaviour and moves, by means of evidence, to a rational and considered opinion.

Meta-Discourse Descriptive Card

Text Pattern: Claim→Counter-claim→Evidence (through explanation) + Evidence (through contrast)+ Evidence (through contrast)→Conclusion (deduction)

Text Type: Academic discursive text

Rhetorical Function: Argumentation through contrast

Paragraph 1: Claim- what intelligence is not/ Counter-claim: what intelligence is;

Paragraph 2: Evidence (through explanation);

Paragraph 3: Evidence (through contrast);

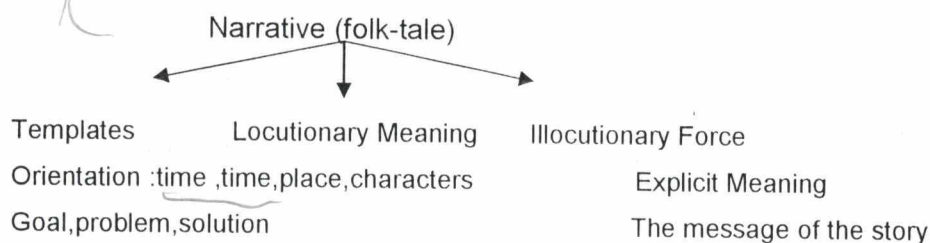
Paragraph 4: Evidence (contrast);

Paragraph 5: Deduction (logical opinion)

Worksheet 4 (Classroom-writing material; author's data)

2.7.4.5. Orientation-Complication-Resolution-Opinion (Narrative)

Labov's work on narratives (1977 in Hatch, 1992) identified a common structure, especially, in fictional writing like folktales. Narratives usually begin with the *orientation*, which includes the time of the story and its spatial setting, and the characters and their roles. In English narratives, copula sentences (use of be), presentatives (there is/are) and descriptive relative clauses are often used to establish characters within the setting. Narratives have *illocutionary force*—what message is the story-teller trying to convey to the reader? The reader recognises when a story is well done or when it is not. This means that we must have in mind some text structure, predictable in narrative writing. Labov (1977 in Hatch 1992:166-67) proposed the following one:



This top-level schematic text structure could be usefully adapted to the writing classroom and given to learners as a task worksheet for story analysis as is the case with the following poem:

50) A Simple Twist of Fate

They sat together in the park
As the evening sky grew dark;
She looked at him and he felt a spark
Tingle to his bones.
shade
It was then he felt alone
And wished that he'd gone straight
And watched out for a simple twist of fate.

They walked along by the old canal
A little confused, I remember well,
And stopped into a strange hotel
With a neon burning bright
Hit him like a freight train
Moving with a simple twist of fate.

A saxophone someplace far off played
As she was walking by the arcade
As the light burst through a beat-up

Where he was waking up,
She dropped a coin into a cup
Of a blind man at the gate
And forgot about a simple twist of fate.

He hears the ticking of the clocks
And walks along with a parrot that talks;
Hunts her down by the waterfront docks
Where the sailors all come in.
Maybe she'll pick him out again.
How long must he wait
One more time for a simple twist of fate?

(Bob Dylan, 1974; classroom writing material)

Meta-Discourse Descriptive Card

Text pattern: orientation→complication→resolution→impression

Text type: poem

Rhetorical Function: narration

Orientation (major characters and setting): a couple (he and she); a park near the Waterfront and a hotel;

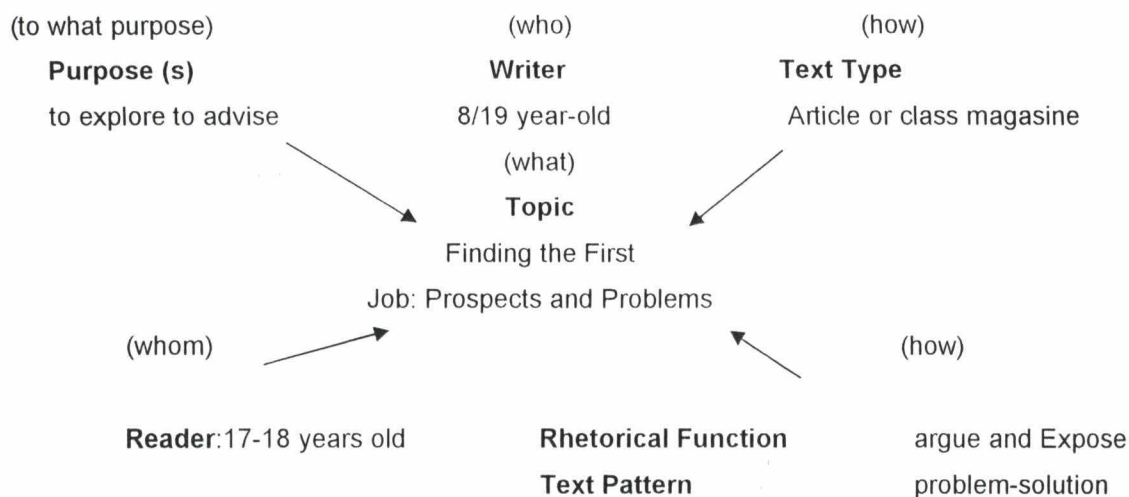
Complication (a series of events unfolds and a crisis develops): encounter followed by separation;

Resolution (the crisis is resolved): hope for a new and a lasting encounter;

Impression (the final stage in which the writer may express an attitude/impression): One needs to take his/her chance as it comes to avoid eventual regret.

Worksheet 5: classroom writing material

Being able to talk about a piece of writing in such explicit terms is clearly useful both for the teacher and the learner (as classroom experience has shown) since it gives an indication of its structure and function and guides the learners to follow suit in their own text creation. It also offers a set of concepts and vocabulary to teach the text structure and development. In fact, the objectives of this kind of practice are threefold: a) to help students consciously and explicitly structure their texts and effectively control different writing tasks; b) to allow them to negotiate different strategies to produce successful texts through guidance and understanding; and c) to give them a chance to build a rich informational background on the characteristics of good texts through explicit descriptions. Here is an illustration of how descriptive frameworks of text structure discussed above (Cf. Kaplan's framework, p.97) could be usefully adapted to fit the writing classroom objectives of text construction and creation.



Worksheet 6: Discourse Knowledge and Text Creation: A Practical Classroom Illustration

2.7.5. Topical Structure Analysis

Another particularly effective strategy for describing coherence in texts, which could also be translated into classroom strategy instruction, is *topical structure analysis* (henceforth, TSA) (Connor and Farmer, 1990; Connor, 1990). The effectiveness stems from the focus on the semantic relationships that exist between sentence topics and the overall discourse topic. By closely looking at sequences of sentences and examining how topics in the sentences work through the text to progressively build meaning, it will be possible to identify both local (i.e., cohesion) and global coherence of texts—whether the text exhibits a clear focus and a recognisable discourse topic or not. More specifically, TSA examines how topics repeat, shift and return to earlier topics in texts. It involves therefore a clear identification of sentence topics, determining sentence progression and charting the progress of sentence topic through the text.

The analysis tries to identify three types of sentence progression: parallel, sequential and extended parallel (Lautamatti, 1987 in Connor 1996:85). In parallel progression, the sentence topics are semantically identical; in sequential progression, the sentence topics are always different since the comment of the previous sentence becomes the topic of the next sentence; and in extended parallel progression, the first and the last topics of the text are the

same but are temporarily interrupted by a sequential progression (Connor and Farmer, 1990:127). In the first type, repetition of the topic is meant to reinforce the idea of the reader; in the second, the fact that sentence topics are derived from the content of the comment in the previous sentence helps to develop individual topics by adding details to an idea. In the third types, the writer returns to a topic mentioned earlier in the text. To clarify how the system works in texts, let us look at some examples.

50) Parallel Progression

(1)Chocolates are a national craving. (2) Records show that they are sold in huge quantities- 11.2 pounds per capita per year. (3) Designer chocolates often sell for nearly 30 /lb. (4) It is obvious that these candies are America's number one choice.

(1) chocolates→(2) they→(3) Designer chocolates→(4) these candies

Sequential Progression

(1)Computer interviews are used by market researchers to assess product demand. (2) Using these, many different products are analyzed. (3) For example, people may be asked about detergents.

(1) Computer interviews→(2) Products→(3)detergents

Extended parallel progression

(1) Body language varies from culture to culture.(2) To say yes, Americans nod their heads up and down.(3) Japanese and Italians use the same nod to say no.(4)Body language is an important skill for international managers.

(1) Body language→(2)Americans→(3)Japanese and Italians→Body language

(source: Connor and Farmer, 1990:131)

Adapting this suggested analytical method of coherence to classroom instruction involves careful text analysis with students and a familiarisation with the use of topic sentences in text development.

TSA is a fairly complex strategy which requires an ability to identify sentence topics, determine sentence progression and revise the progress of sentence topics. In other words, the writer is expected to be constantly aware of the coherence quality of the text by monitoring the topic progression. This in turn involves a familiarity with cohesive ties and information organisation within sentences. The main difficulty lies in the fact that topics do not always coincide with the grammatical subject of the sentence but rather with its discourse

meaning. It seems that awareness and understanding of topical structure, albeit difficult at the beginning, will likely improve the coherence of learners' texts. TSA may be an effective strategy to help improve a low-level text into a coherent one, specifically with regard to clear focus and better development. Forcing students to focus on the meaning of individual sentences and their relations will make of them careful and critical readers of their own texts (a re-reading strategy which is very important in the composing process). In other words, they will learn to assess both global coherence (what the overall text is about) and local coherence (how sentences build meaning in relation to each other and the text topic). In this respect, TSA has been used to explain differences among high-and low-rated texts, with the former expected to show a higher proportion of sequential progression which pulls the text back to its main topic. The following text-coherence (discussion of intelligence (text 49)) could be further improved by encouraging the student to apply TSA (coherence chart) during the revision process.

(52) Intelligence

(1) For the majority of people, intelligence is to get high scores and good marks. (2) But the psychologists say that it is only one side. (3) To know how to do is not enough, to know how to do when you don't know is the most important. (4) James O. Whittaker said, 'We know that there is not a perfect relationship that determines ease or difficulty in learning.' (5) To be intelligent is to know how to deal with problems. (6) The obstacles aren't frightening and we believe that getting over is always possible and nothing can stop us. (7) To think that bad periods are only temporary is also to be intelligent because to be optimist makes that we do everything as possible; (8) we search, ask, and try to return the things alright. (9) A failure doesn't mean that life stops here. (10) On the contrary, we learn a lot of things which help us in the future. (11) That is what we call an experience. (12) However, a dull person always sees life in its wrong side. (13) He is alive because he breathes, that is his life conception. (14) He is discouraged by the smaller failure and the world seems to him a dark tunnel. (15) He feels sad, anxious and stay right in his place. (16) We have to be strong, to find our own way and to follow it whatever happens.

(First-year student, 1999; author's data)

Worksheet 8: Coherence Chart

- Parallel (1) , intelligence.....
 (2)..... it.....
- Sequential (3) To know how to do.....
 (4)..... ease or difficulty in learning
 (5) To be intelligent.....
 (6) The obstacles.....
 (7)..... to be intelligent.
 (8) We search....(?)
- Sequential (9) A failure.....
 (10)..... a lot of things (?).....
 (11)..... experience.....
- Parallel (12)..... dull person.....
 (13) He, → (14) He →, (15) He.....
 (16) We.....

The text, even though acceptable in terms of language and organisation, displays different sentence topics, resulting in too much sequential progression to allow for adequate development. The writer needs to make changes to develop the sub-topics better and to adhere to the focus more consistently. By using a coherence-chart strategy, this high-level proficiency student will be able to sort out her ideas more coherently and become aware of how individual sentence topics actually build up together the overall discourse topic and purpose. She will be able to avoid the pitfall of drifting from one sub-topic to another.

As a matter of fact, writers who fail to connect what they are saying in any particular sentence to what they have said earlier are likely to be open to the charge of drifting from one topic to another (i.e., no clear focus). One should, therefore, be encouraging those who are learning to write to think of their writing as it evolves progressively through sentences to build up connexions between what they are currently saying and what they have previously said and later intend to say. The implications are that making connections across the text would be particularly important with regard to topic sentences. The existence of central sentences are that writers who see what

they have to say in terms of a series of interconnected sentences are more likely to succeed in producing highly valued writing than those who make it up as they go along. The analysis of text paragraphs in terms of topic, its comment and sequence may be very helpful in suggesting strategies (e.g., paragraph structure analysis) for improved text coherence and readability.

2.7.6. Paragraph Structure Analysis

Paragraph structure analysis (henceforth, PSA) may also constitute a very useful textual strategy during the writing and revising stages. A paragraph consists of a sequence of sentences, forming a unity of ideas. It focuses on the topic sentence, the main statements and supporting points. In other words, the writer is expected to structure the sequence of sentences in such a way that the information in one is so presented that its connexion with the previous and the one that follows is made clear. For instance, some of the sequences that writers use to explain and debate are as follows: a clear statement of the thesis, topic or purpose; use of main ideas to develop or clarify the topic; use of supporting details (examples, evidence); supporting by telling/describing; supporting by showing (giving evidence, facts, statistics); supporting by linking cause and effect; or supporting by using comparison/contrast.

If we examine a paragraph in Holt's text on intelligence (No49), we will discover a tight and systematic organisation of sentences so as to yield an idea unity.

Sentence 1	Main Statement	<i><u>Bright and dull children</u> are very different</i>
Sentence 2	Description of Characteristic	<i><u>The bright child</u> is curious about life and eager to get involved in it.</i>
Sentence 3	Clarification	Clarification of Characteristic <i>In other words, there is no wall between <u>him</u> and life.</i>
Sentence 4	Clarification/Contrast	Contrastive Description of Characteristic <i>However, the <u>dull child</u> is inclined to live in worlds of fantasy.</i>

Sentences 2, 3 and 4 all support the main statement (extended parallel sequence). The writer employs both descriptive and contrastive methods to

support and clarify the main statement. There is a clear focus and an idea unit (difference in behaviour) which contribute to the overall coherence of the text discourse-topic. It is this systematic organisation of paragraphs which enables the reader to follow, understand and, perhaps, adhere to the text argument.

Paragraphing may constitute a potential problem area for learners, especially when they will have to deal with complex ideas and information. A text may consist of long strings of sentences, making it difficult for the reader to follow the relationship between main and subsidiary points or understand the writer's purpose. It is clear then that learners need to develop an awareness of and familiarisation with the organisational features of texts and employ useful textual strategies such as TSA and PSA during the composing process of text creation.

2.7.7. Rhetorical Structure Analysis: Organisation Modes

Rhetorical structure analysis (henceforth, RSA) refers to the methods of organisation selected to develop a topic in order to achieve a specific function (Hatch 1992:164). It offers a top-down perspective on text since it concerns the overall development of ideas. Kaplan (1997) defines the term *rhetoric* as 'the method of organising syntactic patterns into larger patterns'. Traditionally, rhetoric has been considered as *persuasive discourse*: the logic of an argument and its persuasiveness (making a point and winning over an audience through a convincing logical presentation). This definition seems to take a rather narrow perspective on rhetoric since the focus is clearly on static rhetorical form of argumentative persuasion (probably, the most complex of all organisation modes). A wider perspective, which looks at rhetoric from a dynamic textual organisation to perform a variety of functions, appears to us to be preferable. Therefore, the term *rhetoric* is used in this work to denote the types of text organisation or development. The most preferable types in English are description, narration, cause-effect, classification, argumentation and comparison-contrast. Each type has a slightly different structure, which gives writers considerable flexibility in text organisation.

In language use, most writers have a purpose or an intention that inspires or compels them to write—to persuade, to advise, to request, to argue,

to entertain, to explain, to experiment, to expose and the like; hence, the term *rhetorical acts*.¹⁶ These functions are the uses or pragmatics of discourse: the results that writers hope to achieve. To do so, they adopt, among other choices, a convenient method of development (where to start, what sequence to follow, which aspects to stress, what lexico-grammatical and textual features to employ). Not only does the appropriate organisational choice help to perform the intended act but it also contributes to the overall text coherence. Thus, if we grant that there is a distinction between means (methods) and ends (acts), then the developmental sequence of texts have to take into account the *appropriateness* of method to purpose.

In a seminal article entitled, *A Theory of Discourse* (1971) in Kinneavy (1982), Kinneavy distinguishes means and aims in text development and organises discourse into four main types: reference (emphasis on the subject), persuasive (emphasis on the reader), literary (emphasis on language) and expressive (emphasis on the writer). According to this distinction, methods of developing discourse such as comparison-contrast, definition and cause-effect are *means* to the *end* and should not be confused with the *aim* of discourse. The text purpose (the aim) disciplines the means. When both aim and means are taken into account, the focus is on the social function of the text, arguing (persuasive), explaining (referential), remembering or observing (expressive and literary).

The pedagogical relevance of such a model lies in making explicit to the learners the nature and properties of each organisational method: specifying its potential aim, appropriacy to the topic and formal features. That is to say, the proposed classification makes use of two bases: means (method) and aims (acts), starting from the least to the most complex method (Cf. ^Aappendix 2.1 for a pedagogically based typology of text development methods and aims).

Each organisational method has a slightly different structure in terms of topic-development, rhetorical purpose and textual properties. The structure, however, is flexible enough to be combined with another in order to achieve the intended aim (e.g., classification and description to expose and clearly explain a complex system or topic). This flexibility illustrates the fact that methods do overlap, but their division remains both convenient and helpful as a way of

thinking about the structure of texts and the functioning of writing. Furthermore, the explicit description of each mode will assist learners in making appropriate choices in terms of topic/method/purpose and to use texts in *predictable* ways to make room for the reader's expectancies (i.e., shared knowledge). That is why, a learner's clear understanding of the nature of writing methods will certainly contribute to his/her discourse awareness and writing effectiveness.

2.7.7.1 Narrative Writing

Narrative writing tells a sequence of event, focusing on how the sequence started, developed and ended. Two types of narration can be distinguished: fiction and non-fiction. The former covers all products that come as a result of a person's imagination. The latter consists of accounts based on true facts: a period of history, a person's biography, or a real event. While fictional narration stems from the writer's own reaction and emotion, non-fiction narration is essentially informative following a straight-line (i.e., a time-line sequence) with emphasis on the most important facts. Narrative writing, whether fictional or factual, is typically flexible and may be combined with another type such as description or impression.

2.7.7.2 Descriptive Writing

Because many writing tasks demand the reproduction of details, descriptive writing is a basic element in the writer's craft. It is essentially concerned with the outward and visible signs of a place, person or object. The function of description is to focus on what is seen, heard, touched or felt. In other words, it conveys any of the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. A writer's memories are stocked full of images and sensations from the past. It is a requirement of descriptive writing that he/she harnesses the ability to recall and describe. One's experiences are the most important source for description—they make the best of texts. After learning to recreate experience in written words, then the writer can easily move into the world of abstract ideas where details other than those based upon experience are often needed to support a written text.

Two types of description may be distinguished: static and process. The former describes the location of a place, its objects and equipment (how objects are laid out). Such description may need to be very detailed (e.g., describing a scene), general (describing a geographical area) or technical (giving minute details of an object). Since the primary aim is to inform the reader through an accurate and precise account, the writer may resort to visuals to help the reader visualise the relations more clearly (e.g., a map, plan, diagram) by adding further information to the text or to emphasise a different aspect of the supplied information. Descriptions of locations are commonly organised according to conventional ways of looking at scenes: general to particular, whole to part, large to small, outside / inside, top to bottom and left to right. Besides impersonal or objective description, there is a subjective or emotional one, through which the writer attempts to communicate his/her feelings and arouse in the reader the same felt emotions. The latter (process) explains how to accomplish some task or how something works. It is meant to describe to the reader how to meet a goal through a sequence of ordered steps by moving forward in a logical, step-by-step sequence.

2.7.7.3 Impressionistic Writing

Impressionistic writing commonly occurs with emotional description. It refers to the writing about the impressions that the writer receives from a given stimulus (an object, a person, or a scene) which creates a set of sensations (either of pleasure or certain irritation). This writing method concerns then the writer's reaction to the experiences and pressures made upon him/her and the use of text as a means of communication to gain the reader's attention. The requirement of impressionistic writing is essentially lexical—to be able to choose successfully the appropriate lexis, with the basic human feelings that involve (a) *perception* (the way in which the writer senses things in general and sees things in particular), and (b) *response* (how one's emotions cope with these experiences).

2.7.7.4 Expository Writing

Expository writing is, undoubtedly, the most common type of writing development, serving a variety of purposes (to explain, to inform, to illustrate and to analyse).¹⁷ It is the kind of writing through which we conduct our everyday life (from letters of application and business letters to the elaboration of a report or an essay). Whether we wish to elaborate and present a complex theory about a problem, or to communicate the procedure of immigration to a friend, we will need to resort to exposition. To put it simply, we may refer to exposition as writing that explains by answering the questions *how* and *why* on a variety of topics (people, things, events, facts, ideas, or a mixture of all these). It covers therefore a wide range of subjects with the ultimate aim of informing the reader through logic: to think, analyse and interpret. Exposition resembles a discussion or a debate in which the writer is expected to use convenient development methods to make both views and explanations clear. What actually differentiates expository writing from the other types is that it employs a number of modes to achieve the clarity principle: definition, classification, cause-effect and / or comparison-contrast.

2.7.7.5. Argumentative Writing

There is no doubt that argumentative writing is both the most advanced and complex type. It consists of a method through which the writer arrives at a conclusion by reasoning and presenting the various aspects of a question (usually a complicated or conflicting one) in a logical way. The writer is expected to consider in turn each aspect and then proceeds to make a statement of his/her own carefully thought-out opinion about the issue. The rhetorical aim is twofold: to convince the reader of the relevance and pertinence of the expressed point of view and to persuade him/her to accept it as true. Hence, the label persuasive or discursive discourse.

An argumentative text is conventionally expected to display a number of features: (a) a genuine interest in the subject matter under discussion and a provision of an adequate amount of information about that subject; (b) an ability to see both sides of an argument and to clearly present opposing views; and (c) a rational method to arrive at a considered conclusion by moving steadily

through conflicting arguments. Needless to say that this is a colossal task which is likely to pose serious problems (to both native and non-native speakers): one^X is that it requires a firm lexico-grammatical and discourse knowledge. Another problem is more personal. Whenever people argue, certain features of personality are likely to emerge, resulting in one-sided and subjective presentation (here, there is plainly a need for *pragmatic knowledge*: to be tentative rather than totally true and to use hedging strategies through indirect modals like might, could and can and less imposing expressions such appear and seem). To do so, the writer then needs to use an appropriate *style* by means of terms that express strong probability rather than universal truth (e.g., it is generally agreed that...) and to adopt a rational sequence: introduction (a brief lead-in to the subject stating its importance, topicality and perhaps, an aspect of its history); development (a series of paragraphs each dealing with a relevant topic that presents arguments for and against); and conclusion (a balanced opinion based on reading and careful evaluation of the arguments).

In sum, the focus on rhetorical writing organisation and function captures the essence of text development: the fact that text-organising modes are not static but flexible, most often functioning as parts of a text rather than constituting the whole text. They change as we put them to use in meaningful communication. In other words, it is not that writing uses certain forms but rather we select appropriate forms more often than others to achieve specific purposes. In this view, the proposed analytical strategy may be useful in helping learners to make appropriate rhetorical choices when writing texts on a variety of topics. Clearly, they need to think about different kinds of information and different ways of organising their texts. The issue remains therefore as to how^{to} assist them in developing an ability to apply appropriately the different organisational modes. ²On suggestion, implicit in the given illustrations, is to work through a sequence of analytical strategies using explicit worksheets , with emphasis on textual organisation according to the function and purpose of the text and to gradually familiarise them with the notion of style in writing.

2.8 Writing Styles and Registers

2.8.1 Style

Style is a major writing issue that faces all writers at advanced levels: it has to do with the appropriacy of text to context (i.e., how to construct a relationship with a reader).¹⁸ In general, style refers to a continuum, ranging from formal to informal because the only thing that can be demonstrated is that one style contains more linguistic characteristics indicative of formal or informal language use. From a writing perspective, two major aspects of style are commonly dealt with: *formality* and *hedging* or *commitment*. Formality represents the quality of a text which determines the sort of relationship which the writer wishes to establish with the reader. In English, it is often associated with grammatical forms which are personal or impersonal and which create either maximum or closer distance between the interactants. In fact, three factors affect formality: the choice of vocabulary, the use of personal or impersonal forms, and the complexity of sentences.

Hedging represents a process in which a writer reduces his/her commitment to a particular idea through the use of lexical or grammatical devices (e.g., modality). It is a way of describing the extent to which a writer has been willing to take responsibility for the truth and authority of the assertion he/she is making. Issues of hedging and commitment are central to the way in which writers signal their sense of authority. Again, it is vitally important to be able to signal to the reader where a writer stands in relation to what he/she is writing about. In this light, linguistic studies in the field of pragmatics (the ways in which language use is influenced by context) have heightened awareness of the degree to which culturally-related factors (i.e., appropriate level of formality and degree of politeness in discourse) are central to successful communication (Tomalin and Stempelski 1993:5-6).

It comes as no surprise therefore that EFL writers, even the advanced ones, often fail to achieve an appropriate degree of formality and commitment. The realisation that even with an error-free writing, communication may not be effective is just beginning to dawn:

The problem typically presents itself when we come across a piece of writing that is apparently correct in its surface features...Very often we find that it is in the ordering of the material, the treatment of previous writers, or the degree of tentativeness (my emphasis) that cause the piece of writing to seem to belong to another culture.

(Brooks and Grundy, 1990:30)

To be successful, writers need to learn to make appropriate choices from the linguistic system and to match their text to their readership in a way that ensures maximum impact.

Style is thus a result of the selected linguistic items, which are dependent on factors such as culture, context and text; it depends on the writer's awareness of the readership's expectations regarding the appropriate level of formality and politeness. Knowing who the reader is provides the writer with a context without which it will be very difficult to know what style and register to use (i.e., to know what to put in, what to leave out, how formal or informal to be).

2.8.2 Register

Register is a variety of language corresponding to a variety of situation: a variation in language use that goes with variation in the context of situation. It includes the expressions and grammatical features that typically convey meanings in a particular situation. A register is therefore defined according to use or function—the activity in which the language is functioning. This takes place primarily at the lexical level (it is usually a terminology belonging to a certain situation or a certain subject area which distinguishes one register from another: standard English, legal English, English of journalism, English of educated writers, colloquialisms, slang, jargon and the like). The implication is that registers, like styles, become an important skill, albeit a complex area of language, at advanced levels of writing. Advanced learners cannot learn only one register and use it indiscriminately (as is, unfortunately, always the case) in all situations. Failure to use the appropriate register may lead to incongruities and embarrassment.

In sum, it may be fair to argue that in spite of being in a lesser degree of urgency, stylistic and register inappropriacies remain important problem

areas of writing, especially at advanced levels. An ability to write in a variety of styles and registers is likely to increase a writer's effectiveness when it comes to addressing different audiences and adjusting to specific writing contexts. Learners may manage to develop an adequate linguistic repertoire but not be able to implement this appropriately for particular contexts; they may also have a clear understanding of the need for different levels of formality but not have sufficient linguistic range to achieve the effects they desire or may simply rely on their own cultural background to employ politeness strategies. In the case of learners, perhaps the majority, who neither have linguistic range nor a discourse awareness of context, disaster (usually called *failure*) looms ahead at each moment they put pen to paper.

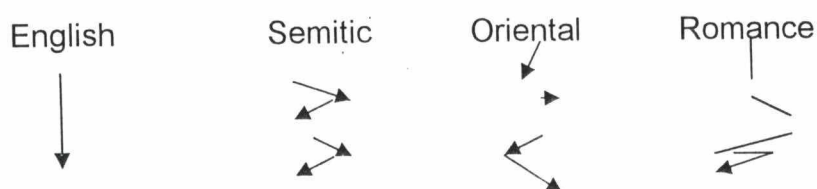
2.9 Discourse and Culture

Up to now, our discussion has clearly demonstrated the fact that most potential writing difficulties may be relatable to lack of language-system knowledge and the tedious problem of coping with global discourse planning when one is still under great stress grappling with the sentence level. To put it simply, the biggest problem for our learners is certainly inadequate linguistic knowledge. However, what of those difficulties (the above-mentioned discourse-patterning, style, rhetoric and register) that may be relatable to the fact that the learners' writing experience has been fashioned (perhaps, shaped) by a culture (or cultures) quite different from the English one. Classroom experience has shown that learners do employ strategies that do not adhere to the conventional norms of text construction in English. Does this mean that there may be well-established writing conventions used by Algerian learners that are different and might therefore be expected to interfere with discourse-level decision-making of the learner writing in English? A satisfactory answer to this thorny question may not be possible because the exact nature of the problem is not itself easy to identify; it has to do with underlying cultural assumptions about the written text.

The area of linguistic study which concerns itself with the relationship between culture and writing is *contrastive rhetoric*— 'the comparison of discourse structures across cultures and genres...and the inculcation of culturally intellectual traditions and ideologies' (Connor 1996:15). Contrastive

rhetoric has spawned, since its appearance in 1966 by Kaplan, a vast literature of its own, and a somewhat confusing one. On one hand, linguists claim to have evidence of discourse patterns in other languages which have no counterpart in English writing; on the other hand, there is disagreement over whether these patterns interfere when the learner writes in English. Various studies have contrasted coherence and discourse patterns across language to figure out the likely differences and hypothetical interference (Kaplan, 1966, 1997; Kachru 1997; Maurannen, 1993; Connor, 1996 amongst others). One of the renowned and most influential works has been Kaplan's study (1966) on the organisation of paragraphs in ESL students' essays.

Kaplan (1966) (in Connor 1996:15) identified five types of paragraph development for five groups, as indicated in his diagram, showing that L1 rhetorical structures were evident in L2 writing of his sample students:



Kaplan's diagram displayed a typology for textual progression with different types associated with different cultures. Thus, in English, text is characteristically linear and hierarchical, while Semitic (Arabic and Hebrew) is characterised by parallelism and coordination. For Kaplan, therefore, the possibility that writing in different cultures may differ in important ways, not least in the logical development of ideas.

This position has been criticised for several reasons: for being too ethnocentric and privileging the writing of native English speakers and for considering transfer from a first language as negative. Albeit influential at the beginning, Kaplan's findings do not seem to be very significant, nor that they explain basic writing problems for EFL learners (whether difficulty is due to natural difficulty with local encoding or cross-linguistic interference).¹⁹ Language teachers are therefore left with their own experience and data as the most reliable resources for deciding whether interference is a problem. Generally, examination of our learners' texts reveals the basic problem of language

knowledge: bad discourse organisation often accompanies poor lexico-grammatical knowledge. That is to say, there appear to be clause-and-sentence-level problems that demand higher priority in teaching. It is not always easy to separate discourse-level weaknesses from the local lexico-grammatical ones, especially when the latter are thick on the ground in a piece of learner writing.

Nevertheless, there is still room for practising high-order features of text discourse by means of the above-suggested textual strategies (text patterns, text types, TSA, PSA and RSA) accompanied by discussion on macro-level decisions: the ordering of the material, the treatment of previous writers, the degree of tentativeness and hedging. Such a discussion may gradually help learners to match their own cultural assumptions about good writing strategies with those of the users of English texts. Similarly, there are discourse features that do lend themselves to direct intervention, for example, discourse-signalling vocabulary, appropriate use of conjunctions and other cohesive devices (reference, substitution, ellipsis).

2.10 Composing Knowledge

Paying attention to the grammar and discourse features described and discussed above is a partial means of attending to the writer's responsibility towards the reader, in terms of assisting orientation to the writer's argument and giving signals to the reader as to how the elements of the text relate to one another. The other means concerns the writer's *composing knowledge*, that is the complex process proficient writers go through and that includes a number of high-level cognitive and composing operations that occur simultaneously. In effect, some writers appear to have developed a much better understanding of how to make the process operate effectively both for writing and learning as a whole. Therefore, it would certainly be useful for us as writers and teachers to closely examine this *composing process* with the purpose of figuring out just what it entails as strategies and how it fits with the other types of knowledge, namely, linguistic and discourse.

The main underlying assumption of composing knowledge is that text creation is *recursive and cognitive*—writing is not fixed but is very much what

the writer makes of it, reformulating the task into an increasingly complex process. This process consists of cognitive operations: thinking, planning, composing and revising. As such, writing comes to form what Vygotsky (1978 in Brumfit 1990) calls *higher mental processes*: the ability to plan, evaluate, memorise and reason. In a similar way, it constitutes a psychological shift from *knowledge-telling* strategies (a kind of unstructured outpouring typical of spoken discourse) to *knowledge-transforming* strategies (a conscious mental attention to conventional discourse structures of texts) (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987). Thus, the allocation of mental capacity plays a key role in learning to compose a text, with increasing conscious attention to the possible and conventional ways of representing meaning in writing. This composing process, through which the writer moves back and forth modifying, shortening or expanding the text, may be simplified as follows:

Idea exploration → Planning → Note-Making → Drafting → Redrafting

Raimes (1983) suggests a very convenient pedagogical division of the process: pre-writing, writing and rewriting. *Pre-writing* first starts with decision-making concerning the function of the writing task: is it a letter of application, which has to be formal? Is it an article, discussing a complex topic? The writing purpose will partly determine the choice of discourse organisation. Secondly, it considers the expected reader: a friend, a supervisor, a colleague, an institution or a group of readers. Readership awareness helps the writer to select the content (what to say) and the appropriate style (formal, informal). These two aspects constitute the context of writing and influence the first cognitive strategy, viz. planning. This may take different forms (a rough mental outline and then a thorough outline followed by rhetorical choice and discourse pattern).

The *writing* stage consists in drafting, that is composing the first piece of writing by paying attention to content, organisation, presentation and checking of surface-level details. The main characteristic of drafting is a constant recycling in the process from planning to drafting, reviewing, replanning and revising. The drafting strategy focuses on what the writer wants to say, whereas redrafting pays attention to how to say it most effectively. The *rewriting* stage

concerns the editing process which involves a re-assessment of the whole text. The most useful strategy is reading through the text from a reader's perspective to assess how clearly the ideas are expressed and arranged. Poor writers may equate editing with only correcting grammar without further attention to the overall text structure. These stages indicate the type of strategy instruction that learners need in order to deal effectively with text creation. Thus, instead of investing too much mental capacity on mechanical skills, they will need to allot enough awareness to the other macro-level constraints. Through pre-writing activities, students may be able to avoid the mental burden of considering many aspects at the same time, which generally results in muddled thinking and reader's confusion. That is why it seems very difficult to argue against findings and processes which have as their objectives the preparation of learners with a large repertoire of powerful strategies and sufficient self-awareness of their own thinking and writing process. Indeed, much of the value of process knowledge derives from its invigorating effect on classroom writing practices and from its recognition of the importance that learners bring with them to the classroom.

This part has tried to provide a more-or-less comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of writing as both a text and a task by specifying what would-be writers need to know in order to become effective writers able to construct and create authentic, meaningful and purposeful texts. Relying on relevant theories, interdisciplinary perspective and classroom practical experience, we have developed the assumption that to be successful writers, EFL learners need three essential types of knowledge: lexico-grammatical (mastery of the language system necessary for the completion of a writing task), discourse (awareness of the conventions and norms of text creation in accordance with the context) and composing (adoption of the most appropriate cognitive and composing strategies for preparing and overcoming likely blocks and problems). Pedagogical proposals and classroom practices that give little heed to one or more of such intrinsic aspects of writing will certainly be doing their learners a serious disservice. Therefore, it seems to us that the key to an effective writing pedagogy is to find out a solution to a basic problematic: how to bridge the gap between language-system knowledge, discourse knowledge and composing knowledge.

2.11 Conclusion

Despite the fact that not everything described by discourse analysis, writing theories and schema research theory is immediately relevant to the teaching of writing, the more one learns from them as to how different texts are organised and how the process of creating genuine texts is accomplished and mediated by a number of cognitive and textual strategies, the more likely one is able to create authentic material and implement effective classroom practices. Moreover, current research and renewed interest in language use has provided us with a fundamentally different way of looking at writing and writers, compared with the traditional sentence-dominated models. We now know more about what people actually do with language when they write (*writing performance*). Such knowledge can prove immensely useful for adapting and developing a writing model that fits our own context and provided that it is subjected to systematic and experimental classroom scrutiny.

Accordingly, and in order to ensure that the whole enterprise be based on thoughtful adaptation and selection of what is useful, Chapter Two has strived to analytically describe the types of knowledge that developing writers need to have as well as highlight the potential difficulties about writing in a foreign language. We have argued that the time may be ripe enough to put the teaching and learning of writing on more well-defined, coherent and systematic lines. Relying on both classroom experience and relevant theory, we described the kind of writing model that we wish to introduce in our context : writing with a purpose, paying attention to the audience, using accurate form and organisation, developing a useful set of composing strategies and creating texts that conform to the discourse conventions of English. Coming to terms with such a pedagogy is clearly quite demanding for teachers and learners alike. But the effort, we believe, is worth it because of the added sense of usefulness and authenticity it can give to teachers interested to work at fostering and developing students who wish to be confident and genuine when writing. Is this possible ? We think so and in the following chapter we will put into application the proposed writing model to assess its pedagogical effectiveness by means of qualitative and quantitative research.

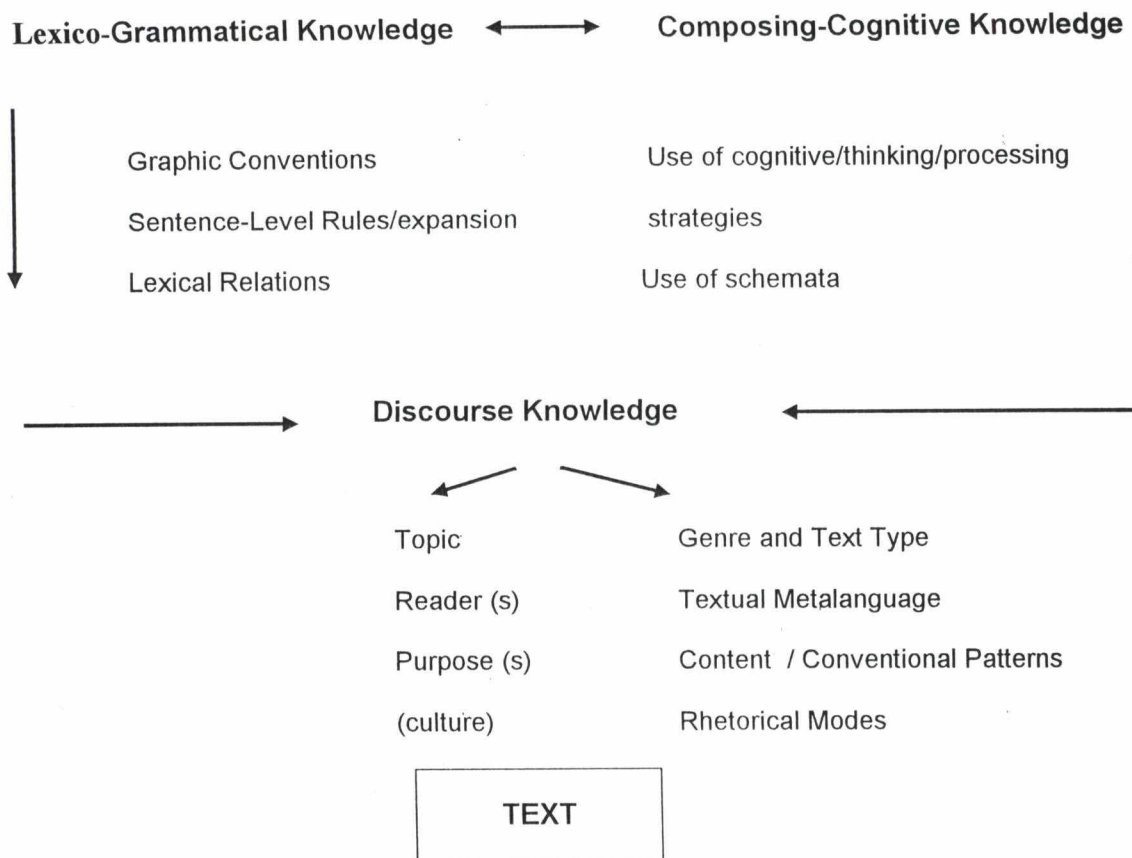


Diagram 2.5 : Integration of Writing Types of Knowledge.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. The term *linguistic competence* was initially introduced in linguistics by the American linguist, Noam Chomsky (1957 :1965), to refer to the innate grammatical knowledge that a native speaker possesses and which allows him to generate an infinite number of novel well-formed sentences by means of a finite set of syntactic rules. Chomsky (1965 :4) distinguished linguistic competence from *performance* : 'We thus make a fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situation)'.
2. The term *effective writing* is adapted from Rivers and Temperley (1978) and Halliday (1985) to mean the writer's ability to construct both purposeful and meaningful texts (i.e., as pieces of communication) by means of a thorough understanding of the lexical, syntactic and textual choices the language offers.
3. *Writing performance* is used in the context of this work to mean the construction of texts to achieve specific functions (i.e., language use). This meaning is derived from the field of pragmatics which lays emphasis on the use of language in social context.
4. Lexical knowledge indicates the writer's ability to choose and use appropriate lexical items in the context of the text rather than knowledge of lists of words.
5. The term *lexical item* is generally preferred to *word* because it may consist of more than one lexeme (i.e., a group of words like phrasal verbs).
6. Modality plays a key role in discourse because it functions as information-conveyor of the writer's attitude towards the text.
7. Discourse and textual structures in this part draw extensively from the seminal work of M.A.K. Halliday, who speaks of language as a social semiotic, a resource employed to transmit and reformulate essential patterns of culture as realised in valued texts of members of that culture (1978, 1985, 1989).
8. The emphasis on what people do with language originates from works in pragmatics and the philosophy of language, especially from the seminal work of John Austin, *How to DO Things with Words* (1962) and that of John Searle, *Speech Acts* (1969, 1979). Both works stress language performance as a reflection of the speakers' ability to achieve their intentions and goals, and perform speech acts in social contexts.
9. The distinction between *text* and *discourse* in which discourse includes text is found in a great deal of influential literature (Brown and Yule 1983 ; Hoey, 1991 ; McCarthy, 1991 ; Connor, 1996). But the distinction is not always clear-cut, text formerly referred to the structural qualities of discourse, whereas today it is increasingly seen through the processes of text production and comprehension, bringing the term text closer to the connotation of discourse. According to this perspective, which is adopted in the present work, written discourse analysis is concerned with the processes that writers and readers go through in their attempts to create and comprehend texts (i.e., it is cognitive, linguistic, and contextual).
10. Text linguistics is the study of written discourse analysis, an analysis that goes beyond the sentence level. Text linguists see texts as language elements that are strung together interrelationships with one another that can be defined. Linguists such as Van Dijk (1972), Halliday and Hassan (1976) and de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) have made a significant impact in this area. The chief task of text linguistics is to identify the textual structure of written texts, i.e., the linguistic features that allow sentences to display mutual dependence and the sequence to cohere.
11. The term *rhetorical* has been used by a number of discourse analysts to mean persuasive discourse, that is, to select rhetorical strategies to convince the reader (s) of the writer's claims (Kaplan 1997 ; Kramsch 199 ; Connor 1996). This meaning is also adopted in this study since it specifies the main function of a rhetorical strategy within discourse (i.e., organisation and development of ideas).
12. The concept of *context of situation* was originally coined by Malinowski (1923, 1935) to refer both to the context of text (the words and sentences before and after the analysed sentence) as well as the total environment, verbal and non-verbal, in which the text was produced. Malinowski's analytical purpose was to elucidate and expound the meaning of particular instances of language use (viz. how people use language in social situations to perform functions). The term *context* has since undergone continuous development, especially, in the fields of pragmatics and sociolinguistics, notably, by Searle (1979), Hymes (1972), and Labov (1972). For the purposes of this work, the term context is used to include the 'identities of participants, the temporal and spatial parameters of the event, and the beliefs, knowledge and intentions of the participants in that event' (Levinson 1983 :5).
13. Arising out of a variety of disciplines, including linguistics, sociology, psychology, and anthropology, *discourse analysis* has built a significant foundation in descriptive, and latterly, applied linguistics, the various disciplines that feed into discourse analysis have a common interest : how real people use real language to perform social functions. Crystal (1987: 116) draws a useful distinction of the way sentences work in sequence to produce coherent stretches of language : discourse analysis and text analysis. The

former studies the structure of naturally occurring spoken language, as found in such discourses as conversations and interviews; the latter focuses on the structure of the written language, as found in such texts as essays, letters, and articles. However, this analytical distinction is not clear-cut since the focus is the analysis of the communicative event, whether spoken or written.

- 14 According to Malinowski (1933), the phatic function of language serves to keep up social bonds between participants (i.e., maintaining social relations between humans). For instance, speaking about the weather in the English culture.
- 15 The term 'illocutionary force' comes from speech act theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1979) and denotes the actual performance of a communicative act like requesting or complaining.
- 16 Rhetorical acts are adapted from the theory of speech acts (Austin 1962 and Searle 1969 and 1979 in Ourghi 1986). They refer to the intended force of the utterance, i.e., the actual performance of an act.
- 17 The variety of functions in expository writing has led some authors to consider it as a genre in its own right (e.g., Kaplan 1997 and Swales 1990).
- 18 Being one of the thorniest concepts to define (Crystal 1987:66), various definitions have been put forward to clarify the concept of style, especially by linguists. For instance, Joos (1961) distinguishes five types of style (frozen, formal, consultative, casual and intimate). Crystal and Davy (1974:9-10) differentiates four commonly occurring senses of style: a person's language habits; a group's shared habits; the evaluation of a mode of expression; and the association with literary language. In like manner, Crystal (1987) divides style into evaluative and descriptive.
- 19 Typical of the confusion is the case of Arabic: Saad Eddine (1989:70) analyses the phenomenon of parallelism and finds more of a tendency to fluidity in Arabic text (i.e., non-hierarchical progression with a preference for connexion with 'and', 'but', and 'so'). Saad Eddine (op.cit.) discusses two types of text development used in Arabic, one of which appears to be more acceptable in English translation than the other. The less acceptable written mode, the *aural mode*, although highly valued in Arabic culture, involves such features as repetition of propositional elements, cohesion by repetition, a lot of presupposition and 'face-to-face interactional expression' that might be considered highly inappropriate in academic English texts. The alternative Arabic mode, the *visual mode*, is much closer to the English ideal of an academic text. He argues that 'if Arabs writing in English are to succeed in effective communication they will have to gain mastery over the visual mode'. He proposes that Arabic education should familiarise the learners with a broader selection of text types in Arabic as a step towards a firmer mastery of academic written skills (ibid. 71).

CHAPTER THREE

CRITICAL REFLECTION INSTRUCTION: DISCOURSE AWARENESS AND WRITING PERFORMANCE

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Quantitative Approach to Situation Analysis

3.3 Qualitative Approach to Situation Analysis

3.4 Conclusion

CHAPTER THREE

Critical Reflection Instruction: Discourse Awareness and Writing Performance

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two attempted to lay the ground for both a theoretical framework and an analytical descriptive paradigm capable of explaining the complex nature of writing and paving the way for a pedagogical correlation between written discourse analysis and relevant instructional practices—that is to say, to propose and describe a theoretical or conceptual framework that guides the research questions and the proposed instruction.. The present Chapter follows suit by providing classroom-based empirical data and support for developing and implementing an efficient discourse-oriented writing pedagogy at the university level. As a *classroom-action research*¹ with the purpose of evaluating both the proposed instructional practices and the process of learning that students experience within a well-defined teaching-learning context, it is extremely specific in that the researcher-teacher investigates his own teaching and learners. The research focusses on the area of explicit awareness-raising in foreign-language writing—that is, how a growing awareness of text-creation processes and an ongoing interaction with discourse-contextual conventions (background knowledge) can be effectively applied to and reflected in the quality of the subjects' texts, resulting in improved writing performance (procedural knowledge).

As previously argued, there is now indeed a considerable evidence that supports and calls for the use of explicit discourse-structure and composing strategies as a means for improving writing performance in the foreign

language, when the instruction is carefully and systematically done. Accordingly, this Chapter reports on a small-scale, action-research study aimed at highlighting the positive correlation between awareness-raising instruction and writing performance with a view to promoting *change* in the present curriculum and modifying current teaching strategies. The questions to these specific concerns and objectives could be formulated as follows :

- Does explicit teaching of specific writing resources (micro-skills and strategies) at the discourse, context, composing and language levels help developing learners to build up both *background knowledge* and *procedural knowledge* which together form the basis of effective writing performance ?
- In what ways and to what extent does the learners' writing performance change and come closer to the norms and conventions of authentic discourse ?

In other words, the research deals with two major issues : a) the impact of direct instruction which explicitly raises learners' awareness of specific discourse and composing processes (viz. background knowledge) and (b) instruction in writing micro-skills and strategies more generally and which are potentially able to bring about positive changes in the learners' writing performance (viz. procedural knowledge).

Chapter Three is therefore divided into two major parts : quantitative and qualitative research. The former consists of the experimental discourse-awareness raising instruction. The primary objective of the empirical investigation is to assess the extent to which explicit instruction in textual and composing micro-skills and strategies positively correlate with their progress in text creation and writing performance. The study examined aspects of the subjects' writing performance before (pre-assessment : holistic and analytical evaluation), during the ongoing instruction (a cyclical process that evaluates the developing writing behaviour of the subjects), and after a full-time academic year in teaching written comprehension and expression (post- assessment through macroscopic analysis of the four types of writing knowledge : discourse-contextual, content-informational, composing-procedural and lexico-

grammatical ; individual microscopic analysis of lexical, textual and selected strategy variables), and comparative microscopic analysis of written discourse variables : complexity, explicitness, cohesion, and accuracy). The statistical results are explained in two main ways : first, a full description that focusses on clear and salient patterns found through data analysis, together with representative examples from the subjects' texts ; second, interpretations and implications that are salient to the subjects' performance and how they can help us develop useful and effective classroom instructional practices.

Thus, the empirical investigation is designed in such a way to find out whether a growing awareness of what constitutes effective writing (background knowledge) can show what happens on both discourse and linguistic levels to student writing performance as it develops (procedural knowledge). In other words, an important objective is to identify what the subjects can learn and do right ; hence, *performance analysis* rather than *error analysis* (what they do wrong). By the same token, it provides us with a reflective means of understanding an aspect of the process of learning to become better writers in a foreign language.

The latter tries to carry out data-collection on the context of teaching-learning, with selective focussing on the subjects' existing writing *resources* (to identify the range and variety of both the micro-skills and strategies frequently used by first-year learners)² their attitudes, types of entrant motivation and learning habits, and writing experience in English. Data collection is aimed at uncovering an *emic* perspective ; in other words, the study focuses on research participants' experiences, perspectives and interpretation of learning and writing behaviour and needs (rather than *etic* categories—the researcher's own viewpoints). Furthermore, to ensure that the study is both valid and credible rather than impressionistic or anecdotal, multiple methods and sources of data collection are used : three types of questionnaires (learners , secondary-school teachers and university-level teachers), classroom notes (in which the researcher has kept a reflective log after each lesson), informal and formal interviewing with both learners and fellow teachers, and observation (where peers are observed in a targeted and systematic way while completing a particular writing task in order to monitor their behaviour and likely problems).

Such tools offer a valuable possibility to establish close contacts with the research population and provide a first step into pedagogical interaction (or what Richard and Lockhart (1996 :14) call *critical reflective teaching*, an issue that will be discussed in Chapter Four).

3.2 Quantitative Approach to Situation Analysis

3.2.1 Research Population : Subjects

The total number of the research subjects amounted to twenty-five (25) new Baccalaureate holders, enrolled in the first year of the degree, 'Licence' in English Language (BA), at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Tlemcen, session 1999-2000. The subjects studied together in one mixed-ability group throughout the academic year. Most of them (21) had over five years of English Language instruction at the lower levels of education (Foundation and Secondary-School levels) and had thereby attained a language-proficiency level ranging from lower to higher intermediate. The research sample was randomly selected (i.e., based on the administrative organisation of groups).

The provided questionnaire showed that 70% of the learners came from literary streams (Arabic Language and Literature, Human and Islamic Sciences, and Arabic Literature and Foreign Languages) and the remaining 30% from scientific streams (Mathematics). The vast majority (90%) reported having chosen English as their first choice, which indicates that they had obtained good marks in the Baccalaureate (only those having high marks, above the average, are afforded the opportunity to select their own first choice). Almost all subjects belonged to the same age group (17- 19 years old, except one male student (20 years old)), length of foreign-language learning experience (5-6 years), and type of teaching instruction (a combination of functional-communicative-structural approaches). The most significant characteristics (variables) of the research population profile (age, gender, language education background, length of instruction, motivation, attitudes, learning style and behaviour) are summarised in Table 3.1 below.

Characteristics	Details
Gender	Male : 4 <i>Female: ?</i> <i>20?</i>
Age	17/19 years old (except 1 male student: 21)
Foreign-Language Instruction	5/6 years
Language-Education	L1 (Classical Arabic as the primary medium of educational instruction)
Background	L2 (French as a first foreign language)
	L3 (English as a second foreign language)
	First : Arabic Language and Literature
	Second : Human and Islamic Sciences
Secondary-School Streams	Third : Arabic Literature and Foreign Languages
	Fourth : Mathematics (2 female students)
	Lower-Intermediate (60%)
	Higher-Intermediate (40%)
Entrant Language Proficiency :	Good (20%) Adequate (60%) Poor (20%)
Writing Performance Ability :	Essentially instrumental (success and mark-oriented), but a clear enthusiasm to learn and succeed
Type of Motivation :	Fairly positive attitudes towards the foreign language (by virtue of its international status) and vital role in communication (especially, with the growing popularity and use of the internet)
Attitudes :	
Personality Traits :	Largely serious, well-behaved and eager to learn
Learning Styles :	Clearly accustomed to transmissive formal classroom learning, but accept group work willingly and hand in homeworks and personal texts (tentative poems, reflections, etc.) regularly.
Attendance :	Regular attendance (nearly 95% per lesson)
Classroom-Learning	Largely friendly and collaborative with the teacher as participant and guide
Atmosphere :	

Table 3.1 Research Population Profile

As well as the research population, two groups of teachers participated in the study : Secondary-School level and University level (lecturers). The former held a Licence in English Language Teaching and had a teaching

experience of at least 5 years ; the latter had a Magister in applied linguistics and TEFL and had been teaching for over 5 years. The teachers' participation consisted in filling out a questionnaire for each level and taking part in informal interviews concerning the state of language learning, the main encountered problems and perspectives for the future. The aim of both research tools was to describe salient attitudes and practices within micro and macro-contexts by uncovering what teachers knew about the learning habits, strategies and difficulties that learners faced when completing learning tasks, specifically, written ones. It might be the case that teachers themselves knew little about the strategies used by their students, confused writing micro-skills and discourse strategies, or simply did not consider such instruction to be a pedagogical priority. In any case, it was felt important to unravel some of the principles underlying teachers' classroom principles and practices.

3.2.2 Pre-Assessment : The Subjects' Entrant Writing Ability

3.2.2.1 Pre-Assessment Description

The subjects' entrant writing ability assessment constituted a descriptive analysis of a corpus of 50 short texts written by the newly enrolled students in the English language section, written expression and comprehension module. The 25 subjects wrote two texts (friendly letters) during the first two weeks of the academic year (Cf. Research Card No1). None of the new students knew that his/her letter was to be used as research data to assess their language and writing proficiency. They were simply asked after a short introduction in the first week to do a classwork (to write a short letter to a friend, studying English and advising him/her on how to be a successful language learner(advice). They were subsequently asked to write another letter as a homework to an English penfriend, giving him/her some useful information on Algeria and their hometown (description and advice).

Thus, in contrast to much previous research on writing ability and performance (Kroll 1990), which analysed compositions (i.e., pre-test samples) with specified time limitations and classroom pressure, the compositions discussed here were divided into two types : those produced in class and under pressure of time (1 hour), and those carried out as homeworks during the

second week (i.e., with 8 days of interval and preparation time). Such a pre-assessment procedure was felt to be fair enough to cater for the learners' varied performance under different conditions. In this respect, each learner contributed two texts to the corpus. It should be pointed out that during the 8-day interval, the subjects were helped by doing some activities related to the preparation of the homeworks, e.g., reading an authentic friendly letter. One objective of this planned help was to assess, to some extent, the students' reaction to an opportunity to improve their work by making use of composing strategies to complete the written task (e.g., preparing an outline, making notes and attending to accuracy by correcting likely mistakes). The main aspects of the written task are listed in the Research Card No1 below.

Pre-Assessment Writing Tasks

Objectives :	To assess the entrants' micro-skills and strategies in completing a written task ; To learn about the existing global micro-skills and strategies
Type of Assessment :	Performance Analysis (to identify what the subjects are able to do to complete a task successfully ; hence, emphasis mainly on strengths but also on apparent weaknesses
Dates :	Homework (November 3 rd , 1999) Classwork (October 26 th , 1999)
Text Type :	Friendly (informal) letter
Text Topics :	Homework (to respond to a friend's letter, giving him/her advice on how to become a successful language learner) Classwork (to write a friendly letter to a penfriend, informing him/her about their hometown)
Text Length :	100-150 words

Research Card 1 Pre-assessment Writing Tasks

The preliminary results reported here stemmed therefore from the application of three grading procedures chosen for their 'positive' approach

towards writing—one, as said above, which looked for strengths and weaknesses, indicating how the subjects were developing as writers—holistic, analytic, and frequency use. The first looked at the rhetorical organisation of content following a macro-level analysis, which assigned a holistic scoring to the overall competence of the piece of writing. The features of rhetorical appropriacy that most contributed to high holistic score included :

- lexical and syntactic cohesion
- appropriate use of connectives
- interesting and relevant ideas
- logical development of ideas
- use of appropriate level of formality according to the context

The second procedure consisted of a micro-analysis at the sentence level (each composition was examined in detail with regard to accuracy of mechanics, grammar and lexis) . Analytic scoring evaluated the basic language –system components of a text :

- sentence construction
- Verb form and tense
- range of vocabulary
- mechanics

The third procedure (frequency use) relied on class observation of the subjects while carrying out the tasks to identify the frequently employed strategies. Following a frequency scale (perhaps, the most convenient for handling strategy analysis), both *global* strategies (meta-cognitive and cognitive) and *local* ones (specific discourse-textual) were assessed :

- Global Loan translation
 Approximation (e.g., use of synonyms,
 cognates, syntactic and lexical simplification)
 Repetition
 Avoidance
- Local Cohesion, Outlining, Drafting
 Hedging (use of modal auxiliary)

3.2.2.2 Pre-Assessment Results

The corpus analysis yielded results and a number of findings that supported the hypotheses proposed and discussed in Chapter One (Needs Analysis Section) and Chapter Two (Implications and Applications Section). These concerned the assumption that the major difficulties that most new entrants might have were: lack of a rich repertoire of linguistic resources to express ideas clearly and an absence of useful strategies and micro-skills for preparing and constructing texts in English. Both macro-and micro-analyses showed an overall inadequate writing performance with regard to the evaluated variables (the distribution of the specific language errors and deviations from conventional discourse norms were almost similar in texts written in class and at home). It might be suggested that perhaps the new entrants did not know about what constituted effective writing or about helpful resources (sub-skills and strategies) to complete successfully written tasks. In fact, they largely employed ineffective strategies to help overcome language problems, especially, lack of vocabulary. Such findings along with the main results of the pre-assessment test are summarised in the tables below.

(1) Writing Performance Analysis (content, discourse, contextual, and language)

Performance Variable	Rhetoric	Content	Context	Form	Score	No of Subjects
Clear Writing Competence	Logical rhetorical structure	relevant ideas	Aware of the reader and having a purpose	Accurate word/sentence forms	Very Good	2
Competence in Writing (occasional errors)	Adequate organisation and development	Relevant details	Having a purpose and aware of the reader	Occasional errors	Good	8
Some Developing Competence	Loosely organised	Give some details	Difficulty with formality and hedging	sentence structure problems	Fair	10
Incompetence in Writing	Serious disorganisation	Little or no details	Unclear reader and message	Frequent grammar errors	Poor	03
Clear incompetence in Writing	Incoherent organisation	Irrelevant ideas	Complete unawareness of readership	inaccurate grammar	Very Poor	02

Table 3.2 Overall Writing Performance Holistic Scores

Scores : Very Good (5), Good (4), Fair (3), Poor (2), and Very Poor (1)

Discourse-Contextual Variables	Class Corpus(25)	Homework Corpus(25)
	Number	Number
Paragraph Structure 1.general statement+Support sentences	10	16
Text Structure (introduction, body, conclusion)	18	20
Text Coherence (use of logical connectives to link ideas)	09	12
Level of Formality (appropriate style)	10	11
Level of Hedging (appropriate directness strategy)	5	7
Text Type (clear text type/genre: letter)	18	22
Total	70	88

Table 3.3 Macro-analysis of Discourse Knowledge (Discourse-Contextual Variables in the subjects' texts)

Number of occurrences in the 25 texts (hand counting procedure)

Lexico-Grammatical Variables	TopicType1: Friendly Letter)	Topic Type2: Friendly letter
	Number	Number
Fluency (Lexical Variable) No of Content Words	2500	3000
Complexity(Syntactic variable) No of Sentences	250	290
Total	2750	3290

Table 3.4 Micro-Level Analysis of Lexico-Grammatical Variables
(Number : occurrences in the total corpus (25+25))

Type of Inaccurate/ Inappropriate Occurrence	Occurrence of errors in class corpus (25 texts)		Occurrence of errors in homework Corpus (25texts)	
	AF	RF	AF	RF
Writing-System (mechanics)	15	60%	13	41%
Word-Centred Errors (other than verbs)	15	60%	14	42%
Verb-Centred Errors (tense, agreement)	18	72%	16	64%
Sentence-structure Errors (fragment, run-on, awkward phrasing, inappropriate use of links)	12	41%	10	40%
Total	60		53	

Table 3.5 Micro-Analysis of Lexico-Grammatical Accuracy

AF : Absolute Frequency (number per subject)
RF : Relative Frequency (percentage)

The following instances illustrate the types of errors frequently found in the learners' texts :

✗ Algerian people put learning in the first place because they know its role in developing the country because of this there are many schools.

✗ And other of cooking with the well-known Kouscous. And you must know another Algeria.

✗ Algeria has many points to develop it among them culture which is very important to the Algerian people such as the achievements of Dib and Feraoun who speak in their books about problems of people because they live in their society and know about poverty and hunger. (long repetitive sentences with more than three clauses represent a frequent inaccuracy/inappropriacy in the writing of the new entrants)

✗ I want to write some information about may country (hedging inappropriacy/ PF :I would like to write).

✗ Despite its cruel climate, people who live there (PF :the local people) knew how to make this (PF :such) climate in their service. (PF: to make the most of it, to exploit it)

(✗Erroneous sentence PF : Preferred Form)

(2) Writing Strategy Analysis (strategies used during task completion and reported ones)

The writing strategy analysis revealed two groups of students : effective and less effective. The differences between them were reflected in the number of strategies used and the way in which each strategy was used. In general, effective students used a greater variety of strategies and used them in ways that helped them complete the in-class writing task successfully. The less effective ones not only had fewer strategy types in their repertoires but also over-relied on strategies that were inappropriate or that did not lead to successful task completion. Both direct classroom observation and textual analysis. revealed that effective learners, much more than less effective ones, were purposeful in their approach to the task, monitored their production for overall meaningfulness and appropriate organisation rather than only for discrete linguistic elements, and effectively applied their background knowledge of the language system and text organisation while writing. Tables 3.6 and 3.7 summarise the observed learning, thinking, and writing strategies used during

classroom task completion and list the main differences in the cognitive and writing performance of efficient and less efficient learners.

Strategy Type	Frequency			Performance (Preferred Strategy
	A	S	R	
Global Composing Strategies (meta-cognitive/cognitive/Social) Pre-Writing Strategies 1. Making notes (writing down key words and ideas) 2. Planning (generating a plan for organising main points) 3. Using a dictionary 4. Asking for help Composing Strategies 6. Writing a first draft (use of rough paper) 7. Improving the first draft (correcting mistakes and arranging the ideas logically) 8. Re-reading the text for accuracy and presentation Local Textual Strategies 9. Repetition (repeating a word , clause or whole sentence) 10. Approximation 11. Translation (loan translation from L1 or FFL to English) 12. Syntactic Transfer from L1 or FFL to English 13. Rhetorical Transfer 14. Avoidance (leaving a blank)				Cognitive/Social Strategies Over-reliance on bilingual and trilingual dictionaries Occasional request for help with vocabulary Textual Strategies We can remark <i>with facility</i> ...(PF :It is easy to remark that/We can easily remark that...) You <u>must</u> <i>nutriet</i> your culture (PF : You <u>should try to</u> nourish/enrich) He was a <i>savant</i> (scholar) They are <i>white hearts</i> (PF :they are kind and generous) I <i>will have the honour</i> to describe to you my country.(PF :I'm very pleased to give you some information on my country.) The domain of <i>alimentation</i> (food) They have the culture (PF : they are educated and well-behaved). At the end, I say to you : welcome to visit our country, welcome to take information about Algeria, welcome to take souvenirs. (PF :Welcome to Algeria.)

Table 3.6 Frequency of writing strategies during task completion in the classroom
A : Always S : Sometimes R : Rarely

Effective Subjects (writers)	Less Effective Subjects (writers)
1. Spend some time reading the composition topic and subject ; 2. Spend some time (but not too much) planning to write ; 3. Look for structure through mental notes (thinking) and use note prepared out of class (planning) ; 4. Easily let their first ideas flow onto the paper ; Follow a general organisational plan as they write ; 5. Have a clear type of organising and developing ideas (schema) ; 6. Have a clear purpose and keep it in mind ; 7. Use translation to help generate content and verify word choice ; 8. Use of logical links to separate ideas and sentences ; 9. Focus on main idea as they write ; 10. focus on overall meaningfulness of the text ; Ask teacher for help with some vocabulary or clarification ; Solicit and use feedback on their writing ; Revise their work willingly and patiently , paying attention to language form, organisation, and attractive layout.	1. Start writing sentences directly as a first paragraph ; 2. Write ideas as they come along ; 3. Rarely stop to make notes and organise ideas ; 4. Have no clear schema for the function type of aa text (e.g., friendly letter with date, greetings, body, and salutation) ; 5. Have no clear composing strategy (ies) to complete the writing task ; 6. Lack a clear purpose and distracted by different ideas when writing ; 7. Over-reliance on translation from L1 (Arabic) ; 8. Over-reliance on bilingual and trilingual dictionaries for necessary words ; 9. Insert ineffective strategies probably used in most language tasks, oral or written (simplification, loans, transfer, approximation, repetition and direct translation) ; 10. Focus on syntactic accuracy (usage) ; 11. Excessive use of coordination to link clauses , resulting in lengthy repetitive sentences ; 12. Hand in the final product without taking time to re-read the text and revise form , ideas and layout.

Table 3.7 Differences in the Strategies of Proficient and Less Proficient
Subjects (Based on direct observation, textual analysis and interviews)

3.2.2.3 Interpretation and Discussion

In general, the pre-assessment findings support an initial hypothesis that the major types of writing problems the majority of new entrants might have at this point were essentially : language inaccuracy due to lack of linguistic resources,

discourse inappropriacy due to unawareness, and the application of global inefficient strategies to accomplish writing tasks. The macro-analysis and micro-analysis procedures showed that the in-class and out-of-class texts did not differ significantly with regard to the analysed writing variables. Both types of assessment clearly highlighted and confirmed the common problems regularly encountered by EFL learners when writing:

- limited repertoire of useful vocabulary ;
- inaccurate use of cohesion (reference, conjunction, and lexis) ;
- excessive repetition (redundancy of words, clauses and even sentences) ;
- Exaggerated use of co-ordination (especially, *and*, (a likely transfer from the Arabic *wa*) to co-ordinate clauses and sentences) ; and
- limited repertoire of not always efficient strategies (over-reliance on translation, approximation, transfer and circumlocution).

The causes of inappropriacy are essentially due to the following factors :

- deviations from expected modes of textual cohesion, e.g., non-standard punctuation, long sentences, and lack of variety in connectors ;
- few qualifications (use of adjectives) ;
- a clear leaning towards piling clause over clause, separating them by *and* or *which* ;
- a clear unawareness of the differences between spoken language and written language even in informal texts (repetitive use of *so*, *I want to*, *you can see*, and fragmented clauses)
- deviations from clearly expected text type and organisation (e.g., letter format)

What is most striking about the pre-test samples is the widespread use of excessive co-ordination as a means of structural linkage, which resulted in incoherence. This major deviation typified most of the subjects' texts, confirming what has repeatedly been claimed on EFL writing and rhetoric produced by Arab writers (i.e., whose L1 is Arabic), typically characterised by exaggerated co-ordination and repetition (Kaplan 1972 ; Aljoubouri 1983 :99-117 ; Dudley-Evans and Swales, 1983 :97 ; Sa'adedine, 1989 ; Connors, 1996). The interpretation generally given attributes this norm-deviant feature in writing to the learners' first language (i.e., negative transfer from Arabic which is said to favour clause co-

ordination and parallel structures). The present analysis does provide some support to this hypothesis (Cf. Table 3.4).

In a similar way, the pre-test finding and classroom observation highlighted the entrant's lack of understanding at the composing level ; that is, they seemed to be unaware that effective writing takes time (mental preparation) and involves a series of steps, ranging from preparation, planning, drafting to revising. It is quite evident that they lacked composing experience and were used to doing written assignments rapidly to get a pass mark.

Thus, the evident inappropriacy in the writing of most subjects may be due not only to mistakes in grammar and mechanics, but also to higher-level global unawareness of how tasks are approached and ideas put together in a conventional text type. It might indeed be suggested that perhaps the subjects did not know enough about what constitutes good writing or about helpful resources (micro-skills and strategies) to complete a writing task and approach a topic. Such learners would probably attack every language learning task (whether in speaking, reading , or writing) with the same lack of skill and strategy. Often these EFL learners, either due to lack of understanding rhetorical patterns or due to lack of previous school-composing experiences/instruction as said above, are bound to generate inappropriate texts (a low performance referred to as *writing failure*).

Without any explicit awareness of what constitutes good writing and the necessary steps required in text creation, students cannot be expected to know how to proceed in their writing tasks. They must therefore be familiarised with and made aware of organisational structures and strategies used in different text types, including paraphrasing, summarising, paragraph ordering, the movement from generalisations to specific supporting details, the exclusion of repetitive ideas and lengthy sentences, and the framing of paragraphs around one main idea. It seems to be increasingly accepted that awareness-raising (fairly direct teaching) is advantageous for expanding learners' stock of lexis, syntactic devices, textual patterns, and composing strategies. For instance, learners' writing was largely stigmatised by errors of syntax, grammar, and lexical choice. It is our task to enable such low-proficient learners to activate their passive grammatical knowledge to learn to edit for certain grammar errors within their

own written discourse and to develop strategies for increasing lexical accuracy (word form) and expanding their existing vocabulary (perhaps their biggest challenge).

In like manner, the repetitive use of conjuncts and co-ordination may have been a reflection of the need for *scaffolding*, to externalise the structure of the text in explicit and graspable ways (Chang and Swales 1999). The motivation is to sensitise the learners to various aspects of the text where potential difficulties could arise and provide them with resources (micro-skills and strategies) to overcome problems that have previously hampered their writing effort. In this light, the value of an explicit awareness-raising instruction is primarily to encourage students to reflect on what they do, how they do it and why they do it in a way rather than another. Even for seemingly good writers, awareness of a variety of writing micro-skills (sentence-level and rhetorical features of written discourse) and further more specific composing strategies (paraphrasing, summarising, and resourcing) are needed to help them improve their writing performance (address the topic clearly, develop it in a rational way, and take account of the reader's needs).

3.2.3 Classroom Action Research

Classroom action research consisted of the experimental awareness-raising instruction, which aimed firstly at providing classroom empirical data to support the proposed content-based discourse-oriented pedagogy to EFL writing. Direct discourse-awareness instruction attempted therefore to bring out the best in learners by making processes of writing more transparent, that is, providing direct or explicit teaching, where the learners' attention was directed to the strategy or/and micro-skill being taught and the macro-structure of the authentic text. Secondly, this type of instructional approach represented both a natural consequence and an evidence of the grounded theory outlined in Chapter Two. The view of written texts as embodying interaction between the reader and writer and conforming to conventional norms was clearly demonstrated as a well-established fact, and underlay, therefore, specific components (types of knowledge that a writer needs to know) that may be focussed on in the training of developing writers. In this respect, the subjects

worked with authentic coherent texts that covered a range of interesting topics, genres, and discourse macro-structures (conventional patterns). The proposed materials included facts about the U.K., texts, articles, extracts from renowned books, pictures, maps, songs, recipes, schedules, and letters (formal and informal). Such thematically-related (i.e., content-based) material provided ongoing purposeful opportunities for exploring and recreating texts. Thirdly, the experimental research attempted to prove that awareness-raising instruction could draw on the improvement of existing global strategies (i.e., producing gradual change the subjects' writing habits) and new local discourse-based strategies to build up a mental conceptualisation of what text creation involved as well as to successfully complete writing tasks.

The classroom-research experimental instruction lasted a whole academic year, session 1999-2000. As part of the Written Expression and Comprehension module, the instruction was conducted for three hours each week (Cf. Research Cards 1 and 2), nearly a total number of 60 hours over a period of 20 weeks. As such, the overall instruction, notwithstanding the regular out-of-class works, might be argued to constitute, up to a certain extent, a valid quantitative teaching variable capable of producing the expected and planned changes in the subjects' writing performance and awareness. Throughout the instructional phase, the subjects were constantly assessed to monitor the ongoing performance (i.e., whether or not they created better writing outcomes). Such summative assessment was in line with the overall aim of the study—how well the subjects' writing had improved with regard to the use of useful micro-skills and composing strategies (Cf. Diagram N 3.1). That is to say, in the gradual move towards more advance writing, the learners' texts were expected to adhere more closely to the norms and functions of conventional English written discourse and to better conceptualise what effective writing involved.

Two sets of text-type and topic types were selected for analysis (Cf. Research cards 3.2 and 3.3 below) : non-fictional narrative report (topic-type 1) and expository comparison/contrast essay (topic-type2). The first type was produced during the first semester. The reason was that narration tasks were found to be easier to complete than other discourse modes such as exposition (Reid 1990 :157). Moreover, narrative and expository tasks were found to

require different types of linguistic, cognitive, discourse, and stylistic components on the part of the writer. In this respect, the chosen text types made it possible to investigate the way learners approach different levels of difficulty.

3.2.3.1 Typology of Writing Micro-Skills and Strategies

The experimental study was based on needs assessment (Chapter One), the *critical-discourse-awareness* conceptual framework proposed in Chapter Two and the results of the qualitative research (Chapter Three, Section Two). The careful analysis of students' writing behaviour highlighted the need for specific micro-skills and strategies that developing writers should build up consciously to deal effectively with particular text types, genres, and writing tasks. Accordingly, the most relevant resources (both micro-skills and strategies) could be classified in diagram 3.1, which may help in determining problem areas for individual students (e.g., a student may have problems in micro-skills but is good at the macro level). The diagram can serve therefore as both a research and pedagogical checklist for individualised teaching and for formulating hypothesis like : *Why do most students suffer from problems in micro-skills ?*



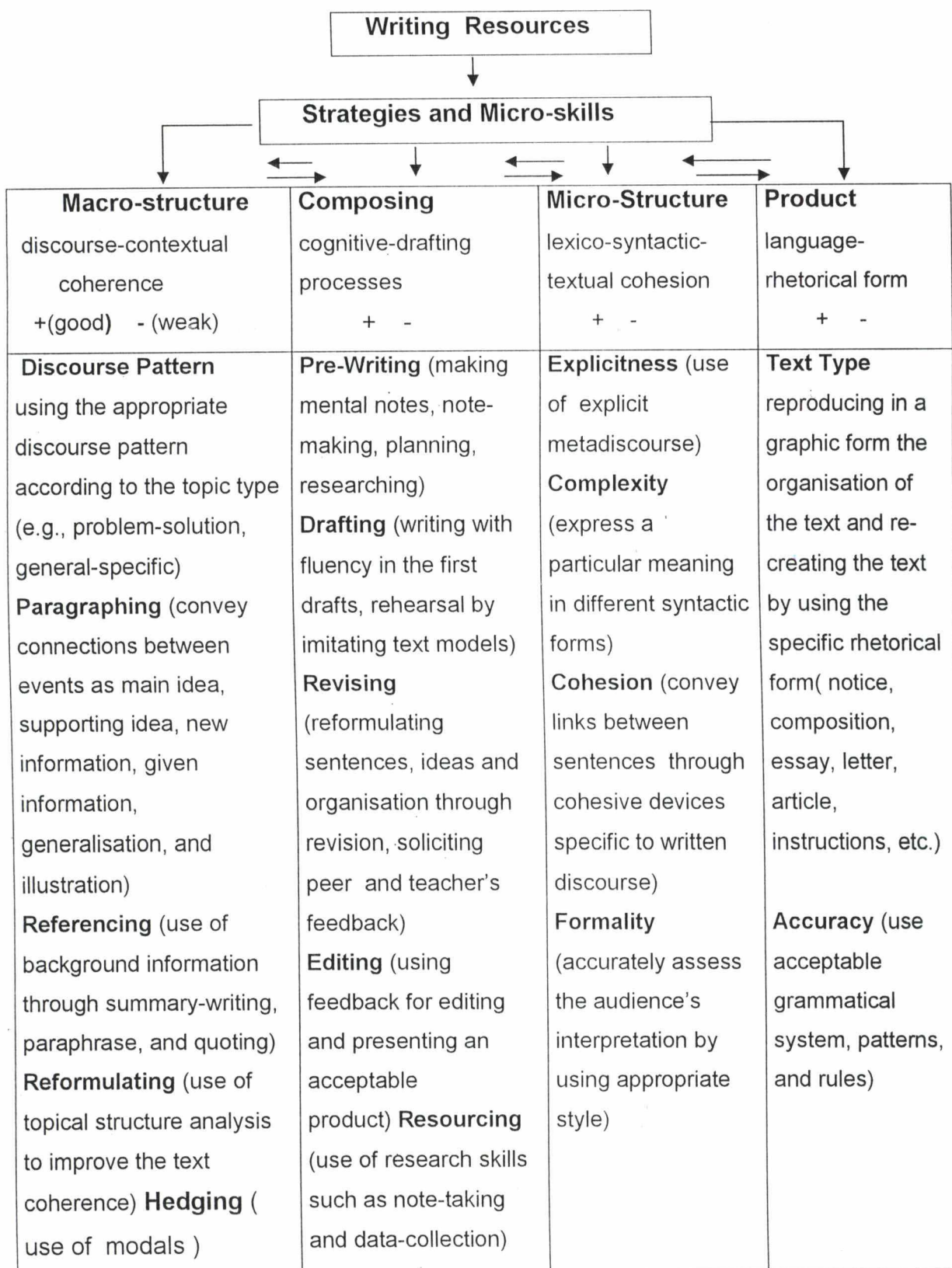


Diagram 3.1 A typology of Micro-Skills and Strategies

The awareness-raising instructional model³ was carefully designed so as to be *practical* (offering constant practice through a variety of tasks), *applicable* (striking a balance between resources that were easy to learn and those somewhat novel and rather difficult), *gradual* (making a sequence of narrowly selected resources to prevent overloading learners with varying ones and also permit precise assessment of their effectiveness), and *complementary* (selecting resources that supported one another and that could be used in a variety of writing tasks) :

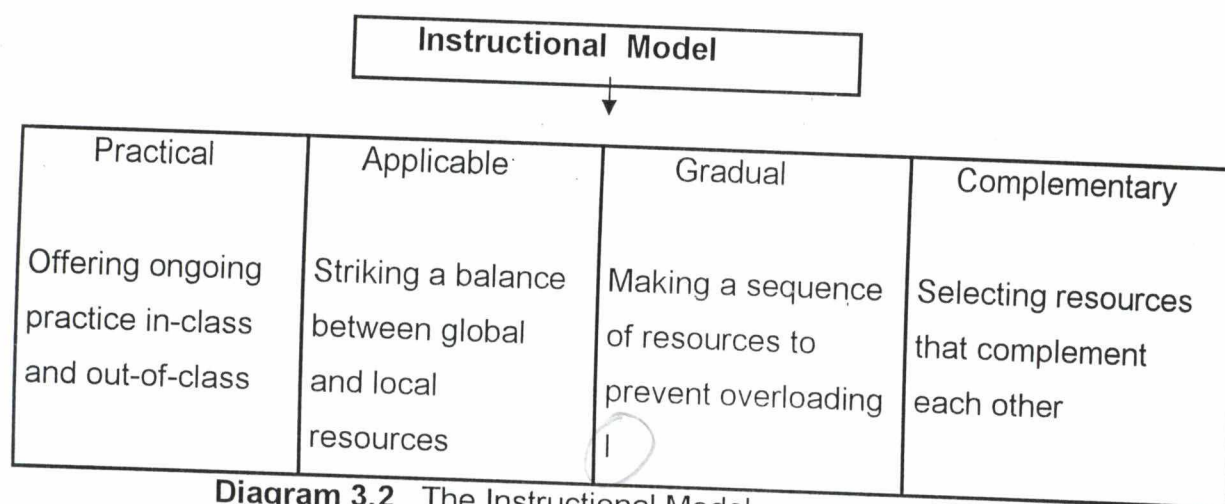


Diagram 3.2 The Instructional Model

3.2.3.2 Texts and Tasks

(1) Selection Criteria

Prior to the actual classroom experiment, the text and task samples were selected according to an evaluation checklist (adapted from Hedge 1988, 1998 ; Douglas-Brown 1994 ; Johns 1997). This careful selection was done with a view to ensuring maximum learning benefits through innovative and interesting lessons that should develop different composing strategies, attend to the cognitive and social processes of reading and writing, involve individual and peer groups in evaluating and responding to drafts, focus on different text types, and stimulate these tasks through diverse techniques. The selected tasks focussed, thus, on reading, writing, composing, and the development of background (cultural) knowledge and procedural knowledge—that is, they largely met the evaluation criteria :

- **Aims** : the text exhibits a clear conventional macro-structure and rhetorical organisation ;it represents a clear text type (letter, composition, report) ; and focus on specific resources (use of cohesive devices, note-making as a way of planning, coherence of ideas)
- **Methodology** : the methodology has a clear emphasis—product (how a text is organised and the parts put together); process (foster appropriate composing strategies) ; model (follow model texts as a first step in writing) ; creativity (use of own ideas and language resources to create texts).
- **Motivation** : the material involves students as individuals, allowing them to exploit personal knowledge and experience (i.e., through subject matter) ; the content of the task motivates students (widening cultural horizons, topics of current and universal interest, topicality) ; the task methodology motivates students (problem-solving or bridging an information gap) ;
- **Task design** : the context of writing is clear (description of a place, a letter to a friend, a tourist brochure) ; the audience for the writing is clear (a classmate, a school, a magazine editor, an organisation) ; the degree and type of support is specified (content, language, organisation) ; classroom interaction is specified (individual, peer, group) ; the steps to be followed are made clear ; and the instructions are clear.
- **Text Authenticity** : the texts are authentic (with no modification), reflecting instances of language use ; they are adapted (slightly changed) ; and they are taken from a variety of sources.
- **Text Potential** : The texts are analysable from a discourse perspective (structure, function, participants, purpose) ; they include vocabulary and grammatical structures that will enable the learners to do the task best.

(2) Texts and Tasks : Experimental Samples

Two sample tasks were chosen for describing and illustrating the type of awareness-raising instruction that lasted a whole academic year. In what follows, a description is given in the form of Task Research Cards, specifying the object of the classroom-action research, topic, hypothesis, objectives, date, target micro-skills and strategies, sequence of instructional steps, material source, and date.

Task Description

Object of Research : Use of background reading texts to generate content and build up background knowledge

Objectives : Raising the subjects' awareness of composing strategies (develop procedural knowledge : resourcing, note-making, planning, and drafting) and audience expectations (convey to and exchange genuine information with each other) ;
Combining information from different sources ; and familiarising the subjects with the discourse structure of narrative texts (text-structure awareness)

Hypothesis : If students are given time for ample preparation, data-collection and drafting, they will be able to develop the ability to generate useful content and use authentic documents to write formal coherent texts in English

Date : December 1999

Time Period : Four-class periods of 1.30 each (two weeks)

Type of Writing Performance : Real Writing (academic: content-based task to exchange information that is genuinely sought and conveyed)

Text Type : An historical report (reporting historical events)

Cultural Payoff : To build a background knowledge on the main events in the target culture

Writing Micro-Skills : Use of Cohesive devices to convey links and connections between past events ; Communicate such relations as main idea, supporting details, new information, and illustration

Discourse Macro-Structure : Use the rhetorical form and conventions of narrative texts — Orientation (introduction) / Sequence of Main Events (development) / Message (conclusion)

Topic : The Battle of Hastings, 1066

Task : Write a full account of The Battle of Hastings, 1066, according to authentic documents ; give the main sequence of events that took place between the Norman Army and the English Army, and suggest a suitable conclusion in the form of a message.

Research Card 3.2: Sample Task Description (The Battle of Hastings, 1066)

Task Instructional Procedures

Instructional Procedures :

In-Class Preparation

1. Students study two short outlines (topic and sentence) on the Battle of Hastings).
2. They are asked to study the content to say whether it is sufficient to write a report ;
3. They should find out the essential elements of a good report : Who ?, When ?, What ?, How ?, and Why ? by answering a set of questions
What type of battle was it ? Where did it take place ?
When did it happen ? Who were the rivals/enemies ?
What happened to each army ? What was the result of the battle ?
What happened to the victorious army ?
What happened to the vanquished army ?
4. Students are then asked to write a short draft by using information from the outlines ;
5. Students read the short texts to the class to assess their content ;
6. Students are asked to say how they can improve their texts by including more information : attention is drawn to background-reading and note-making in dealing with authentic facts.

Out-of-Class Work : Students search authentic and useful information from external sources (encyclopedia, the web) and to make notes following the above questions for the following lesson.

In-class Work (2) : 1. Students share the collected information and select the most important one.

2. Teacher writes the selected facts on the board.
3. Teacher explains the conventional organisation of a narrative text by making explicit the structure (orientation/Sequence/Message)
4. Students organise the notes into a new richer outline (sentence), paying attention to the overall structure of the text Teacher checks and helps with outlining ;
5. A sample outline is written on the board.
6. Students are asked to prepare a draft at home based on the new outline

In-Class Work (3) : Revising

1. Students read aloud sample drafts to the class ;
2. Students work in pairs revising the drafts : stress on writing mechanics, punctuation, accuracy, use of time links, unity of a paragraph, organisation of ideas, and attractive layout). They are encouraged to use a monolingual dictionary.
3. Teacher checks and helps with correction and reformulation.
4. Students hand in the final product.

Remarks: The main advantages of such instruction lie in giving enough time to students to generate genuine content by exploring the topic and examining ideas, to create coherent texts by writing different drafts, to learn to get involved in the writing task by doing prior research, and to collaborate in producing the final writing outcome.

Research Card 3.3 Task Instructional Procedures

Object of Research : Provide more information and preparation for the task

Objectives : Develop awareness of the macro-structure and rhetorical organisation of expository texts ;
Provide support evidence in the form of graphs, statistics, and figures ;
To use referencing strategies such as paraphrasing, summarising, and; quoting
To continue practising composing strategies such as pre-writing, drafting, and revising.

Hypothesis : If students get more preparation and search for more information, they will be able and eager to improve their writing.

Date : February 2000

Time Period : Four class periods of 1.30 each (two weeks)

Writing Performance : Real Writing (academic : to search, expose, and exchange genuine information on education in England and Algeria)

Text Type : Formal Expository Essay

Writing Micro-Skills : Lexical cohesion (use of specific vocabulary in context)
Use of metadiscourse items to introduce statistical information ;
Syntactic cohesion (use reduced clauses in complex sentences)

Discourse Conventions : Paragraphing : use of topic sentence and support sentences ;
Rhetorical organisation : select a comparative structure to develop ideas

Composing Strategies : Pre-writing : brainstorm by means of pictures, chart, and a short questionnaire ; planning through topic web (lexical cohesion) and topic tree (idea coherence)
Drafting : preparing drafts out-of-class through further researching ;
Revising : peer-revision of drafts in the classroom ;
writing the final product out-of-class

Cultural Pay Off : Offering a possibility to compare between educational systems across cultures (cross-cultural analysis to foster cultural awareness)

Topic : Education Systems in England and Algeria

Task : Compare and contrast the education systems in Britain and Algeria with regard to factors like aims, age, length of learning, types of school, examinations, and subjects. Provide recent authentic information (figures, graphs, tables, charts, and quotations).

Task Instructional Procedures :

Preparation In-Class (1): Pre-writing Activities

Discussion : Brainstorm the students through a large chart presenting the state education in Britain and a set of pictures on pupils and classrooms—

How many stages are there in the English education system ?

How many years do pupils spend studying ?

What are the different examinations ?

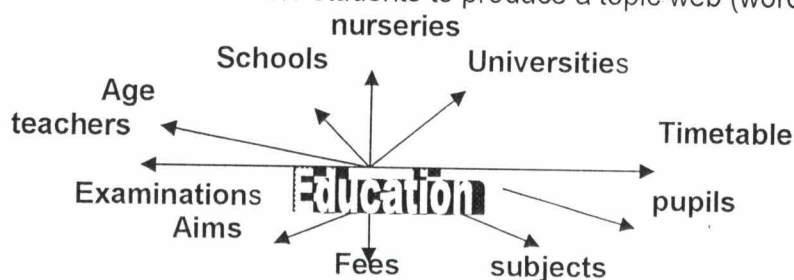
What subjects do they study ?

What are pupils wearing ? — *what do pupils wear*

How is the classroom organised ?

Do we have the same type of organisation in Algeria

1. Topic Web : Brainstorm the students to produce a topic web (words related to education)



2. Short Questionnaire on Educational Aims :

Students in groups read and discuss the listed aims (10) to select the preferred ones.

Out-of-Class Work : Resourcing and Note-Making

1. Ask students (group work) to look for more authentic documents in the library or on the web (e.g., The British Council site) to make useful notes .
2. Report the notes on a chart.

In-Class Work (2) : Sharing Notes (chart summary) and Note-Taking

1. Each group of students reports the collected information to the class ;
2. Teacher draws a chart on the board and asks students to fill it with useful notes
3. Students read quickly short authentic texts on education in England to add more details to the chart (skimming strategy)

Out-of-Class Work (2) : Planning (organise the notes for separate paragraphs)

In-Class-Work (3) : Planning (topic tree) and Paragraphing (topic and main sentences)

1. Teacher draws a topic tree on the board and solicit details from the students.
2. Students make decision on the number of paragraphs and rhetorical structure
3. Drafting (producing a first draft of the essay)

Out-of-Class Work (3) : Rewriting and enriching the first draft

In-Class-Work (4) : Revising and Reformulating the first draft by peer revision (organisation and accuracy) ; Teacher checks and helps with correction and reformulation.

Out-of-Class Work (4) : Writing the Essay as a homework paying attention to layout, presentation of the product (a cover) ; typing the final product on the computer, using A4 sheets, leaving margins and typing on one side only, and supplying pictures.

Remarks : Using experience as acquired knowledge, the subjects become familiar with the composing stages of text creation and use the available time variable to carefully explore, examine, prepare, and complete the task.

Research Card 3.5 Task Instructional Procedures

3.2.4 Data Analysis : Results, Interpretation, and Discussion

Data analysis consisted thus of two groups of texts produced by the same subjects during the experimental instruction. The total number of texts amounted to fifty (50), twenty-five (25) for each text-type. The sample size of texts made it possible to have an adequate comparability of all texts at three levels of analysis : holistic, macroscopic, and microscopic. Given the nature of written material, all the counting was carried out first by hand (absolute frequency) and then given as percentage (relative frequency) whenever possible in reporting the statistical results. Such a statistical method, though limited, made a comprehensive analysis of most of the writing performance variables feasible.

3.2.4.1 Holistic Evaluation

The following interpretation attempts to exhibit a holistic perspective on the research results. In general, the instructional experiment may be said to have yielded invaluable knowledge on what learners could learn and do through classroom-action research. The major aim of orienting them towards a different mental conceptualisation (developing new attitudes and habits) of the nature and activity of writing and the use of relevant resources as learning tools was largely met. The main changes that took place in the subjects' performance can be listed as follows :

- **Attitudinal Changes** : It may be fair to argue that performance was significantly enhanced by the time variable (having regular and plenty of practice both in-class and out-of -class). As expected, for those learners whose purpose for writing was to learn how to shape and reshape meaning in an effective way, constant practice and varied tasks served to improve their writing outcomes. In like manner, looking at writing as a multi draft process and a dynamic activity, an assumption that ran counter to what they had been accustomed to, within a collaborative atmosphere (continual learner-learner and teacher-learner interaction) contributed to changing the subjects' attitudes towards the task of writing (from the attitude of pleasing the teacher, producing a superficial product, and getting a pass mark to one of trying to create a meaningful and informative text). Despite a certain initial reluctance, they adhered to the fact that writing is, by nature, an act of personal and public commitment. This acceptance was clearly observed in their eagerness to search for authentic information and take time to think, reason, and write.

- **Declarative and Procedural Knowledge Changes** : Thanks to the reliance on authentic content-based material and the integration of reading

and writing, it was possible to demonstrate impressive gains by a larger number of students in building up a consistent declarative knowledge (useful information background) and develop procedural knowledge (using resources as tools for handling a variety of tasks). Among the composing strategies, brainstorming, resourcing, and planning emerged as the preferred resources that were repeatedly used in a variety of ways. For example, pre-writing activities co-occurred with 'drafting' with sufficient regularity.

□ **Discourse Changes** : The main result here was the development in terms of mastering written discourse (both textual and rhetorical) rather than mere language proficiency. It was expected that the subjects' work had improved in textual (use of metadiscourse, cohesive devices) and rhetorical (use of appropriate mode of organisation). In effect, the subjects may be said to have learned to use paragraphing (clear topic sentence, support evidence) and organise content (introduction/situation, development/analysis, and conclusion/opinion). Mere listing of sentences and ideas was frequent in the first texts (Cf. pre-assessment results) and rare in the experimental ones. Similarly, a significant change consisted in written outcomes that sounded less like speech and more like conventional written English (i.e., a rising awareness of the differences between speech and writing). There was also some evidence of a rising awareness of text-type differentiation in that an article resembled an article, and a letter was clearly a letter.

□ **Lexico-Grammatical Changes** : The expected changes included two main indices : (a) a reduction of some clause-level features of spoken language like the frequent use of 'so', 'because', 'and', 'fragments' (repetitive noun phrases) ; the use of specific register (lexical cohesion) thanks to reading different authentic texts on the same topic (i.e., thematically related texts), and the use of metadiscourse items to direct the reader (e.g., 'it can be seen from the graph' instead of 'you can see').

Statistically, the holistic evaluation yielded the following results (the figures in the columns are hand counted giving occurrences according to the number of subjects (25) in this and all subsequent tables) :

Variables	Excellent		Very Good		Adequate		Fair		Weak	
	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2
Discourse (Coherent)	3	5	7	15	11	5	4	0	0	0
Content : (Informative)	2	2	10	5	10	9	2	5	1	5
Language (accurate)	3	5	6	4	6	8	7	5	5	3
Strategies (adequate)	3	5	14	16	4	4	2	2	0	0
Total	11	17	40	42	31	23	17	9	4	6

Table 3.8 Holistic Evaluation of the Subjects Writing Performance in the Two Texts

Variables	Discourse	Content	Grammar/Lexis	Composing
Scores				
High Scores	30	19	15	38
Average	10	19	25	8
Low	4	12	09	4

Table 3.9 Number of the Subjects' Scores in the Two Texts

The holistic evaluation scores were obtained on the basis of the criteria listed below :

- **Excellent** : Clear conventional discourse pattern and rhetorical organisation ; original information ; fluent control of lexical and grammatical structures, mechanics show no fault ; clear resourcing, planning, and drafting ;
- **Very Good** : Good organisational structure ; relevant content ; use of varied lexical and grammatical forms ; effective use of resourcing, planning and drafting ;

- **Adequate** : Limited organisational structure ; some ideas and irrelevant content ; adequate range of lexico-grammatical forms that could be used more effectively; short topic planning and little drafting ;
- **Fair** : Unclear organisational structure ; ideas poorly organised ; restricted range of lexis and grammatical forms ; poor writing mechanics ; unawareness of composing strategies;
- **Weak** : Organisation absent ; no suitable content ; very restricted range of lexis and grammar ; very restricted mastery of mechanics ; total unawareness of composing strategies.

As it can be seen from the above tables, there was a noticeable improvement in the discourse and composing variables (i.e., a growing awareness of the macro-structure of texts and the steps to create them). Composing strategies made up the highest gains (38) and discourse (30). The lowest gains remained in the language-system variables (15 :high and 25 average). Content (searching for original information through extensive reading) steadily improved across the three score groups (19, 19, 12). The texts that received higher or good scores had to demonstrate control over both the structure of the essay and the structures of individual paragraphs. A good score generally demonstrated a fair degree of discourse awareness and rhetorical competency . The majority of scores clustered above average, specifically, those having to do with rhetorical organisation and composing awareness, indicating that the subjects wrote better organised texts and learned to spend some time preparing for the writing task (respectively 38 and 30). As a result, and with increased time and preparation, they were able to increase the incidence of good performance as regards organisation and composing. In contrast, the low scores remained stable in the language-system variables, highlighting the persistence of linguistic difficulties and low language performance (34 texts, average/low).

3.2.4.2 Macroscopic Analysis : Discourse, Content, and Composing Variables

~~X~~ Analysis at the macroscopic level was ^{made} done to further show whether and to what extent the subjects' texts improved globally as regards discourse-rhetorical organisation, content-informational and composing-procedural variables (Cf. Typology Diagram above). The results for each category of variables are presented in a tabulated form.

(1) Discourse-Contextual Knowledge

Variables	Topic-Type One/25		Topic-Type Two/ 25	
	AF	RF	AF	RF
Discourse Variables				
1. Use of Coherence Patterns	18	72%	20	80
2. Use of logical connectives	15	60%	20	80
Rhetorical Variables				
1. Use of appropriate organisation	20	80	22	88
2. Clear text type	18	72	20	80
Paragraphing Variables				
1. paragraph Idea Unit	10	40	14	56
Contextual Variables				
1. Clear reader	6	24	10	40
2. Purpose	12	48	16	64
Level of formality	10	40	11	44

Table 3.10 Macroscopic analysis of Discourse, Content, and Contextual Variables in the Subjects' Texts

(2) Lexico-Grammatical Knowledge : Fluency Variables

Fluency Variables	Topic-Type One	Topic-Type Two
Lexical Variables		
1. No of content words	783	5538
2.No of cohesive ties (pronouns)	192	369
Total	975	5917
Syntactic Variables		
1. No of sentences	332	743
2. No of short sentences	217	394
3. No of complex sentences	115	349
Total	664	1486

Table 3.11 Macroscopic Analysis of Fluency Variables (lexico-grammatical) in the Subjects' Texts

(3) Content Knowledge : Use of Background Reading

Content Variables	Topic-Type One	Topic-Type Two
	Number	Number
Text-length Variable		
1. Overall No of Words (content/function)	1030	6020
Reading-Background Variables		
1.Original Information	124	277
2.Topic-Specific Terms/Concepts	170	920
3.Evidence (graphs/figures)	08	30
Total	302	12 27
Planning Variables		
1.Plan length (No of words)	120	200
2.Plan quality (No of specific details)	591	750
Total	1013	2177

Table 3.12 Macroscopic Analysis of Information/Planning Variables in the Subjects' Texts (Use and planning of Information from Reading Texts)

(4) Composing Knowledge : Use of Local Strategies

Strategy	Frequently		Sometimes		Rarely	
	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic1	Topic2
1.Resourcing (consulting references)	2	18	10	04	11	02
2.Planning (using outlines)	10	20	11	04	04	01
3. Drafting (rewriting different drafts)	11	16	03	06	12	03
4. Paraphrasing (using own words to report information)	02	06	02	06	21	13
5. Summarising (main ideas/events)	02	08	06	08	17	09
Total	27	68	31	28	66	28

Table 3.13 The frequency of local composing strategies in the subjects' texts.

3.2.4.3 Discussion and Interpretation

In general, it might be fair to suggest that the majority of subjects developed an awareness of what constituted coherent writing and about the helpful composing process. These learners started to realise the need for building a consistent background knowledge (by learning to use resourcing, note-making, and background reading for a knowledge base) and an effective procedural knowledge (by using conventional discourse patterns, acceptable modes of organisation, cohesive ties and lexical cohesion). It is clear that class instruction directed towards assisting the subjects (providing enough time and practice) yielded evident gains as regards the careful preparation for and completion of the assigned tasks.

As a matter of fact, the hypothesis that the subjects would be able to generate texts with better and relevant content if they were able to go through a pre-writing process (resourcing, planning and note-making) was largely proved. In other words, there was clear evidence of enhanced performance when the subjects spent time resourcing, planning, exchanging information, and drafting. In preparing for a task, the subjects were clearly instructed to search for original information, discuss the collected data in groups, and suggest suitable working outlines before producing initial drafts. They were oriented towards the available library resources (World Facts 2000, Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedia, Study UK, Encarta Encyclopedia and useful websites).

Accordingly, they provided more details, and wrote longer and better plans and texts than the ones produced at the beginning of the course. While length itself may not necessarily constitute an index of quality, the content analysis did reveal the fact that the texts were richer in genuine information (Cf. section 3.3.2.3 above). The homework plans were more complete and included a greater amount of information that would serve as valuable guidelines for the subjects as they wrote their final draft. The texts resulting from the plans were clearly rich in details and superior in quality than the ones produced in the pre-assessment stage. For instance, the overall amount of words for Topic 1 was 1030 and 6020 for Topic 2, which suggests a greater amount of content. By the same token, the texts did a better task of meeting the needs of the reader by offering genuine and rich information on *The Battle of Hastings* and *Education Systems* in England.

Planning also led to increased familiarity with the topic, allowing the subjects to activate their newly built background knowledge. They became more knowledgeable and comfortable not only with the topics but also with the language used, thus avoiding ineffective global strategies such as translating and coining. That is to say, they found themselves retrieving the information in English. Background reading and ongoing planning allowed the topic knowledge to be gradually ingrained (i.e., schema-construction from a cognitive standpoint). This result corroborates findings from previous studies (e.g., Friedlander 1990) which indicate that when students write on topics for which their knowledge is adequate and in which they are involved, content and organisation are likely to be superior

to texts on topics for which their knowledge is limited or with which they are unfamiliar.

In like manner, essay length (total number of words) was considered as an index indicative of development within paragraph, structural complexity and ease of writing. Here again, several studies (Reid, 1990 :195) showed that essay length correlated highly with quality writing. The vocabulary chosen by student writers in their texts varied significantly with topic type. The high average word length in both topics elicited more formal, informational lexical items resulting in greater lexical cohesion expressed both in the form of word families and word formation :

Topic 1

Earl of Wessex, conquered,
ravaged, axes, shields,
ill-prepared, fightings,
contingency, archers,
knights, warriors, assault,
loss, strong, victory, victorious
bloody, devastating

Topic 2

primary, nursery, secondary,
timetable, schooling, learning,
subject, skill, degree, pedagogy,
practical, technical, academic,
library, develop, development,
training, learn, learner, throne,
learning

Even if the language-system knowledge remained relatively low, compared with the other components, there was a significant improvement in the lexical choices made by the subjects. The prompts tended to require the writers to choose specific lexis in order to inform the expected readership. By repeating a number of specialised words, they increased both lexical cohesion and their average word length. The high percentage of nouns was an index of 'high informational density' (Halliday, 1989), resulting in high explicit and condensed meaning (Grabe and Biber, 1988).

3.2.4.4 Microscopic Analysis

The microscopic analysis was carried out to examine more closely the occurrence of specific micro-skills and strategies in individual texts. The objective was to assess the extent of change in individual learners' performance by looking at variables such rich modification (more participle phrases, nominalisations, more variety of modification, use of explicit discourse markers), accuracy ratio (the use of correct forms), the distinction between written language and speech, the use of background-reading information in each text,

and strategies such as paraphrasing and quoting. The results are also presented in a tabulated form.

(1) Fluency, Complexity and Modification

Subjects	Lexico-Grammatical Variables									
	Content Words		reference		Short sentences		complexity		Modification	
1	116	320	2	35	22	18	14	38	25	30
2	122	229	9	16	12	10	02	10	07	17
3	70	143	0	26	08	21	05	24	07	15
4	93	315	6	17	08	13	08	11	10	1
5	64	220	0	07	05	35	07	04	10	16
6	63	281	4	16	06	14	05	12	10	14
7	141	354	0	32	22	29	05	22	03	13
8	115	276	9	19	09	16	11	16	09	10
9	87	222	0	15	18	35	03	06	12	08
10	77	102	6	09	07	05	03	11	10	04
11	103	200	0	11	07	05	01	12	06	06
12	109	217	2	12	10	07	05	12	00	04
13	134	194	0	23	01	03	05	15	02	06
14	98	340	9	22	20	30	04	12	09	06
15	67	115	1	29	14	02	00	07	00	10
16	117	202	4	11	07	32	06	08	08	02
17	60	143	0	07	11	09	03	11	06	01
18	119	230	4	13	03	05	04	15	03	08
19	117	126	0	17	04	13	04	08	08	09
20	110	134	3	18	14	12	06	03	02	05
21	169	256	0	21	14	14	05	19	06	12
22	195	325	6	06	10	28	03	23	02	05
23	91	120	0	15	05	04	03	12	05	10
24	112	130	3	10	03	06	04	14	04	06
25	181	207	0	12	09	32	04	10	03	10

Table 3.14 Frequency of fluency, complexity, and modification in individual subjects' texts

Complexity was interpreted as the increased use of rich syntactic modification like the use of nominalisation, reduction of clauses to prepositional or participial phrases, subordination and use of cohesive devices (pronouns). For example :

Subject E/Topic1 : The two strong rivals, blinded by zeal and ambition, used power only to reach the throne and become the king of the new nation.
(participial phrase)

Topic 2 : The important basis for any country to be developed and have a literate society is education. (complex nominalisation)

Subject F/Topic 1 : The Norman army consisted of 12.000 soldiers, with different types of cavalry, archers, foot-soldiers, and well-trained horses. (infinitive phrase)

Topic2 : The Algerian educational system was for a long time mentioned as an example in the formerly colonised countries.
(nominalisation)

There was firm evidence of increased complexity in the subjects' texts, reflecting a rising awareness of the nature of written discourse (complexity being one essential component). Specifically, the second texts contained more reduced clauses and nominalisations as shown in the table below :

	Topic 1	Topic 2
Nominalisation (NP)	63	125
Adverbial Reduced Clauses(adj/infinitive)	37	41
Past/Present Participial Phrases	33	36
Total	133	202

Table 3.15 Aspects of Syntactic Maturity (occurrence of complexity patterns)

(2) Accuracy Ratio

Subjects	Number of errors per text Errors/Words /(topic1)		Number of errors per text Errors/Words/(topic 2)	
	AF	RF	AF	RF
1	12/410	29%	4/470	1%
2	8/150	5%	9/300	3%
3	9/180	5%	18/240	3%
4	4/110	3%	16/220	7%
5	11/125	9%	10/200	5%
6	3/75	4%	12/130	9%
7	5/125	4%	6/189	3%
8	6/120	5%	12/210	6%
9	7/103	7%	6/140	4%
10	10/125	8%	5/80	6%
11	9/120	7,5%	12/170	7%
12	5/100	5%	8/345	2%
13	3/110	3%	3/300	1%
14	3/200	1,5%	11/370	3%
15	12/190	6%	10/220	5%
16	09/130	7%	10/200	5%
17	07/115	6%	10/142	7%
18	01/60	2%	4/200	2%
19	07/50	14%	12/150	8%
20	07/130	5%	8/140	6%
21	10/105	10%	14/200	7%
22	6/100	6%	12/120	10%
23	2/90	1%	10/123	8%
24	12/80	15%	8/150	5%
25	10/130	8%	13/200	6,5%

Table 3.16 Accuracy Ratio per Text (division of the number of errors by the total number of words—adapted from Kroll 1990 :145)

(3) Accuracy Ratio : Type of Errors per Text

Error Type	Occurrence of error types per text	
	Topic 1	Topic 2
Sentence Structure Variables		
1. Whole sentence or clause aberrant	3	10
2. Verb missing	10	16
3. Sentence Fragment	07	05
4. Run-on sentence	06	04
5. Parallel structures	02	02
6. Relative clause formation	06	04
7. Word order	01	04
8. Awkward phrasing	13	11
Verb-Centered Variables		
9. Tense	31	02
10. Verb formation	11	14
11. Subject-Verb Agreement	05	08
Reference Errors		
12. Noun-Pronoun Agreement	08	06
13. Ambiguous Reference	05	02
Word-Level Choice		
14. Lexical Choice	17	19
15. Idioms	02	01
16. Preposition	19	09
Article Errors		
17. Missing/Extra/Wrong articles	30	22
Punctuation		
18. Missing/Extra/Wrong	35	28
Total	111	165

Table 3.17 The occurrence of the type of errors in the subjects' texts

Number of texts : 50

Despite the persistence of a number of language-system errors , the examined texts showed a relative improvement in terms of accuracy for some students both at the word-level (verb forms) and sentence-level (sentence

Despite the persistence of a number of language-system errors, the examined texts showed a relative improvement in terms of accuracy for some students both at the word-level (verb forms) and sentence-level (sentence construction). Unlike the pre-assessment results, the present texts contained fewer nouns wrongly constructed from verbs and fewer misconstrued long sentences (run-on). As the above table indicates, the main errors consisted of the wrong use of mechanics (punctuation) and articles (especially, definite articles). Here again, it is worth mentioning that the aim of *assessment* was not *error analysis* (what was wrong) but rather *accuracy analysis* (what was right—what the subjects learned to do right).

(4) Written Language : Formality and Impersonality

There was a noticeable move from a spoken to a written language style in the subjects' texts, typified by the use of written formulae, explicit metadiscourse items, and a richer syntactic modification within sentence structures. Consider the following examples :

Subject A/Topic 2 : Education is a human right, carrier of an immense hope of transformation.

Subject A/Topic 1 : Among the very famous battles in England history is The Battle of Hastings, 1066.

Subject B/Topic2 : As a case study, we will compare education in England and Algeria.

Subject B/Topic 1 : The Battle of Hastings, a military engagement, happened on the 14th October 1066 and was a critical turning point in the history of England.

There was also a gradual decline in the use of such fossilised spoken forms like *so* as an adverbial. This typically spoken and vague connector, repeatedly used in the earlier texts, was gradually replaced by more formal written-language terms marking well-defined logical relations. Another aspects of a rising awareness of the differences between speech and written discourse consisted in the increased use of written formulae :

Subject C/Topic2 : To make an illustration, this system is compared with the Algerian one, giving the main characteristics.

Subject D/Topic2: Generally, the Algerian educational system is different from the English one, with regard to choice, aims, and methods.

The use of explicit metadiscourse markers occurred specifically in the introductory paragraphs and served as openers to topic sentences (e.g., we will highlight, we are going to compare, we can notice, I am trying to study...). Similarly, concluding paragraphs included an increased use of metadiscourse verbs as shown in the table below :

	Topic 1	Topic2
We+active : As far as we are concerned		
To sum up, we can say that	1	08
We insist that education...		
In conclusion, we can say that Britain		
I+active: In the final part, I would suggest that ...	1	03
Impersonal : As a conclusion, the English Army was defeated.	22	11
As a result of this battle, the Norman leader became King of England.		
Finally, the English witnessed a bitter defeat.		

Table 3.18 Use of metadiscourse items

What is noticeable in the corpus was the decline in the use of spoken formula like *I think* as a personal attitude hedge (*I think the British system is better or I think Algeria needs some urgent actions...*). The subjects were learning not to use their personal experience as a warrant for their claims, rather than merely not to say *I*. Probably, thanks to ongoing feedback and guided revision, the subjects were gradually adhering to the use of impersonal items in their texts despite an evident shift towards the use of 'we' (we insist, we must, as we have seen) :

	Topic1	Topic2
with I	-	06
with you	-	-
with we	-	31
with one	-	02
Total	-	39

Table 3.19 Personal Items

Likewise, given the formal nature of the two tasks, it was expected that aspects of informal writing would decrease (e.g., contractions and vague items like *big*, *lots*, *lot of*, *many*) as shown in the following instances:

There are big differences between the two systems.

Nursery schools are found in big cities like Algiers and Oran.

The student in Algeria studies a lot of subjects.

Learners need big knowledge.

They are oriented according to two things.

Education differs from one country to another according to a lot of hings.

They musn't leave school at a young age.

We see and meet a lot of persons with different personalities.

Schools haven't a good method.

The English soldiers didn't care about Harold's orders.

The occurrences of such variables are summarised in the table below.

	Topic 1	Topic 2
I'm	-	1
'll	-	2
'nt	3	6
it's	-	3
they're	-	2
a lot	-	5
lots	-	-
big	2	4
many	5	4
Total	5	27

Table 3.20 Informal Variables (contractions and vague items)

The rising awareness of written discourse as a distinct medium of expression from speech can be also seen in the occurrence of constructions with the cataphoric *It*: *It* + {modal} + be + adjective + to/that as the following instances clearly show :

It is necessary to note that the 'A'level is a very specialised exam.

It is vital that children should start school at five in Algeria.

It is necessary that the gouvernement use good solutions.

The table below provides the occurrences of adjective/cataphoric in the two texts :

	Topic1	Topic2
primordial to	-	1
compulsory to	-	1
necessary to	-	4
desirable to	-	1
urgent to	-	3
useful	-	1
vital that	-	1
difficult to	-	2
Total	0	14

Table 3.21 Occurrence of Cataphoric/Adjective constructions in the subjects' texts.

The low occurrence of constructions with cataphoric *It* was perhaps due to the discourse nature of Topic 1 (narrative) and the difficulty of learning to use such advanced forms. The subjects appeared more at ease with the use of direct modal formulae in simple declarative sentences:

We must with the help of the authorities try all the best ways to improve our education.

Classes should be less crowded.

They should introduce pupils to sports and cultural activities like in England.

We should take urgent measures.

Modules should be related to each other.

However, the relative frequency of cataphoric forms in Topic 2 (14) might suggest the subjects' developing writing ability and awareness.

(5) Explicitness : Use of Textual Metadiscourse

The occurrence of explicitness (explicit metadiscourse) took two main forms. First, there was an increased use of a limited set of *text markers/connectors* such as *time sequencers* (before, after, during, meanwhile, afterward, later), *comparison/contrast connectors* (however, in contrast, on the contrary, on the other hand), *interpretive markers* (for example, as an illustration, as a case study), and *clausal adverbials* (but, because, even though while, as, in spite of), certainty markers (certainly, in fact, as a matter of fact), and *speech act markers* (to conclude, to sum up, in conclusion). Second, there was a tentative use by a few students of *interpersonal metadiscourse*, namely, *hedges* (perhaps, maybe, probably), *attributors* (according to, as regards, with respect to), and *attitude markers* (modals expressing obligation like must, should and thematic constructions such as it is important to).

Both sets of texts were generally coherent thanks to the use of the above metadiscourse items, showing a rising awareness of the components of written discourse. Consider the following instances:

Subject D/Topic 1: The Battle of Hastings was between the Normans, under the Duke of Normandy, and the Anglo-Saxons, under King Harold II. However, this one had had many losses before due to the rivalry with his brother. In addition, England was an Earldom which made it in disputed succession.

Subject D/Topic 2: By comparing education in two different countries, England and Algeria, we will highlight the main similarities and differences. First, England's schools can be divided into state and private. ✕

The table below summarises the frequency of occurrence of metadiscourse items :

	Topic 1	Topic 2
Logical connectors	46	101
Clausal adverbials	38	59
Speech Act markers	04	06
Certainty Markers	-	11
Interpretive	-	07
Attitude Markers	02	12

Table 3.22 Metadiscourse Markers of Coherence

Improved coherence (thematisation in Halliday's terminology) involved thus an extensive use of metadiscourse markers to convey links between ideas. This was especially noticeable in Topic 2-Texts which included a variety of logical text markers (likewise, similarly, in addition, in contrast) and clausal adverbials (e.g., *but* occurred 15 times). However, the weak point remained the use of the conjunct *and* as a logical connector (10 times in the first texts and 07 in the second texts), and the persistence of *so* (as a speech act marker), which might hint at a certain fossilisation among some learners (especially the low-level subjects).

Similarly, in both texts there were non-conventional discourse markers such as *more than this*, *for this*, *on reverse* to express elaboration or contrast. Such ✕ occurrence indicated the persistence of global inefficient strategies like transfer and translation (the above words were clearly transferred from French, *plus que ça*, *pour ça*, *au contraire*). There were other types of used strategies : meaning transfer and loan words (e.g., *their studies are gratuits* ; *the main raison behind the English defeat was lack of preparation* ; *problems are with hundreds*).

3.2.4.5 Discussion and Interpretation

The main finding of the microscopic analysis was the fact that nearly most learners (60%) became gradually aware of the components of conventional written discourse. There were increasing frequencies of typical features such as syntactic modification, explicit metadiscourse, and lexical cohesion. The subjects used enthusiastically (sometimes they overused) logical metadiscourse items to convey coherence and developed lexical cohesion by using vocabulary specific to each topic (increased use of synonyms and word formation). That was a significant evidence of the subjects' rising awareness of and progress in arranging the content in a logical and explicit manner. The subjects seemed to approach written discourse in a conscious and critical way, and were quite successful in adapting to it.

As a clear illustration, they partially managed to decentre their writing, i.e., removing the ego-centric aspect (a prevalent feature of pre-assessment texts) and providing an appropriate context for the reader (a shared knowledge). In other words, most of them learned to go beyond an overly simple view of a topic (a composition to be corrected and marked by the teacher) and understand that their audience may be different, requiring genuine information and appropriate interaction (level of formality and hedging). The awareness and acceptance of writing as an *act of commitment*, a reader-writer interaction, constituted a major objective (and perhaps a significant achievement) of the present study.

Clearly, discourse and contextual awareness (a conveniently achievable pedagogical goal) was not as difficult to develop and learn as grammatical accuracy (as the persistence of a number of linguistic errors demonstrated). The overall improvement was in mastering conventional written discourse rather than improving linguistic proficiency. This specific research finding may highlight two main and immediate implications. First, if performance at the level of syntax and the level of discourse appear to differ so widely, it might be time to seriously consider the need to offer different types of classes to students who exhibit different types of achievements and problems. In other words, it may be convenient to introduce a multi-level flexible curriculum that determines

students' needs, and uses those needs as a basis for deciding what to do and how to do it, both in course planning and during classroom decision-making (this proposal involves both *learner development* and *teacher development* as it will be respectively discussed in Chapters Four and Five).

Secondly, if writing requires particular attention to correctness, a lack of linguistic knowledge, or in Widdowson's terms (1984), *syntactic automation*, will exacerbate the learning task of low-level learners by making their mental resources preoccupied with achieving linguistic correctness, leaving little spare capacity for genuine communication and coherent discourse. That is why, all too often, such learners focus on the text for its own sake and neglect its discourse, context, and composing dimensions (Cf. Diagram 3.1: 163).

These learners have clearly reached a point in their learning process where they need to modify organisational structures, by adopting useful and effective resources. It means that mere language proficiency may not enable them to move beyond limited decoding and L1-based strategies (translation, simplification, and repetition) to more effective micro-skills and strategies. If low-level learners keep retrieving information about a topic from memory and past experience in the first language and then have to translate and transfer into English before writing anything down, they will simply overload their short-term memory, diminish the quality of the content of their writing, and further exacerbate their writing problems (or ,in fact, writing failure).

3.3 Qualitative Approach to Situation Analysis

3.3.1 Questionnaires' Description

Data collection through the three questionnaires is aimed at uncovering the types of approach to writing that teachers and learners alike have developed toward language learning in general, and writing in particular. In other words, the focus is on the research participants' own experience, interpretations, and perspectives of behaviour, events, and learning situations by encouraging them to reflect on their own classroom practices, attitudes, personal learning strategies, and the underlying assumptions. The rationale behind such an emic introspection (i.e., *reflective learning and teaching*) is to point to some currently debated issues in relation to the teaching of writing and

its role in the learning of English as well as suggest possibilities for classroom practice and awareness-raising instruction. Equally important is the aim to elicit written commentary on students and their proficiency from a large number of teachers.

3.3.1.1 Learners' Questionnaire

The learners' questionnaire (henceforth : LQ) was designed to enquire about the type of learning and writing instruction that the new entrants perceived themselves to have received and the type of instruction they would prefer to receive at the university level (for more details, see appendix 3.1). The objective was to find out their language-proficiency level, degree of writing-performance ability, the encountered difficulties and the perceived motivational and attitudinal orientations. They were asked therefore to indicate whether they had learned to use helpful resources (strategies and micro-skills) to handle writing difficulties and to provide self-ratings of their language proficiency and writing performance.

LQ was administered at the beginning of the academic year in the written comprehension and expression module. To facilitate the learners' task, the LQ was introduced and discussed in the class and then completed out of class by selecting the answers that best suited their own views and experiences and to provide short written answers whenever necessary. LQ consisted of five headings :

- ☐ personal information
- ☐ affective orientations
- ☐ writing experience, preferences, and difficulties
- ☐ secondary-school writing instruction, and
- ☐ university-level writing instruction (expected needs).

The first category aimed at collecting general information on the subjects' background (age, sex, secondary-school stream, total number of years in foreign language learning, and the choice of English as a subject of specialisation). The second category included eight (8) questions on attitudes towards learning in general, and English in particular, the type of learning experience , main wants, needs, and motives for learning and view towards the target culture. The third category, five (5) questions focussed on the learners'

writing experience, preferences and difficulties with the purpose of identifying their existing writing strategies, micro-skills, styles, weaknesses, strengths, and own suggestions for improving their writing performance. The fourth category, four (4) questions, assessed the type of writing instruction that the subjects had received at the secondary-school level, and their curricular and extra-curricular writing activities. The questions enquired about the most developed language skill (the one in which they felt competent and were able to get higher marks), the reliance on textbook material, the range of writing activities regularly practised, and the likelihood of transfer of writing strategies and micro-skills from L1 and L2 to English. The fifth category attempted to look at the learners' perception of the type of writing instruction they would expect at the university-level to become better writers and succeed in their studies.

3.3.1.2 Secondary-School Teachers' Questionnaire

The Secondary-School teachers' questionnaire (henceforth : SSQ) aimed primarily at uncovering the current writing methodologies as regards prevalent classroom instructional practices as well as achievable learning and writing objectives and outcomes. SSQ consisted of six (6) categories :

- ☐ Educational objectives of Secondary-School level of English language learning ;
- ☐ Pedagogical objectives ;
- ☐ Writing instruction methodology ;
- ☐ Writing strategy instruction ;
- ☐ Institutional evaluation of learners' writing ;
- ☐ Classroom evaluation of learners' writing and strategy use.

The first category included three (3) yes/no questions on the preparation of learners to cope with university studies at the three (3) levels : language proficiency (the ability to comprehend and create correct and meaningful short texts in English), cognitive (the ability to think, analyse and synthesise), and affective (fostering positive motivational and attitudinal tendencies towards the foreign language and culture). The second category, eight (8) questions, enquired about the actual teaching objectives and pedagogical priorities (e.g., skills that hold most importance for learners), learning difficulties (skills that pose serious difficulties to learners), teaching constraints (teaching time allotted to English per week), language objectives (linguistic foundation, oral communication, written communication ability and /or reading comprehension),

learning objectives (useful learning strategies like asking questions, using self-access material, and developing a metalanguage within the classroom to raise language awareness), and the extent to which the above objectives were achievable and actually attained in a school year.

The third category, six questions (6), dealt specifically with the learners' holistic writing performance (good, average, weak), the time allotted to the teaching of writing during a single session (per lesson), the objectives that writing activities focused on (grammatical accuracy, mechanics, syntactic expansion, lexical development, paragraphing, and/or text organisation), and the text types that learners were regularly taught to write (short narrative compositions, reports, letters, surveys, broadsheets, school-essay). Moreover, the teachers were asked to enumerate the learners' main difficulties while writing (e.g., inaccuracy limited vocabulary, poor mechanics and/or inadequate development of ideas) and suggest their main causes (e.g., insufficient teaching time, the complexity of the skill itself, irrelevant textbook tasks, inadequate methodology, and /or pupils' own demotivation).

The fourth category, three questions, asked teachers whether they had tried to introduce additional writing resources (strategies and micro-skills) to help learners overcome some ~~the~~ main writing difficulties (e.g., pre-writing activities to generate ideas and organise content; revising to check accuracy and sentence construction; resourcing by using monolingual dictionaries or grammar book; collaborating through group work and peer correction). It also enquired about the teacher's own teaching strategies (e.g., collaboration with learners in completing written tasks; provision of additional authentic material and interesting tasks; giving rapid and useful feedback; encouraging group work and group projects to enhance motivation and avoid monotony).

The fifth and sixth categories, three questions, investigated the types of evaluation procedures regularly used to test pupils' language proficiency and writing performance (e.g., formative and/or summative) and requested from teachers to make relevant suggestions that may help learners improve both language-system knowledge and writing-performance ability.

of x
x

3.3.1.3 University Teachers' Questionnaire

The University teachers' questionnaire (henceforth: ULQ) aimed at completing the comprehensive data collection by uncovering underlying assumptions and assessment of the new Baccalaureate holders' language and literacy proficiency. To do so, it examined the current writing-teaching models and staff attitudes (classroom practices, theoretical principles, methodological procedures, and attitudes towards toward change, theory, and practice). ULQ was divided into five major categories:

- Assessment of the subjects' entrant skills (thinking and writing);
- Writing teaching experience, instruction, and underlying assumptions;
- Teachers' critical reflection upon classroom teaching and learning;
- Critical awareness implementation and evaluation; and
- Experience-based suggestions to improve thinking and writing skills.

The first category, seven (7) questions, asked the teachers to assess the entrants' linguistic skills (Question One), to specify the learners' most developed language skill (s) (Question Two), to enumerate the types of difficulty that themselves first met when teaching the entrants (linguistic, motivational, contextual, behavioural, and/or material) (Question Three), to evaluate the subjects' writing initial writing performance and indicate the observed weaknesses (limited vocabulary, inaccuracy, poor mechanics, incoherence, inappropriacy) (Questions Four and Five), to make a tentative list of the range of learning and composing strategies observed in the classroom writing behaviour of first-year learners (e.g., taking notes, asking for clarification, using reference books, rewriting, planning, collaborating and other ones).

The second category, essentially a critical reflection upon one's teaching experience, attempted to make teachers reflect on their own approach to learning and teaching, what actually happened in their classrooms, and their own opinion on implementing change and enhancing the learning process and outcome within the educational institution. The eight (8) questions requested from the respondents to indicate their teaching experience, type of teacher-training (specific to the taught skill or general), the role of academic literacy (especially writing as an aid to learning, reinforcement of proficiency, support and testing measure of other language skills, key to academic success), the text types taught to learners, the types of classroom writing performance (imitative

or writing down, intensive or controlled, self-writing, display writing, real writing—academic, technical, personal), and the teachers' own classroom-teaching behaviour (formal or/and collaborative).

The third category, three (3) questions, enquired the following points: the introduction of explicit awareness-raising instruction with regard to discourse and composing strategies, the use of discourse-based metalanguage to talk about textual structures and rhetorical development, and the specification of the most relevant and applicable types of writing resources (sub-skills and strategies) for the target learners (meta-cognitive, cognitive, discourse-based, learning). The fourth category, four (4) questions, examined the text-examination procedures commonly used to evaluate writing performance (expository, narrative, descriptive, summary, textual transformation, and/or stylistic transformation), the types of evaluation (formative and/or summative, in-class work, out-of-class work, developmental tasks like portfolios, projects, and surveys), the most serious errors (mechanics, grammar, lexis, content, organisation, discourse), and the frequency of assessing the learners' thinking and writing skills. The final category provided an opportunity to teachers to put forward proposals to enhance foreign language education (in terms of processes and outcomes).

3.3.2 Questionnaires' Results

3.3.2.1 Learners' Questionnaire

Not only did the questionnaire findings add further insightful information on the learners' profile (mixed-ability groups with a very strong drive to learn and succeed) but also corroborated the tentative needs analysis proposed in Chapter One (a set of writing and thinking skills). The subjects' answers also revealed a rising *language awareness* in terms of clear perceptions towards both the learning and teaching processes that they had so far received. In what follows, a detailed analysis of all the answers is carried out so as to pinpoint the most relevant findings and offer reasonable interpretations. Table 3.2.1 below provides a summary of the frequency of the subjects' answers.

Out of 25 Subjects :		AF	RF
1. Importance of university studies in English.		24	96%
2. Great effort in learning English		20	80%
3. Positive attitudes towards English Language learning		22	88%
4. Positive attitudes towards learning to write		23	92%
5. Having an enjoyable language experience		22	88%
6. Studied English hard to pass the Baccalaureate (instrumental motivation)		01	04%
7. Having a keen interest in the British culture		24	96%
8. Writing habits in English :			
☐ Think in Arabic or French first		12	48%
☐ Think in English first		06	24%
☐ Write the same way in English and Arabic		02	04%
9. Concentrate on the following micro-skills when writing :			
☐ organisation		15	60%
☐ vocabulary		20	80%
☐ mechanics		12	18%
☐ grammar		18	72%
☐ purpose		05	20%
☐ discourse		05	20%
10. Main difficulties regularly encountered when writing:			
☐ expression of meaning		18	72%
☐ insufficient vocabulary		20	80%
☐ sentence construction		18	72%
☐ organisation of ideas		16	64%
☐ generating ideas		16	64%
11. Main causes of the writing difficulties			
☐ insufficient practice		20	80%
☐ insufficient reading		18	72%
☐ poor teaching methodology		06	24%
☐ lack of co-operation		05	20%
☐ lack of extra textbooks		15	60%
12. Suggestions for improving writing performance			
☐ Solid grammar		20	80%
☐ rich vocabulary through reading		23	92%
☐ a lot of writing practice		20	80%
☐ have a good classroom methodology		18	72%
☐ Co-operation and group work		05	20%

Table 3.23 Frequency of Student Responses to the Questionnaire

As the above table shows, the most striking finding lies in the high proportion of learners who hold very positive attitudes towards the foreign

language and exhibit a strong motivation to learn and succeed (24 out of 25). Only one respondent opted for *positive* rather than *very positive*. Almost the same proportion reported having positive attitudes towards 'learning to write in English' (23/25). None of the respondents said that 'learning English was only to pass the Baccalaureate'. All the subjects reported having 'an interest in the British culture' and 22 considered their foreign-language experience to be so far 'enjoyable'. Clearly, the vast majority of the new entrants came with very positive attitudes, high motivation, keen interest, and a clear eagerness to learn and succeed. Such an affective asset ought to be fully exploited to enhance language learning.

With regard to how students wrote in English, the largest group (13/25) reported trying 'to think first in Arabic or French, and then write in English', 6 reported 'thinking in French first', and 2 said 'to write in English the same way they wrote in Arabic'. Reliance on translation from and note-making in L1 or French as a major learning strategies may partly explain most of the learners' poor entrant writing performance; that is, their existing strategies, largely coloured by L1 interference, eventually resulted in inaccurate and inappropriate texts. However, it may be unwise to assume that most students are skilled writers in Arabic (CF. Chapter One, Section Two) or may have an adequate repertoire of strategies in L1 or French.

Concerning the important writing micro-skills, a large proportion (80%) reported giving importance to vocabulary (20/25), 72% to 'grammar' (18), 64% to 'organisation of ideas' (15), and 18% focus on 'mechanics' (12). 5 respondents (20%) said to pay equal attention to the purpose of the text and its discourse (coherence). The answer to Question 9 helped to shed some light on the learners' perception of good writing performance, equating it with correct grammar and plenty of vocabulary. Such equation (in effect, an ineffective *monitoring* strategy which diverts attention to wording and grammar) points to the fact that learners confused *language awareness* and *discourse awareness*—accuracy with appropriacy. In fact, they seemed to be unaware of the importance of discourse components like readership, style, purpose, and text pattern. Clearly, these young learners exhibited a narrow conception of what good writing involved, conceiving a text as an error-free linguistic product

and writing as a demonstration of language competence. That is why, without an explicit awareness and sound mental formulation of what good writing involves, they cannot be expected to know how to develop as effective writers.

As regards writing difficulties, the vast majority of respondents (90%) admitted experiencing serious problems when completing writing tasks. The biggest problem reported was undoubtedly an acute lack of necessary vocabulary to express the desired ideas (20/25), followed by 'expression of clear meaning' (18), 'sentence construction' (18), 'organisation of ideas' (16), and 'generating content' (16). According to most subjects, the main reasons behind the listed difficulties lay in 'insufficient writing practice' (20), 'inadequate reading' (18), 'poor teaching methodology' (06), and 'the lack of co-operation and extra textbooks' (respectively, 05 and 15).

Finally, as far as suggestions for likely improvement are concerned, almost all respondents insisted on 'developing a rich lexical repertoire' (23), 'building up a solid grammatical basis' (20) and 'having constant writing practice' (20). Six (6) mentioned the importance of having a 'good teaching methodology inside the classroom' and five (5) considered 'co-operation and access to extra-material' as helpful measures (i.e., strategies) to improve one's performance. It is clear again that these learners did come with a certain degree of language awareness and perceptions of immediate needs (essentially linguistic) but, on the other hand, held very simplistic (perhaps narrow) view of what effective writing involved (i.e., an inadequate type of background and procedural knowledge). In other words, it may be argued that pre-mature and narrow focus on grammar and lexis resulted in diverted attention (in terms of monitoring strategy) and eventually led to a *failure* with regard to a mental formulation of writing as an activity, involving more than just language-system elements but also a set of norms and necessary preparatory steps (readership, purpose, discourse conventions, drafting, and revising).

In summary, LQ highlighted a number of findings (listed below) and supported a set of hypotheses, discussed, in detail, in Chapters One and Two.

- Most subjects hold very positive attitudes toward the foreign language and culture ;

- Most respondents expressed a clear need for a rich vocabulary and a solid grammar (conceiving writing as demonstration of language competence) ;
- They also expressed a need for a *good* teaching methodology ;
- The majority come with little knowledge of what constitutes effective writing and possess few but largely ineffective writing strategies (translation from L1 or French, transfer (syntactic, semantic, and rhetorical), use of bilingual dictionaries, and sole monitoring of grammar and word forms.

The findings could be interpreted as showing a certain conflict between desirable educational practice (teacher-researcher's own perception) and the expectations of most students (perceived needs) who see writing as an isolated, required skill instead of as a learning experience. As to the subjects' lack of useful composing strategies, the finding, (which is consistent with findings from similar research (Cohen 1987 ; Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990 ; Kroll 1990 ;) that the majority of learners had little or no awareness of text as discourse and the steps involved in its completion, would once again suggest the need for an explicit 'awareness-raising instruction' to recognise, discuss and use the conventional attributes of effective texts. Clearly EFL learners need help with linguistic form (grammar, sentence construction and lexical choice), but they also need help with generating and organising of content, and adhering to conventions of discourse (specifically that these are likely to differ from those used in L1 or French).

3.3.2.2 Secondary-School Teachers 'Questionnaire

The chief interest of the SSQ was the identification of further variables (attitudes, assumptions, practices, and experience) that might add further information on the subjects' language learning background and writing experience. Two main variables were taken into account in the choice of the ten (10) respondents : *having a long teaching experience and being representative of the regional background* of learners. Accordingly, all the respondents (4 females and 6 males), had a teaching experience ranging from 13 to 23 years and constituted a representative sample of the type of teaching/learning that the majority of new Baccalaureate holders received at the secondary school

since they represented the six (6) major regions of the Wilaya of Tlemcen (Tlemcen, Remchi, Nedroma, Sabra, Sebdou, and Ghazaouet). The first variable (experience) was motivated by the need to obtain an evidence-based classroom-experience reflection rather than learned theories.

Most respondents (respectively 8, 7, and 7) said that Secondary-School Education prepared, to a certain extent, the new Baccalaureate holders at the language-proficiency, cognitive and affective levels (Appendix 3.1 provides a statistical summary of the answers' frequency in SSLTs questionnaire). Two (2) respondents reported 'no' (lack of such a preparation). With regard to the pedagogical objectives, most respondents agreed on reading comprehension as being both the most developed in learners and the most important skill to be learned (7), 4 mentioned writing, 1 speaking, and none listening, which might be a result of the concern with written examination. Similarly, most of them selected the written skill as being the most difficult (9) and the reading skill as the least difficult. This might explain why most teaching time was allotted to reading comprehension (1-2 hours per week) compared with writing (1/30).

Almost all teachers considered the teaching time allotted to the English subject in general to be too inadequate to facilitate learning and improve proficiency. With respect to the syllabus objectives, all respondents said that the reading comprehension ones were largely achieved with good scores in formal exams. In contrast, it proved more difficult to attain those of speaking, writing, and grammar. For instance, 9 said that despite the classroom focus on grammar and mechanics, the pupils' scores in writing (essentially, short expository compositions and personal narrative accounts) were very low in examinations (in fact, the lowest). The main errors consisted of inaccurate forms, very limited vocabulary, and poor mechanics. Here again, the respondents appeared to confuse grammar with writing performance, either displaying a certain unawareness of the important component of a text (discourse, organisation and content) or simply considering them as being irrelevant at such a level.

As well as teaching time, most teachers blamed irrelevant textbook tasks, an overloaded, and all too often, confusing programme and pupils' own demotivation as the main causes for the observed low writing proficiency (8).

- objectives, the demotivating low coefficient of English and the urgent need to go back to the teaching of basic aspects of the language system .
- The majority of teachers clearly confused grammatical accuracy and writing efficiency on one hand, and micro-skills and strategies on the other hand.
 - Most teachers knew little on their pupils' learning experience outside school.

3.3.2.3 University Teachers' Questionnaire

In the present study, ULQ largely confirmed the hypotheses and analyses carried out in Chapter One with regard to the salient patterns of learning/teaching models and prevalent staff attitudes on the subjects' low language and ineffective thinking and writing entrant skills (Cf. Appendix 3.2 for a statistical summary of the frequency of answers in ULQ).

One of the main objectives of the above questionnaire was to find out what type of learning/teaching assumptions most of the university-level teachers (almost all have a teaching experience ranging from 12 years to 40 years) held and what kind of instruction they had provided so far. As expected and previously argued, 90% of the respondents equated writing with language proficiency and considered grammatical accuracy as the basis of good writing performance ; hence, the application of a language-pattern model of writing in the classroom and the importance given to language-system criteria in correction (accuracy). Such a prevalent assumption might be due to the expressed fact that most Baccalaureate holders came with a clear low language proficiency in most language skills, with the exception of reading comprehension (seemingly, the most developed one).

With respect to observed learning and composing strategies, here again almost all respondents pinpointed the absence of effective strategies and the use of L1-dominated strategies (e.g., translation, transfer, use of loan words from French, simplifying grammatical structures by removing structural elements, repeating the same idea or words over and over again, and producing long co-ordinated sentences, mostly run-on). Only 2 teachers reported having observed composing strategies used by few students (using an outline but as a kind of straight-jacket rather than a working plan). As regards

the teaching strategies employed in the classroom, while all respondents (6) reported encouraging pre-writing and drafting activities, only 2 appeared to give due attention to the use of authentic material and the introduction of recent technology to boost motivation and add variety to writing tasks.

As to the respondents' awareness-raising instruction (metalinguage/metadiscourse/visual graphic structure), it was found that only 1 teacher was trying to make learners aware of the conventions of authentic discourse in English. In a similar way, evaluation of strategy use was occasional (i.e., the exception rather than the rule) (4 indicated sometimes), 1 always and 1 never. In contrast, all teachers said that they applied both formative and summative evaluation (formal end-of-term examination and ongoing evaluation through homework and class composition). To sum up, the main findings of ULTQ can be listed as follows:

- There was a general consensus on the low language proficiency of most first-year learners;
- The greatest priority was given to language-system knowledge to ensure accuracy;
- The prevalence of the language-pattern model of teaching writing;
- Writing was largely seen as linguistic product, and writing performance as a reflection of language competence;
- The reading-writing connection was applied by almost all teachers;
- The introduction of awareness-raising instruction was the exception rather than the rule.

3.3.3 Semi-Structured Interviews : Description and Discussion

Interview data-collection procedure (itself an important triangulation component) aimed at obtaining a richer description of the subjects' reflection on their learning style and strategies, writing habits and perceived needs. Indeed, learners appeared to be motivated to respond in an interview, being very pleased to have a teacher take personal interest in their opinions, reflections and expectations on the prospects of becoming better learners. The interviews, each lasting 20/ 30 minutes, took place in small groups of five subjects (mostly close friends) with the purpose of providing a relaxed atmosphere and facilitating the expression of views and learning experiences

(to help each other). The medium of interviewing was English with occasional switching to French (most of the time) and Arabic. In effect, the subjects were left free to express themselves in the most convenient medium (as they pleased). The twelve (12) questions asked by the interviewer (Cf. Table 3.31 below) were complementary to those in the questionnaire and centred on the types of difficulties the subjects regularly encountered when writing, the techniques they might use (strategies) to facilitate task accomplishment, and their own opinion on the activity of writing in the learner's current and future life.

Name : _____	Age : _____
Can you please briefly answer the following questions ? Take all your time and feel at ease when answering. You may discuss the questions with your fellow students and use English, Arabic, or/and French to express yourself in the most convenient way.	
1. How do you decide to begin writing on a topic ? 2. Do you choose your own topic or simply write the one given in the class ? 3. How do you prepare yourself to the task of writing ? (Where and when ?) 4. Can you describe some of the ways you go through when starting to write ? 5. Do you find ways (or take time to think about ways) to express yourself in writing even you don't have enough words ? 6. What is the easiest part, according to you, in writing a text ? The most difficult one ? Why ? 7. What do you like best about your writing ? 8. How would you like your reader (s) to feel, think, and/or act when they have finished reading the text ? 9. If you have more opportunity to revise, what would you change in your text ? 10. When you meet a specific problem (lack of words, use of complex patterns, ideas, etc.), how do you try to solve it ? 11. Which ways, do you think, will help you to become an effective writer and thinker ? 12. How do you describe yourself as a writer : prolific (write ideas as they come) or careful (take time to think and plan) ?	

Table 3.24 Student Interview Guide

The subjects were given an opportunity to think about and develop awareness of what they generally did when writing (the Interview Guide was handed in a week before the interviews) . They were not supposed to consider how they typically did the task, but to provide information in their own way about their strategies. During the interviews, they answered broad questions, using notes they had prepared beforehand (itself a useful cognitive strategy). The one-week interval and reliance on *self-observation* rather than *think-aloud* procedure (reporting what one is doing during task accomplishment) allowed the interviewees to consciously reflect (observe and analyse) on their own

performance and then to report and discuss at their own ease and pace. In effect, given the varied learning styles and personalities of the subjects (as new entrants in a new context) combined with the unusual task of being interviewed, it seemed preferable to have semi-structured interviews based on self-observation (instead of tape-recorded think-aloud reporting which was deemed to be beyond most learners' linguistic and cognitive abilities). This pragmatic strategy of 'face-saving' (Searle 1979; Levinson 1983) helped specifically those shy subjects with difficulties of expression to feel a little at ease.

The interviews began with a brief warm-up during which the interviewer gathered general information on the subjects' background and affective orientations. The students' verbal reports were written down in note forms, with selective focussing on remarks revealing cognitive processes, composing strategies and writing awareness. The remarks were underlined and transferred to a coding table (Cf. coding table below). In the five (5) interviews, the subjects' motivation and enthusiasm to learn and succeed emerged as the most striking variable confirming the questionnaires' findings. The new entrants came with a high motivation and positive attitudes towards the English Language and culture. In addition to affective dimensions, factors such as understanding of one's own writing habits (weaknesses and strengths) were discussed—choice of a topic, preparing for the writing task, coming with solutions to likely problems, revising, consulting useful documents), and varying goals and strategies according to the specific task. Learners were also asked on their perceived needs and suggestions for becoming better writers at the university (making research, reading authentic material, using the internet to chat with native speakers of English). The following are two successful students describing the ways in which they work best (the samples are rewritten by the researcher).

doing

X about

Subject 1. (prolific) I'm used to writing directly. I just write down what comes through my mind. I can fill two or three pages without difficulty. After finishing my writing, I look over the text and see if there are any language mistakes (like the 3rd personal s in verbs) or unclear points. This style suits me fine ; ideas become clear and interesting as I keep writing. My problem is not the ideas (I've got plenty in my head), but some silly language mistakes. I should perhaps pay more attention to grammar in the grammar module and read some useful references even though there are not enough books in the library.

Subject 2. (careful) First, I make a mental note of what I want to write. It means that I spend quite a lot of time thinking over the ideas I want to develop. To be honest, I think mainly in French. I need this preparation to get the ideas clear in my mind. This is why classroom composition is a little difficult for me because you are limited by time. At home, I write better. I write on coffee and classical music (By the way, I'm a classical musician myself, Andalus music). This lets the ideas gather in my mind for a time. Then I take a piece of paper and put the main notes I want to develop. My outline is mainly mental, you know, developing the ideas as I go while checking the outline to see where I'm heading. Between paragraphs, I stop a little and think again where I'm going next. For me, writing is like music : a question of concentration, sense, and taste. Whenever I have a problem (especially vocabulary), I use my bilingual dictionary (Larousse). I hope my studies in English will help me to become a better writer. A lot of practice, I think, is the best thing (*En forgeant on devient forgeron* (i.e., practice makes perfect)).

Andalusian

	A	S	R
1. Own Topic Choice		/	
2. Preparing oneself for writing :			
Reading before		/	
Using an outline		/	
Thinking a lot			/
Jotting down notes			/
Listening to music	/		
Drinking coffee	/		
Finding a quiet place	/		
3. Favourite aspects of one's writing (what they like best)			
Ideas	/	/	
Language form	/		
Interesting vocabulary	/		
Logical organisation	/		
A good title		/	
Attractive layout and presentation		/	
Neat handwriting		/	
4. Favourite ways to express ideas			
Translation from French or Arabic	/		
Use of bilingual dictionary	/		
Repeat ideas		/	
Reading		/	
Borrowings from French		/	
5. Favourite ways to organise ideas			
Planning		/	
Rereading the development of ideas			/
6. Best ways to improve one's language and writing			
Reading and writing a lot	/		
Watching programmes on sky channels and listening to music		/	

Table 3.25 Frequency of Answers in the semi-structured interviews

3.3.4 Classroom Observation Diary⁴

Further useful information was obtained by keeping an observation diary, in which regular notes and remarks were recorded on the different aspects of learning that took place in the classroom and the students' reaction to discourse-based tasks. Observations were used as 'a way of gathering information about [learning], rather than a way of evaluating [learning]' (Richards and Lockhart 1996:12). To ensure a systematic recording, an observation form was devised specifically for the purposes of this study, by making a list of the learning and writing strategies and micro-skills (Cf. Table 3.33 below) that were hypothesised to be important for observation. Two main procedures were actually used: taking structured notes and checking the types of writing performance that occurred during one-class period. In field notes, the researcher kept a reflective log after each lesson, while in observation, learners were observed in a targeted way.

1. Use appropriate word order.
2. Express a specific meaning in different grammatical systems, patterns, and rules.
3. Express a specific meaning in different grammatical forms.
4. Use cohesive devices in written discourse.
5. Use appropriate rhetorical organisation according to the topic.
6. Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting ideas, new information, and given information.
7. Use composing strategies to prepare and process the text: prewriting, drafting, editing.
8. Use social strategies: collaboration with peers, request help from the teacher, provide support to peers.
9. Use research and study skills: authentic documents, books, encyclopedias, references.

Table 3.26 Observation Form: Micro-Skills and Strategies in Classroom Activities

Observing written interaction among students over a whole academic year proved to be one of the most informative triangulation data-collection technique in the present study. The classroom diary made it possible to record notes and remarks on various aspects of the students' interactions. Even though it was not

possible to record everything going on in the classroom, the prepared list of target micro-skills and strategies helped to exclude what seemed irrelevant. Data consisted of written production resulting from classroom activities (composition tasks, pre-writing activities, revising activities, note-making from authentic material, and group composition).

3.4 Conclusion

The results of Chapter Three yielded a greater understanding of the factors affecting writing performance in a foreign language. Critical reflection and investigation through classroom research action constituted not only an empirical tool for examining the type of teaching and learning processes and outcomes applied in our teaching/learning context, but also a basis for informed decision-making and necessary change. Furthermore, the application of triangulation research tools helped to uncover and report salient patterns in teachers' beliefs and underlying teaching assumptions as well as in the subjects' writing performance: the differences in the use of a number of micro-skills and strategies by effective and less effective students, the preferred strategies, the impact of careful task design, authentic material, and composing preparation on learning processes and outcomes. The pre-assessment results highlighted the fact that the majority of first-year students came with little conceptual knowledge, if not unawareness, of the nature of writing and the prerequisite micro-skills, strategies and processing steps for the effective creation of texts that adhere to the norms and conventions of English written discourse.

In this light, the objectives of the experimental classroom action research were twofold: first, to raise the subjects' awareness of the factors that lead to effective text creation (i.e., explicit awareness and mental formulation off effective writing) and, second, to train them through a set of carefully designed tasks and authentic texts to become better writers (i.e., more aware of their roles as genuine writers). Statistically, most learners were able to improve performance at the macro-level: discourse coherence, rhetorical organisation, and use of relevant original information. In contrast, and despite a relative improvement in written discourse components (complexity, modification, and

paragraph writing.

explicitness) a number of learners appeared to experience persistent difficulties with linguistic competence. This finding might suggest that the learning of macro-level features (discourse, context, and content) constitutes a short-term achievable objective while linguistic mastery requires intensive practice in specific problem areas and a set of appropriate teaching strategies (like individual conferencing). In this respect, as well as suggesting a reflective writing curriculum and language-use based texts and tasks for enhancing writing performance, Chapter Four will attempt to outline and suggest a number of developmental activities to cater for the varying needs of learners and contribute to learner *development (individualised and reflective learning)*.

Notes to Chapter Three

- ¹ *Classroom action research* refers to teacher-initiated classroom investigation which seeks to increase the teacher's understanding of classroom teaching and learning, and to bring about change in classroom practices (Gregory 1988; Kemmis and McTaggart 1988). It involves therefore small-scale investigative projects in the teacher's own classroom (Richards and Lockhart 1996:12). Classroom action research has become a professional imperative. Only by undertaking discovery projects can we extend our knowledge of the impact of our teaching, and the process of learning which our students experience. It also enables us to evaluate techniques which are taken for granted but have never been put to the test. It may thus be general in aim, adding to our knowledge of language teaching and learning. It is also practical in that it constitutes a means of trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvement and increased knowledge through focussed observation, analysis, and modification of classroom practice in classroom situation.
- ² The term *resources* is used to refer both to *strategies* and *skills* in order to avoid the likely confusion generally found in their use. In effect, strategies and skills are used differently by different authors and researchers—Kirby (1984) sees them as macro-strategies and micro-strategies; William and Burdeb (1997) define them as higher-order and lower-order; Oxford (1990) and Chamot and O'Malley (1990) refer mainly to strategies as being multifold (metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective) and constituting conscious means used by learners to overcome likely problems in language learning. While these distinctions may be useful, the main difficulty with them is that they are not always that clear-cut in practice. That is why, the term *resources* is used in this study to refer both to strategies as helpful general ways and micro-skills or skills as local specific textual ways used to accomplish written texts.
- ³ The 'awareness instruction model' opted for in this study follows the 'domain-specific' approach advocated by Brown et al. (1983). The model is based on the assumption that skills and strategies are best taught in relation to specific subject, topic, or skill.
- ⁴ The major problem with diary keeping is that there is not too much time to record everything, which involves decisions about what to record and what to leave (the observation form was very helpful in this respect). However, diary note-keeping appeared to be more advantageous than tape-recording or video-recording (the two other major methods used in observation) because the latter tend to make learners uncomfortable. Moreover, since the focus of the present research is the use of writing micro-skills and strategies, recording verbal behaviour or paralinguistic one (gestures, eye-contact) seemed rather irrelevant).

CHAPTER FOUR

CURRICULUM AND MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT: PROPOSALS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Curriculum Development : Tenets of a Reflective
Writing Curriculum
- 4.3 *Material Development*
- 4.4 *Conclusion*

CHAPTER FOUR

Curriculum and Material Development : Proposals and Illustrations

4.1 Introduction

The major aim of Chapter Four is to put forward proposals for curriculum and material development that promote and foster reflective learning and practice. Such development combines educational, psychological, and cultural goals with language goals, taking into account the four key elements of the process of learning: the *learner*, the *teacher*, the *task*, and the *context*. This statement means that in order to be of value, a learning experience should contribute to a learner's whole *education* as well as to their *metacognitive growth*, *cultural awareness* and *learning* of an aspect of the language. The classroom research action (Chapters One and Three) has emphasised the complex and dynamic nature of the interactions between the different elements of each writing class, which requires careful action planning. Indeed, the teacher-researcher should be fully aware of the specific needs of the classroom particularities (the micro learning/teaching context), determine the goals for the module, then develop and implement the convenient materials and tasks in order to arrive at specific performance objectives (Nunan, 1989). That is to say, he/she should be able to interweave their goals and objectives with the results of initial needs assessment of the learners and translate the information into appropriate classroom pedagogy. X

In this light, one of the first steps towards the primary performance objective of any writing class (viz. effective writing and thinking skills) is being aware of, and learning how to tackle a piece of writing. This means that EFL students need to be taught repertoires of relevant micro-skills and analytical strategies to use as they generate ideas, draft pieces of writing, and learn to accept and respond to feedback, be it from peers or/and teachers. Accordingly, in order to translate who?

such information (insights and findings on *language-discourse awareness and reflective learning*) into planning tools and writing tasks, the focus is to determine how pedagogical activities (or tasks) are graded, organised, sequenced, and integrated within the suggested curriculum.

The tasks in this chapter are built around two basic concepts: *classroom community* (Oxford, 1990; Reid, 1993; Johns, 1996) which involves students in ongoing collaboration (fostering *trust* as the first and fundamental step in *learning*) and *processing and reflective strategies* which encourage careful cognitive preparation (resourcing, discussing, generating ideas, and drafting). Both collaboration and processing are effective in building up communal bonds among teacher-student and student-student. Successful teaching begins with shared expectations and interests, which in turn depend on dynamic interactions among curriculum and syllabus design, teachers and students, methodology and instructional materials (Richards, 1990; Ur, 1992). Even though discrete tasks provide the teacher with instructional practices (something to do) and may help enhance learning through motivation, they should also be based on a coherent theory of teaching/learning (as Chapter TWO has tried to demonstrate), reflect the true nature of language use (Chapter TWO), and support the objectives and the mission of the writing class (Chapter THREE). Writing task should therefore have a clear *rationale* and *mission*, reflecting the type of intended curriculum development:

- What principles should determine how pedagogical tasks are organised, sequenced, and integrated within the curriculum?
- What changes are expected to occur in the learners' writing performance and cognitive awareness as a result of the tasks?
- What materials and activities will facilitate the learning process?
- What kinds of potential technology (media and electronic communication) foster learner development and writing performance?
- What kind of evaluation approach will be used to foster learner development and assess the writing outcomes?

4.2 Curriculum Development : Tenets of a Reflective Writing Curriculum

4.2.1 Main Assumptions and Implications

The focus on language use and reflective strategies needs to be integrated into curriculum development. This could be effectively done through a careful cross-fertilisation of assumptions, practices, and implications from the existing writing-teaching models and the findings of the classroom-research action. Teachers, as classroom practitioners, should be able to make informed choices on what seems useful and applicable to their own classes. Table 4.1 sums up the main tenets of the proposed *reflective curriculum*.

PRINCIPLES	IMPLICATIONS
1. Writing is an enabling and reflective skill:	Metacognitive and self Awareness. Self-understanding and reflective learning on the part of learners may lead to better performance.
2. Writing is language use :	Authentic Writing. Provision of as much authentic writing as possible whether writing is real (genuine communication to an audience other than the teacher) or for display (short answers, essay tasks), it can still be authentic if the purpose of writing are clear to the students, the audience is specified, and the text type is explained.
3. Critical Reading builds up Schemata:	Background Knowledge. By reading and analysing a variety of texts, learners can gain insights both about how they should write and the topic (progressive use of acceptable English discourse).
4. Classroom textual practices make explicit the text structure:	Text-Structure Practice Making explicit the formal properties and conventions of each text type (use of accessible metalanguage) ; Encourage the writing of whole purposeful texts .
5. Content-based tasks offer variety:	Task-Based Approach Tasks should focus on variety by including a broad range of topics and techniques (each task focuses on one aspect : form, rhetoric, content, composing, revising)
6. Catering for differing Individual needs within the classroom:	Individualised Instruction. Developing a wide repertoire of tasks to match text types will facilitate the provision of suitable activities for students with different motivations and at different linguistic and cognitive models. Writing opportunities may include simulated holiday diaries, devise stories, report stories or movies. → films
7. Text creation is the result of a reflective cognitive process:	Compositional Awareness Help with composing process by raising awareness of the different stages involved in text creation (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing), discussing the content and the style of writing to make sentences stronger and patterns coherent, introducing computer work ...
8. Critical Reflection is the key to the preparation of learners	Learner Development: the use of developmental activities like student journals and portfolios allow students to use these tools to understand their strengths and weaknesses as learners. As prospective teachers, learners are asked to maintain such tools throughout their university studies.
9. Responding to student's texts involves variable roles:	Positive Feedback. Teachers need to assume the roles of audience, assistant, evaluator, and examiner: respond to the ideas, feelings and perceptions of the learners in a genuine way ; work with them during task completion to ensure the effective construction of the text (language, organisation, and content); provide comment and feedback on the finished product ; and assess objectively the text on the basis of clear criteria to show what a developing writer can and cannot do.

Table 4.1 A synthesis of the central tenets of a reflective curriculum

The above synthesis attempts to indicate what a reflective curriculum would look like. The different tenets constitute a reminder of the need to heighten students' critical awareness and encourage reflective practice with respect to the complexity of text creation and necessity to nurture worthwhile meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies in ways that contribute to learner ongoing development and fit the teacher's framework of principles:

The implementation of a new curriculum has to be accommodated within the teacher's own framework of teaching principles. Greater awareness of such frameworks across a group of teachers within a particular situation can inform curriculum policy in relation to any innovation that may be plausible in that situation.
(Breen et al. 2001:472)

Moreover, curriculum innovation calls for both the learner's involvement and the teacher's ongoing guidance towards self-understanding and awareness of organisational patterns, text types, and useful micro-skills and strategies. As Richards (1990b:114-115) explains:

The effective writing teacher is not one who has developed a 'method' for the teaching of writing, but one who can create an effective environment for learning, in which novice writers feel comfortable about writing and can explore the nature of writing—and in doing so discover their own strengths and weaknesses as writers...

Learners are then guided to become *analysts* (take time to think, read, discover, and plan) before they begin constructing their own text. They identify and use coherence patterns in a range of easily accessible texts, moving from shorter to longer ones and from general to specifically focused ones (see goals and objective below : figure 4.2) so that they can gain competence as writers in an educational context. This is precisely what a university-level writing class is supposed to do: to equip learners with the confidence, motivation, skills, and strategies to succeed in the textual world and language use. The university context, albeit somewhat resource-poor, does offer a number of opportunities to implement adequate teaching practices: flexible timetable, low number of enrolled and highly motivated students, small classes, and access to a computer laboratory.

4.2.2 Curriculum Goals and Syllabus Objectives

The term *curriculum* refers to the development and specification of the role of the writing class, combining educational and cultural goals with language goals. In order to meet the specific needs of the students, curriculum development should be *flexible* enough to make room for the different components of writing (discourse, contextual, composing, and linguistic) and the specific needs of the learners (language proficiency, cognitive maturity, and writing fluency). The main features of the proposed curriculum consist in combining language-, pattern-, and process-based models according to the phase of writing instruction and the specific writing class.

Curriculum Goals	Syllabus Objectives
☐ Within a reflective curriculum, writing teachers should prepare students for the types of tasks that they may or will have to perform in learning and professional work environments; ☐ Help students develop their abilities to assert through written expression their ideas, opinions, and observations by teaching specific methods of organisation, support, and clarification; ☐ Encourage fluency of ideas through classroom activities such as brainstorming, pre-writing, free-writing, and group discussion; ☐ Improve students' writing by providing feedback on both content and form; ☐ Lead students to assume increasing responsibility for each other's writing whenever possible by teaching and reinforcing the concept of constructive criticism by means of peer correction and review; ☐ Help students build a rich repertoire of English words by reinforcing through writing vocabulary learned in other classes (reading, speaking) ☐ Exploit the relationship between reading and writing whenever possible. The effective communication of relevant ideas in written form rather than the memorisation of words or rules: To increase the students' fluency in written English and their confidence. ☐ To familiarise and equip students with strategies for approaching writing tasks found in and required at the university level. Most tasks (even simple short texts) should require some type of background reading and note making.	(1) Focus ☐ Students are given specific micro-skills and strategies enabling them to write coherent and well-developed paragraphs, get ideas for writing compositions, use different rhetorical methods, and employ useful ways to improve their texts (implications of Chapter Two). ☐ To help students to develop a <i>cultural awareness</i> (Tomalin and Stemplesli, 1993 :7) understanding the fact that all people exhibit culturally conditioned behaviours; ☐ To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave ; To help students to become more aware of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the foreign language ; To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalisations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence ; To help students to develop the necessary skills and strategies to locate and organise information about the target culture ; ☐ To stimulate students to collect genres and types of texts conventionally used in the target culture (discourse awareness). (2) Introduce compositional practices: ☐ exploring topics and examining ideas; developing and organising these ideas; writing the first draft of the paragraph; editing and rewriting the paragraph (3) Instructional Procedures ☐ Teach pre-writing strategies (discussing, freewriting, outlining, interviewing, note making ☐ Class work using charts, making lists, and suggesting outlines. ☐ Make clear the context of each piece of writing:

□ To enable students to activate their passive grammatical knowledge to edit for certain grammar errors, within their own written discourse and to develop strategies for increasing lexical accuracy and enriching their lexical repertoire (critical awareness). □ To have students learn to communicate using different types of written English: letters, reports, stories, biographies, surveys, and essays. □ To help to build-up cultural awareness and ensure cross-cultural understanding by giving access to the culture through the selected texts and tasks (literature, art, music, artefacts, beliefs, values, institutions, customs, habits, dress, food, leisure, education) and making the study of cultural behaviour an integral part of each lesson. □ To reflect on experiences with instructional tasks, texts, and contexts. □ To draw from knowledge of genres and texts and apply this knowledge to analysis and critique of known and new texts. □ To continuously revise theories of discourse genres. □ To assess; expand upon, and revise strategies for approaching writing tasks. □ To develop abilities to research and critique texts, roles, and contexts. □ To cultivate a metalanguage about texts and textual experiences, and to reflect on experiences with texts, roles, and texts.	subject, audience, and purpose. □ Introduce topic sentences and use of appropriate rhetorical structures—paragraph ordering, the movement from generalisations to specific supporting information, the framing of paragraphs around one main idea, choice of appropriate modes of development according to topic (narration, classification, etc.). □ Introduce discourse structures: general-specific, problem-solution, etc. □ Provide an alternate system of feedback: peer correction; Encourage students to keep a journal. □ Stress mechanics and reinforce grammar and vocabulary. □ Encourage students to follow the EFL correction symbols and use only an English/English dictionary in class. □ Hold teacher/student conferences to discuss individual writing problems. □ Have students produce more than one draft. (4) Classroom Activities □ Write during class: have many opportunities to write for communication; work within the writing process of pre-writing (planning, writing, revising, editing, and production of final drafts); □ Work on writing tasks in pairs and groups: Rewrite compositions in class for text improvement: Revising, reformulating and discussing errors with students. (5) Developmental Activities □ Researching and reading relevant material: reading to seek information to use in writing, paraphrasing, summarising, note making and writing working outlines; □ Doing longer tasks (projects, journals, portfolio) □ To learn a word-processing system and typing to make easier the revision and production of attractive drafts.
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Table 4.2 Reflective-Curriculum Goals and Syllabus Objectives

During instruction, writing tasks centred around particular topics and rhetorical forms should progress from controlled to freer tasks. Writing teachers should provide grammar and vocabulary practice as needed or when the need arises, but the primary focus should be on **composition and reflection**—allow students ample opportunities to compose and write both in-class and out of class works.

4.3 Material Development

On the basis of the curriculum goals, this part suggests tasks that contain ideas and techniques for the different stages of creating a piece of writing as a holistic process of composition: pre-writing, drafting, and revising. The different tasks are proposed with a view to encouraging thinking, getting ideas together, outlining, planning, drafting, revising, and editing the text. They can be used for several topic and text types. All of them strive to engage students and teachers together in the effective process of composition, making the classroom a *community* in which members can experience being *writers*, sharing their *literacy* experience with each other. Each task centers around an authentic text, including samples from books, magazines, newspapers, recipes, schedules, novels, and brochures. The tasks focus on reading, writing, composing, and the development of critical knowledge, one that develops different composing skills, attends to the cognitive and social processes of reading and writing, involves individual and peer group in evaluating and responding to drafts, focuses on different types of writing, and stimulate these tasks through diverse techniques.

4.3.1 Text and Task Selection

In order to ensure maximum learning benefits, the selected texts and tasks are evaluated by means of an evaluation checklist (adapted from Hedge, 1988, and Douglas-Brown, 1993). The checklist consists of five headings, each examining an area of text and task types (aims, methodology, motivation, task design, text choice, and text potential). The most important factor in designing tasks is that students need to be personally involved in order to make the learning experience of lasting value. Encouraging student participation in the task, while at the same time refining and expanding writing skills, requires a flexible, multi-level curriculum and realistic, achievable syllabus objectives, for short, a *pragmatic, constructivist* approach to teaching and learning. Reading texts and writing assignments need to be selected with care so as to offer students both 'variety and challenge in terms of both text-external and text-internal features and opportunities to discuss and write about these characteristics in the classroom (Johns, 1996:125). In a similar way, the teacher should be clear on what micro-skills and strategies he/she is trying to develop.

Next, the teacher needs to decide on which means (or type of task) can facilitate learning of the writing component. Once the target component and means of implementation are defined, the teacher can then proceed to focus on what topic can be employed to ensure student participation and motivation. By choosing a topic that involves the students the teacher is providing a context within which effective learning on the target writing aspect can be undertaken. Finally, and most importantly, by choosing the correct means of responding to written work, the teacher can encourage rather discourage students. In this view, a pragmatic combination of objectives allows the teacher to expect both enthusiasm and effective long-term learning experience.

4.3.2 Teaching Writing: Roles and Strategies

The topic-centred, pragmatic task-based approach clearly calls for an extension of the writing teacher's role and strategies. As well as content and activities, the teacher needs to consider the following issues when planning classwork: preparing the students, providing language support, strategies for managing the classroom and a positive system for feedback and assessment (these issues will be discussed in some detail in Chapter Five: Teacher and Learner Development).

4.3.2.1 Preparing the Students Cognitively

First, the students need to be prepared cognitively and linguistically to give them the confidence to use English. This will involve initial input through an authentic text or pre-writing material (topic web, topic tree, visual aids). Second, they will need to be prepared for the topic in general (resourcing) and the task in particular. A clear understanding of the nature of the task is essential.

4.3.2.2 Preparing the Students Linguistically

The teacher must be clear as to what language he/she will be appropriate for the task and the context (simple sentences, modals, complex sentences, tenses, reduced clauses, formal, informal). The kind of language support the teacher gives will vary from situation to situation. The long-term objective is that students develop their own learning strategies for support, for

example, use of grammar references and monolingual dictionaries. The use of useful structures, metadiscourse items and formulas are encouraged (i.e., functional language). Students should be encouraged to understand the functional reason for knowing and using them. They can see the need for the structure in their work and recognise that they are learning more than just a set of useful language forms.

4.3.2.3 Managing the Classroom

Despite the fact that the EFL classroom is largely restricted to chalk and talk, read and discuss, the topic can still be central. A certain mobility can be created by shifting from individual, to pairs, to group work, thereby catering for differing learning styles and giving a chance to students to learn from each other. As students become involved in their activities, the teacher is gradually left free to go around each pair or group and provide language support or to call everybody to share something that one particular group has discovered or achieved.

4.3.2.4 Providing Feedback and Assessment

In order to develop confidence in the students, teacher-to-student feedback should always be supportive and positive. By creating opportunities for individual students and groups to share their tasks and learning experience, the teacher enables them to learn from each other. If there is an immediate task at hand, such as taking a test, perhaps teacher guided correction is the most effective solution. However, testing is only encouraging to those who do best. For the low-level students, poor test scores and heavy emphasis on test correction can signal the end of their motivation.

In sum, writing tasks and assignments should be as carefully designed as possible. These tasks can have a profound effect on students. Successful writing tasks offer student writers the best possible chance to demonstrate their strengths and to improve their writing. Roen (1989) sums up the objectives that teachers developing writing material should focus on:

- guiding students to address authentic audiences, purposes, and topics,
- using process approaches to help students define and solve rhetorical problems that writing entails; and
- making it possible for students to receive appropriate feedback and evaluation.

The following sample tasks and texts have been developed in such a way to attain such objectives, by offering a variety of challenging text experiences, encouraging students to view their own texts as authentic products, and fostering reflection upon their textual experiences, processes, and strategies.

4.3.3 Sample Texts and Tasks

The tasks on the following pages suggest and illustrate ideas and basic techniques for the different stages of writing, emphasising thinking, generating ideas in groups, planning, drafting, and improving drafts.

4.3.3.1 Critical Reflection and Language Learning Awareness

Critical Reflection and Language Learning Awareness

Theme: Foreign Language Learning

Strategy: Raising Metacognitive-Awareness

Performance: Personal Journal Entry Report

Objective: To understand, reflect, discuss, and share opinion on language learning to ensure better learning

Organisation: Description

Skills: Reading-Writing

Material: Questionnaires

Task1 : Foreign Language Learning and Writing

Topic1: Learning to write in a Foreign Language

Directions:

1. Introductory Discussion: Opinion and Attitude

Students discuss to answer a set of initial questions;

2. Reading and Discussing the Questionnaire

Students read silently the questions;

Teacher works with students through the questions;

Teacher encourages students to explain and justify the selected answers;

Teacher writes comments and views on the board.

3. Writing: Selecting and arranging in a short outline

Write out the notes as a short entry to their writing journal reporting and describing one's experience in learning and writing.

Text: Language Learning Questionnaire

Learning a Foreign Language

In-Class

A. Discussion: Opinion and Attitude

Discuss the following questions in groups of Four:

1. What do you think about learning a foreign language in general, and English, in particular?
2. What was like learning to write in English at the Secondary School?
3. How do you think you can improve your competence in learning and writing?
4. According to you, what are the main characteristics of a successful language learner like you?

B. Reading and Discussing: A Language Learning Questionnaire

Select one or two answers to each of the following questions.

1. How can you describe your experience as a foreign-language learner so far?
a) Highly enjoyable b) Enjoyable c) Fair enough d) Disappointing
2. Which types of language practice you may do on your own at home?
a) Listen to English songs b) Watch movies in English *films*
c) Write letters, electronic mail, poems, or keep a personal journal
d) Read magazines, books, websites.
e) Conversing with close friends in English.
3. Are you afraid of making mistakes when talking or writing?
a) Not at all. b) Yes, a little. c) Yes, very much.
4. What type of dictionary do you regularly use to look up needed words? *X*
a) Monolingual (English/English) b) Bilingual (French or Arabic/ English)
5. What is your attitude towards learning the British culture (habits, history, arts...)
a) Very interested. b) Quite interested. c) Not really. d) Uninterested.
6. How good are you in expressing yourself in Classical Arabic or/and French? *S*
a) Fairly good. b) Quite good c) Have some difficulties d) I am not clear.
7. When you want to write, which language you think in for ideas and words?
a) Arabic. b) French. c) English.
8. Do you think writing in English is more difficult than speaking?
a) Yes, very much. b) Yes, quite difficult. c) Yes, a little difficult. d) Not at all.
9. How do you think you can become a more successful writer?
a) Reading a lot. b) Studying grammar. c) Having a good teacher.
b) d) Writing a lot.
10. What would you like your teacher to do to help you improve your writing?
a) To give us a lot of writing opportunities. b) To focus on grammar and vocabulary. c) To look at my work while I am writing and help me improve my text. d) To allow us to see each other's works and suggest improvement.
e) I would like the teacher to mark and discuss all my mistakes.

C. Further Discussion and Suggestion:

1. Do you agree with the above questions?
2. Can you think of other helpful ways to improve you learning and writing.

Homework: Try to write a short text (journal entry N 1) entitled, 'Learning a Foreign Language: Own Reflection' in which you write the selected answers and other ideas that best reflect your own learning experience and future expectations.

Learning From The Professionals: A Poet's Own Reflection

Writing poses difficulties for both native and non-native speakers, experienced and inexperienced writers alike. Here is a clear reflection on trying to write as experienced by a famous English-American poet, T.S. Eliot. Eliot reflects on the painful attempt to use as few and as carefully chosen words as possible to crystallise a moment in time (creating good poetry). Read the poem below to yourself and then write your own reflection when attempting to create a piece of writing. The given question will help you understand better the poem.

The Poet's Struggle

So here I am, in the middle
 way, having had twenty years
 Trying to learn to use words,
 and every attempt
 Is a wholly new start, and a
 different kind of failure
 Because one has only learnt
 to get the better of words
 For the thing one no longer
 has to say, or the way in which
 One is no longer disposed to
 say it. And so each venture
 Is a new beginning, a raid on
 the inarticulate
 With shabby equipment al-
 ways deteriorating
 In the general mess of im-
 precision of feeling,
 Undisciplined squads of emotion.

T.S. Eliot (East Coker)

Guiding Questions:

1. How long has the poet been *learning* to use words?
2. How does each attempt seem to him?
3. How does he refer to such an attempt?
4. Why does he compare *writing* to a 'raid on the inarticulate'?
5. According to T.S.Eliot, what is the role of writing?

Task 2: Understanding Learning Styles**Topic 2:** Barsch Learning-Style Inventory**Directions:**

1. To gain a better understanding of yourself as a learner, you need to assess the way you prefer to learn. All successful persons should develop a style which will enhance learning potential. The following assessment is one useful way of understanding your learning style. Read each of the statements below. Then mark the appropriate box for each statement:

DIRECTIONS: Place a check on the appropriate line after each statement, then refer to the scoring instructions.

	Almost Always	Usually	Some- times	Seldom	Almost Never
1. I remember more about a subject through listening than reading.					
2. I follow written directions better than oral directions.					
3. I like to write things down or take notes for visual review.					
4. I bear down extremely hard with pen or pencil when writing.					
5. I prefer to have an oral explanation of diagrams and graphs.					
6. I enjoy working with tools.					
7. I enjoy reading graphs, grids, charts, and diagrams.					
8. I can tell if sounds match when presented with pairs of sounds.					
9. I remember best by writing things down several times.					
10. I can understand and follow directions by reading maps.					
11. I do better at academic subjects by listening to lectures and tapes instead of reading books.					
12. I like to play with coins or keys in my pockets.					
13. I learn to spell better by repeating the letters of the word out loud than by writing the word on paper.					
14. I can better understand a news article by reading about it in the newspaper than by listening to the radio.					
15. I like to chew gum or eat a snack while studying.					
16. I try to remember something by "picturing it" in my head.					
17. I learn to spell a new word by tracing the word with a finger.					
18. I would rather listen to a good lecture or a speech than read about the same material.					
19. I am good at working and solving jigsaw puzzles and mazes.					
20. I prefer reviewing written material instead of discussing the subject matter.					
21. I prefer listening to the news on the radio than reading about it in a newspaper.					
22. I like to obtain information on interesting subjects by reading relevant material.					
23. I feel very comfortable touching others (handshaking, etc.).					
24. I follow oral directions better than written ones.					

2. Writing: Write a short paragraph describing your preferable style of learning and making some comments on the test results. Use the tasksheet for useful expressions and forms of generalisations.

Task Sheet 1: Generalisations

True in most cases	to tend to... to have a tendency to... to be inclined to... Example: I personally tend to read a lot to understand.
Uncertain generalisations	seem to ... DO (habit) appear to DO perhaps,... Example: My preferences seem to change according to the activity.
Frequency of true generalisations	In the vast majority of cases,... In most cases, ... Generally speaking,... Often/sometimes/occasionally... In some cases, ... Example: I often listen to the news of TV.

(Task Sheet adapted from Arnold and Harmer, 1978/1985: 52-54)

Task Sheet 2: Clarification and Illustration

When we make a generalisation, we need to clarify (explain) it in a specific and simple way. Here are some useful expressions to make clarification and give illustrations:

Clarification

- , i.e., (that is) Intelligence is the ability to solve problems, i.e., to find out solutions to new situations.
- . That is to say, A global learner enjoys group work. That is to say, he/she likes to cooperate and exchange experience with others.
- ; that is to say A visual learner prefers to see visible resources; that is to say, he/she learns better by using the board, magazines, pictures, graphs, and the like.
- In other words, An analytical learner favours systematic work. In other words, he/she studies
- ; in other words, carefully by following a step-by-step method to arrive at results.

Illustration

- e.g., Tactile learners prefer a hands-on-approach, e.g., they like to work on projects and
- ...such as... use real objects for description *such as* computers.
- For example,... For instance,... An example of this is. An illustration of this...

Remarks: The advantage of this kind of task at the beginning of the year is that it allows the teacher to use information regarding learning-style scores for further instructional changes and planning. For instance, the teacher will need to provide a variety of learning experiences to accommodate the learners' various learning styles (providing activities that appeal to them):

- ❑ *Visual Learners:* it is important for the teacher to use resources that must be seen or read (the chalkboard, posters, and bulletin boards; books, magazines, and manuals; drawings, pictures, graphs, and diagrams; computers monitors. Visual learners prefer to have written assignments, and it is wise for the teacher to provide written evaluations.

- *Auditory Learners:* The teacher should provide many resources for hearing (lectures, discussions, and small group talk; tapes, video-tapes. The teacher should also give precise oral directions and explanations. This includes orally setting tasks, giving assignments, discussing resources, and reviewing progress.
- *Tactile learners:* The teacher should prepare materials that are touchable (real objects in description, for example; students should be allowed to plan, demonstrate, report, and evaluate by using these types of resources and the teacher should encourage written, graphic, and /or computer records of information.

(Davis et al., 1994: 12-15)

4.3.3.2 Exploring and Organising Spatial Information

Exploring and Organising Spatial Information

Theme: Memorable Places

Organisation: Spatial Description

Strategy: Information Transfer (text-structure awareness) and Summarising

Skills: Reading for main information and Writing (organising spatial information)

Performance: 1. Writing a Description of a Memorable Room

2. Designing a Broadsheet on Britain (group project)

Material: Authentic article from the Observer (1993), Pictures and a Map of Britain

Objective: To raise awareness of text structure in spatial organisation

Task 1 : Describing a Favourite Room

Topic 1 : A Room of My Own

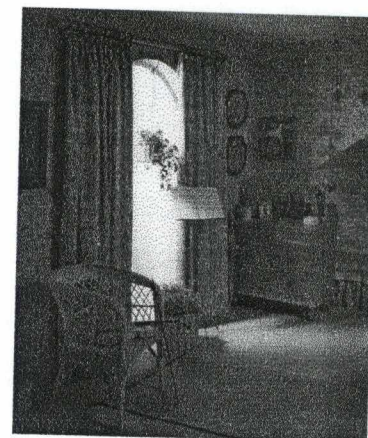
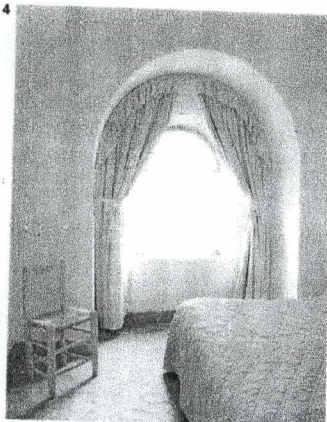
Lesson 1 :

A. Discussion : Topic Web

Making a topic web is a useful strategy for note-taking while reading and note-making before writing. The topic web helps the students to both explore and identify the ideas related to the topic.

1. Picture Description :

- Divide into five groups.
- Each group should have a different picture and describe it by making notes on the topic web.
- Read your description to the other groups.
- Say whether you like or don't like your picture.
- Would you feel happy to be and study in that room ?



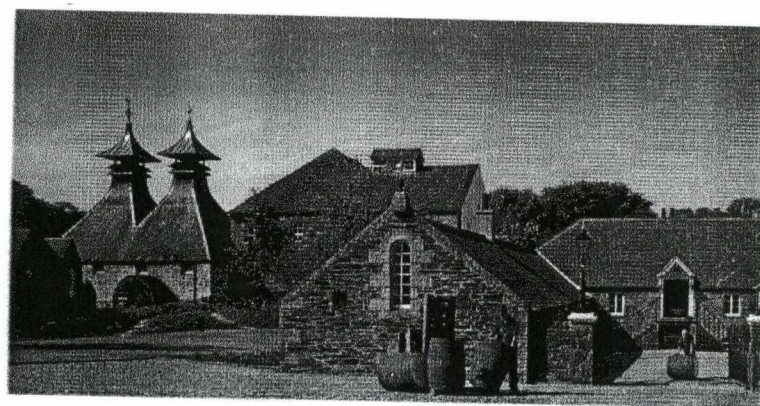
SPATIAL RELATIONSHIP

- How a place is laid out.
- How objects are related

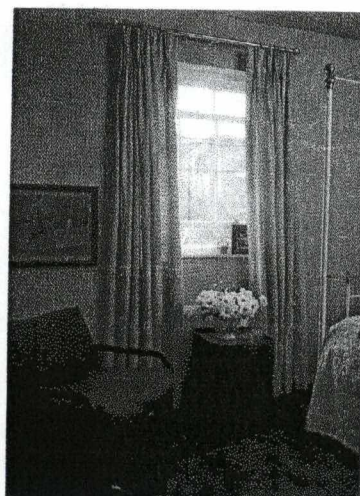
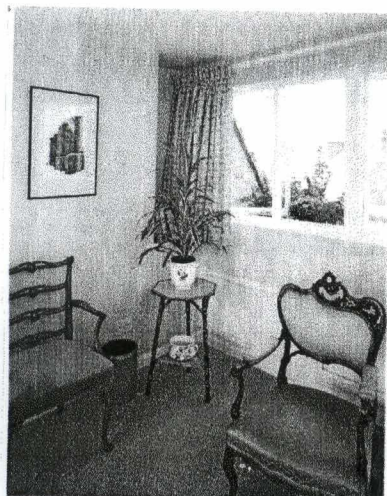
Task 1.1) Suggest vocabulary and expressions of spatial relationship to describe this picture.

For example - Roof, fence
- Behind - Beside
- in front of

1.2) Write five sentences to describe spatial relationships between the picture objects, for example:
- The garage is in the rear of the house.



Stonehouse Distillery in North, on the unique White Whisky Trail



Task 2.1) Suggest vocabulary of furniture

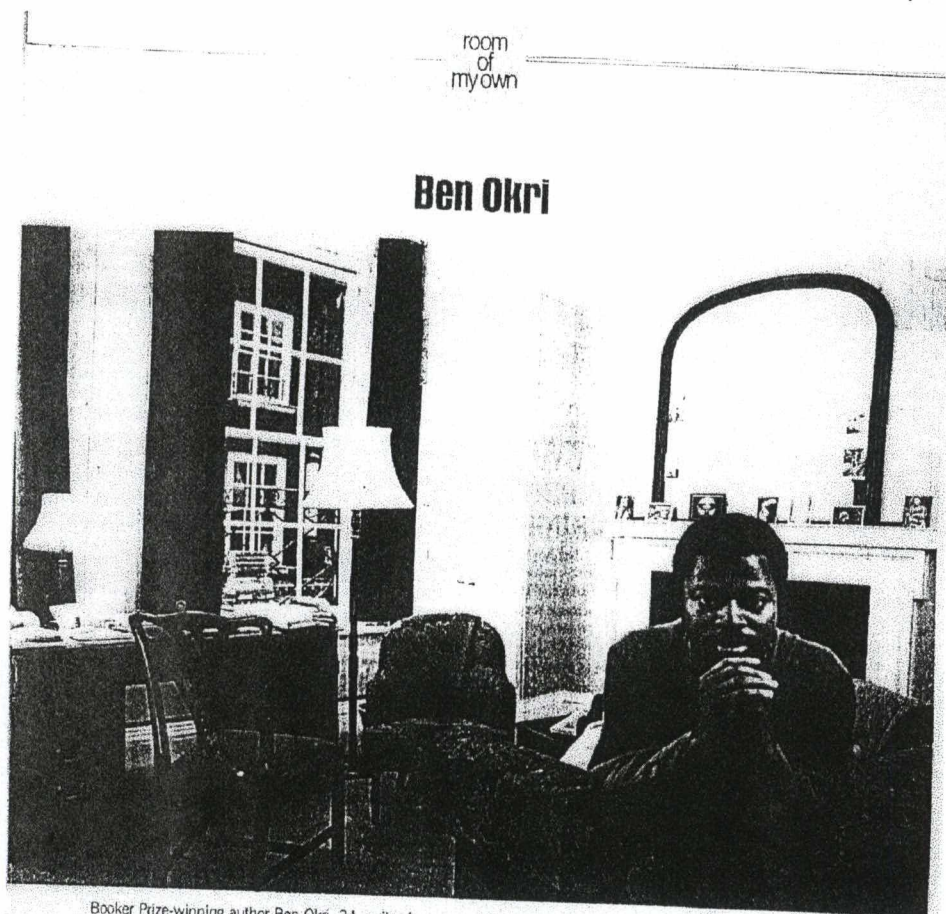
2.2) Describe the following living rooms by indicating the spatial relationships between the different equipment. Write four or five sentences.

Organisation
conventions

General to
particular
Large to
small
Outside to
inside
Top to bottom
Left to right

B. Reading:

1. Reading For Specific Information : Here is an article about a famous British author's room at Cambridge University (a Booker-Prize winner: the first literary prize in Britain). As you read the text, try to make notes on the following : the interviewed author, the room equipment, and the dominant atmosphere.



Booker Prize-winning author Ben Okri, 34, writes from a study above Trinity Street in Cambridge. Sitting at his desk he has spent many hours watching the bank opposite. 'Money helps,' he says. 'People look so different when they come out compared with when they go in.'

Money has helped Ben Okri. He left Essex University after two years, unable to complete his comparative literature degree due to lack of funds, and ended up sleeping rough while writing novels and short stories. 'Sometimes I'm still surprised to wake up with a roof over my head,' he says. Now he has more than one roof to choose from. He has a flat in London, another in Cambridge and the small study room provided by Trinity College for his two-year fellowship, which finishes in September.

Okri's study, where he professes to be most at ease, feels so characterless one can barely believe he has just sweated and toiled here producing his latest novel, *Songs of Enchantment*. But Okri believes a room consists of what you do in it rather than what you put in it. 'Once you've written in a place it changes,' he says. 'I'll carry the mood of this study in me forever.' As far as Okri is concerned, even the stiff college sofa and small table next to it are indelibly marked with his creative struggles. 'They all have meaning in them. I've dreamt and battled over the same sentence again and again on that sofa and edited the final manuscript at the table.'

He feels possessions weigh him down, and tries not to get too attached to them. He is, however, very fond of his college desk. 'It's beautiful because it's so old-fashioned,' he says. 'But more importantly it's solid, efficient and it doesn't move when you write on it.'

Next to his desk is a divan covered in a dreary brown bedspread. This is where he sleeps between his unpredictable bouts of writing. 'I keep hours that would make a cat go insane,' he admits. 'But there is something about this room late at night that's perfect for working.'

He keeps a selection of postcards on the mirror. 'I demand them from all my friends if they go away.' As a result he has hundreds, which he tends to hoard. His particular favourite is one of 'Victoire de Samothrace' (below, far right), a headless sculpture in the Louvre.

Okri feels very at home with the customs of Cambridge and finds the ritual of High Table at Trinity strangely familiar after a formal African upbringing. He was born in Nigeria and came to London as a child while his father studied law at the Temple. When the family had to return he refused to go. 'All my mates told me they still lived up in the trees,' he recalls. His mother said he could stay in England as long as he saw her off on the ship. The next thing he knew he was in Nigeria and in the middle of a civil war. 'That journey changed my life,' he says. 'I still haven't quite forgiven Mum for that.'

EMMA COOK

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LU JEFFREY

The Observer, March 21st, 1993.

Main Text Information	Specific Details
Ben Okri	Age Social Background Ethnic Origin Present situation Past situation Personality
Study Room	Type of Equipment (furniture items) State of Equipment (old, modern, ...) Colours (bright, dark) Atmosphere (serious, quiet, noisy,...)
Text Message	Hard work and material comfort Willingness and performance (doing things) Personality and rooms

2 Which of the following statements best sums up the author's attitude towards his study room :

- ☐ A well-equipped and furnished room encourages hard work.
- ☐ A room is what you do in it not what you put in it.
- ☐ Cambridge University study rooms are uncomfortable.
- ☐ A person's room is his/her reflection.

3 Use the table notes and a statement above to write a short summary, mentioning the title of the article and the name of the magazine.

Lesson 2

C. Writing : A Room of my Own

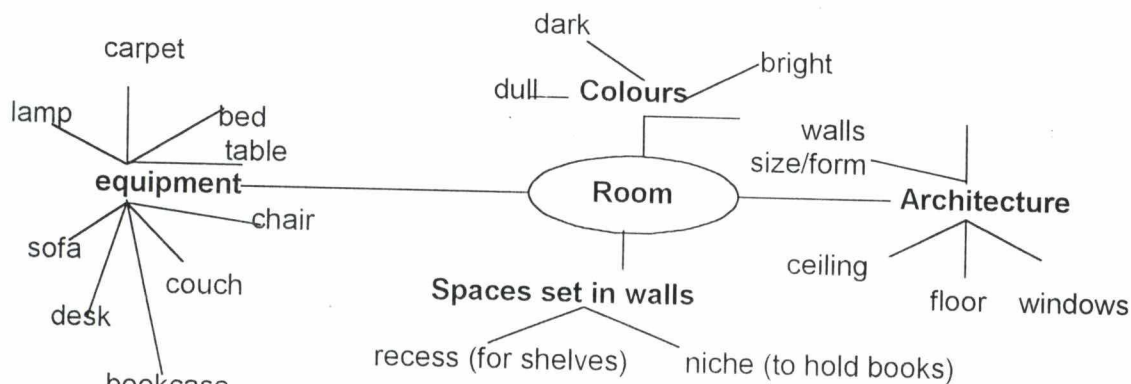
1. Lexical Preparation : Descriptive Adjectives

Students are aware now of the importance of adjectives for describing a place and conveying a particular atmosphere. In addition to the adjectives from the reading text, students and teacher suggest a list of adjectives to be used in their own description. They work in pairs, using a dictionary to complete a lexical chart.

Adjective	Meaning	Type of Atmosphere
dull dark colourless cosy gloomy welcoming dismal austere		

2. Planning the topic : A Topic Web— the inside of a room

Teacher brainstorms the students to produce a topic web on a room : equipment, location, colours, atmosphere...



3. Drafting 1 : Writing and Organising a Description

Focus : How objects in the room are laid out and related.

Each student writes a first draft consisting of three or four sentences describing his/her own room : Topic sentence + Support sentences .

Topic Sentence : Main feature and location of the room

Support Sentences : Describe some spatial relationships between equipment ;

Describe the kind of prevalent atmosphere ;

Describe one's own attitude towards the room.

Task Sheet :

Spatial Relationships

behind below against up above on over next to beside nearby
to the left on the left to the right on the right between in front of
opposite (etc.) (add other expressions)

Organisation Conventions

General to particular Large to small near to far Top to bottom
Left to right

Homework / Drafting 2 : Students complete the task at home, rewriting and improving the class draft.

Learn from the Professionals : Authors' Own Descriptions

.A Frightful Schoolroom

I gazed upon the schoolroom into which Mr. Creakle took me as the most forlorn and desolate place I had ever seen. I see it now. A long room, with three long rows of desks, and six of forms, and bristling all round with pegs for hats and slates. Scraps of old copybooks and exercises litter the dirty floor. Some silkworms' houses, made of the same materials, are scattered over the desks. Two miserable little white mice, left behind by their owner, are running up and down in a fusty castle made of pasteboard and wire, looking in all the corners with their red eyes for anything to eat. A bird, in a cage very little bigger than himself, makes a mournful rattle now and then in hooping i his perch, two inches high, or dropping from it ; but neither sings nor chirps. There is a strange unwholesome smell upon the room, like sweet apples wanting air, and rotten books. There could not well be more ink splashed about, if it had been roofless from its first construction, and the skies had rained, snowed, hailed, and blown ink through the varying seasons of the year.

(Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, p.74, London : Penguin Classics)

2. A Concealed, Sad House

Miss Quentin's home is a detached bungalow in a London suburb; the roof is low and the tiles are covered with pale moss; the front wall is almost entirely covered with ornamental trees; everything is reticence and concealment. Inside the house, the grate contains gleaming pyramid of half-burnt coals. Low armchairs with floral covers, wooden lamp with parchment frame and low-watt bulb; everywhere there are pictures of Miss Quentin's family: smiling, posed, on holiday, relaxed. Miss Quentin is silent at first; the sound of the coals burning with a faint metallic crackle. Miss Quentin had expected to meet an older man; she is not convinced that I will understand.

(Jeremy Seabrook, *Loneliness*, 1973, p. 34, London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd.)

Task 2: Geographical Description and Classification

Topic2: Great Britain At First Glance

Directions:

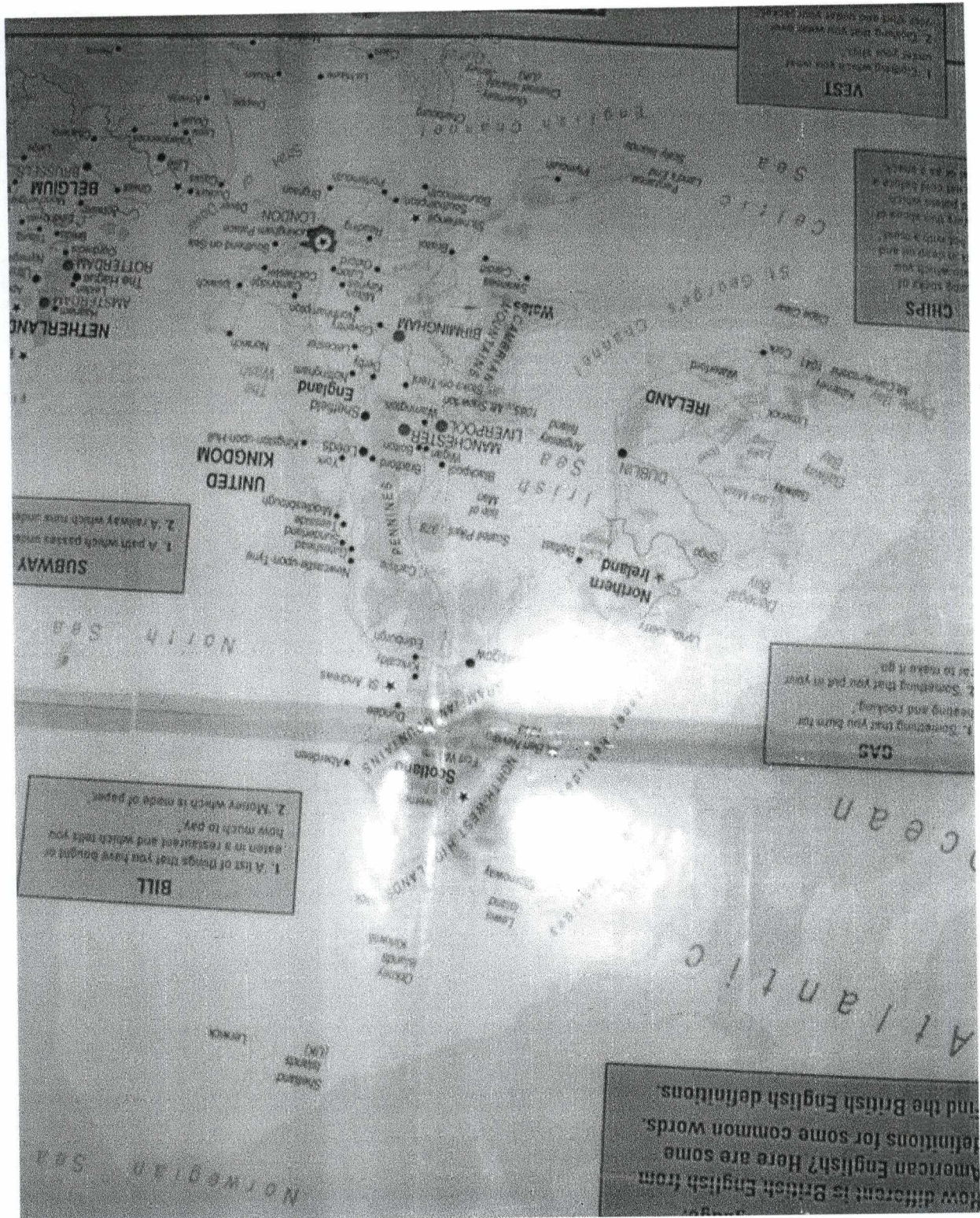
1. Teacher prepares and duplicates a chart listing the names of the four U.K. countries.
2. Students first study the large map of the British Isles in pairs to make a list of geographical notes (location, cities, resources, rivers, lakes, population, and major industries). They add further information through other resourcing means assembled by the teacher: an almanac, a world atlas, Study UK, and magazines.
3. Each pair uses the reference materials to find out information about their selected country, and to fill in the appropriate boxes on the chart.

Location/Geography Population/Classes Cities/Towns/Tourism Major Industries Natural resources Political Parties Environment	England	Wales	Scotland	Ireland

5. Students take turns reporting and describing their findings to the class. The class attempts to complete the chart with the necessary information.

Homework(Group Project):

As a homework, small groups of students (four) prepare a broadsheet on one country (England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland), with map, pictures, and description. The best broadsheet will be given to the Department library to decorate the reading room and the some of the others to local schools. Before submitting the broadsheet, students should check that the information (and English) is accurate, the layout is attractive, and the organisation of the headings is logical.



Task Sheet: Classification Forms

There are	two major	areas	
	three main	classes	of ... : , , and .
	chief	categories	. These are , , and .
Geographically, Britain consists of two main areas: the Highlands and the Lowlands.			
can be divided into two major regions. These are and .			
to divide	class	according to	
to classify	group	on the basis of	
to put into	category	depending on	
to fall in	type	with respect to	
to group	kind	with regard to	

Remarks: In addition to the clear motivational reason behind the task, preparing a broadsheet involves a group of students in close collaboration with regard to selection, organisation, and presentation of written material.

4.3.3.3 Critical Reading and Analysis of Informative Texts**Critical Reading and Analysis of Informative Texts**

Theme: Historical Events (Ireland) **Organisation:** Non-Fictional narration

Strategy: Referencing, Skimming, and perceiving academic text structure

Skills: Reading authentic historical documents and Writing concise accounts

Performance: Producing text-book type informative writing (dates, names,...)

Material: Academic Text from a Standard work on Irish history (*The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923*, Time Magazine article on Ireland (1999), and a poem by Noble-Prize winner, Seamus Heaney, on Modern Ireland

Objective: To encourage students to make use of skimming as the most effective initial skill to develop because it makes use of the paragraph as the basic underlying structure of an argument in a text.

Task 1: Reading and Analysing the paragraph structure of an academic text

Topic1: The Great Famine in Ireland, 1845-9

Directions: Reading

1. Predicting (looking for signposts): What does the title of the text 'The Great Famine' give you about the content and the events?

The Extract

Chapter Seventeen

The Great Famine

The famine of 1845-9 is a major dividing-line in the history of modern Ireland. politically, economically and socially, the period that followed it appears sharply distinct from the period that preceded it. One effect of the famine was to concentrate in a few brief years changes that would otherwise have been spread over generations. The immense burden of human suffering left an indelible mark on the popular memory. The historical importance of the Great Famine lies not only in the physical results—the decline in population, the transfer of property, the changes in agriculture—but in the attitude to the government and to the ruling class that it engendered in the great majority of the people.

From one point of view, there was nothing exceptional about the Great Famine except its extent and its devastating effects. Every year, a large section of the population was, for a period of two or three months, practically destitute; and on several occasions during the earlier nineteenth century, notably in 1817 and 1822, this destitution had become absolute famine in some parts of the country. This situation seemed to be the inevitable result of social conditions. Ireland in the 1840s, with over 8 000 000 inhabitants, was one of the most highly populated countries in Europe. About half of this population depended for its subsistence on the potato. Eventually, it was local and partial failures of the potato crop that had produced the earlier famines. What gave its special character to the Great Famine was that the crop failed over the whole country. That failure was repeated in successive years.

...By August 1846, despair became absolute and the failure was general. In many places the wretched people were seated on the fences of their decaying gardens, wringing their hands, and wailing bitterly the destruction that had left them foodless. Weakened already by a season of unparalleled scarcity, and with all their resources gone, four million people faced the prospect of starvation.

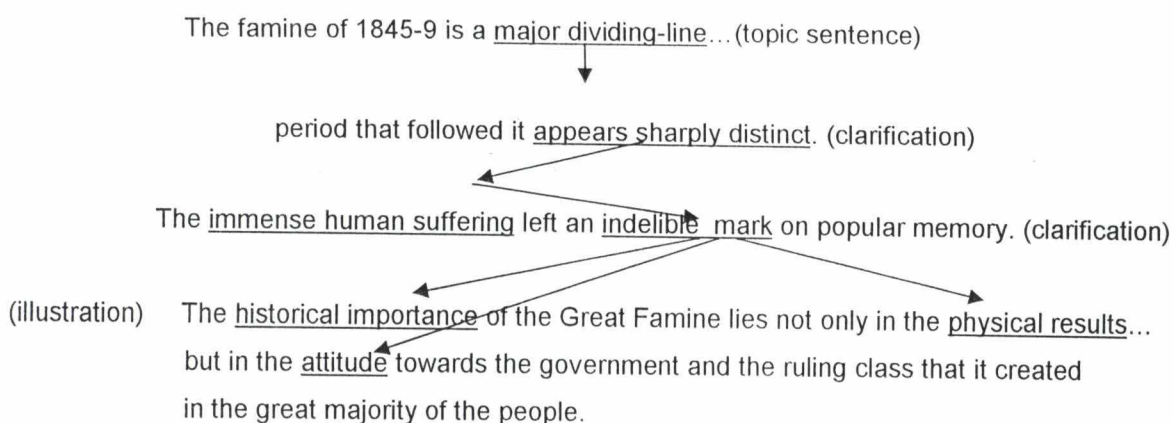
(Adapted from Beckett, S. (1966))

2. Skimming by paragraphs: Read the extract from Beckett's book quickly and write down the *opening sentence (topic sentence)* of each paragraph. What kind of information do the sentences give you on the *outline* of the text argument?

- The famine of 1845-9 was a *major dividing-line* in the history of modern Ireland.
 - This time, the Great Famine was exceptional by its extent and devastating effects.
 - By August 1846 despair became absolute and the failure was general.
3. Paraphrasing: Now read the whole text carefully to summarise the main ideas by rewriting in your own words the opening sentences and other supporting ideas. For example:

The famine of 1845 was *the most important turning point* in modern Irish history.

4. Paragraph-Structure Analysis: In this type of writing (academic) the paragraph constitutes an *idea unit*. Each paragraph develops a single, central topic. Skimming strategy is based on this principle. Look at the first paragraph and notice the neat structure and logical ordering of the sentences:



This systematic organisation of ideas in a paragraph enables you to skim effectively.

5. Writing :Paragraph Coherence

The following paragraph sentences have been taken from the same extract but the order has been changed. Try to put them in their initial logical order.

- The two had always been associated: typhus and fever spread with frightening rapidity in any period of famine.

- In the gloomy picture of Irish society between 1845 and 1849 disease is an element no less important than hunger.
- Both diseases are carried by the body-louse.
- In the famine of the 1840s, they ravaged the whole country.
- The crowded and filthy conditions of cabins, workhouses and hospitals accelerated their spread.
- These diseases were not the only ones;
- scurvy and famine dropsy resulted from extreme malnutrition, and occurred only from those who were actually starving.

6. **Follow Up (Group Activity):** Small groups of students may be asked to read the a chapter from Beckett's book and prepare a summary of the ideas and events for the rest of the class. The summaries can then be grouped together as a reference document.

Remarks:

This task examined a variety of strategies for handling academic reading texts that students need to develop for future essays in civilisation and literature. Skimming and paraphrasing seem to be to the most effective initial techniques for reading. Similarly, the student's ability to perceive and produce the basic structure of a paragraph as an idea unit helps develop structure awareness and text coherence.

Task 2: Writing an Historical Account of Important Events

Topic2: A Brief History of the Troubles in Northern Ireland

Directions:

1. Discussion.

Students are asked a set of questions on the recent events in Northern Ireland: What do you know about the troubles in Northern Ireland?

Why is there a conflict between the Irish people?

Why is Ireland divided into two countries: Southern and Northern?

2. Reading (Skimming).

Students read the Time Magazine article on the troubles in Northern Ireland to sum

THE DEAL IS DONE

In a bold leap of faith the Ulster Unionist Party agrees to share power with Sinn Féin, opening up the possibility that a lasting peace may have finally arrived in Northern Ireland



PEACE IN SIGHT: Jubilant agreement supporters receive news of the result

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TROUBLES

FOR THREE DECADES, THE people of Northern Ireland have been scarred by the Troubles. But this period has also been punctuated by efforts on the part of political leaders to bring about a peace agreement acceptable to all sides in this tragic conflict fueled by sectarian prejudice and nationalism.

PREPARED FOR PEACE **READY FOR WAR**

AUGUST, 1969
As a result of days of bloody sectarian rioting in Londonderry and Belfast, the British army is sent to Northern Ireland to restore order. The breakaway Provisional I.R.A. is formed by the end of this year.

FEB. 22, 1972
An I.R.A. bomb at a paratrooper HQ in Aldershot kills seven and injures more than a dozen, marking the start of the I.R.A.'s bombing campaign in England.

AUG. 27, 1979
While sailing in Ireland, Lord Mountbatten and three others are killed by an I.R.A. bomb. Hours later, across the border, two intensifies. London assumes direct rule in March, replacing the unionist government and alienating Protestants.

JAN. 30, 1972
Londonderry civil rights marchers scuffle with British soldiers who fire into the crowd, killing 13 Catholics. After "Bloody Sunday," Catholic opposition to Britain's presence

MAY 5, 1981
The I.R.A.'s Bobby Sands dies in Belfast's Maze prison on the 56th day of a hunger strike in protest at British refusal to grant political status to republican paramilitary prisoners. Nine others die before hunger strikes end in October.

OCT. 12, 1984
An I.R.A. bomb in Brighton's Grand Hotel, where the government is gathered for the annual Conservative Party conference, narrowly misses killing Margaret Thatcher, but five die and 30 are injured.

NOV. 15, 1985
Thatcher and Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald sign the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which increases cooperation between London and Dublin and gives Ireland a formal consultative role in the affairs of Northern Ireland. This is resented by unionist politicians, most of whom oppose the Agreement.

DEC. 15, 1993
British and Irish Prime Ministers John Major and Albert Reynolds sign the Downing Street Declaration, a framework for a peace settlement, elements of which are rejected by both the unionists and Sinn Féin, political wing of the I.R.A.

AUG. 31, 1994
The I.R.A. announces the "complete cessation of all military operations."

MAY 5, 1981
The I.R.A. bombs kill 19 British soldiers.

OCT. 16, 1998
The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble and John Hume, leader of the moderate nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party and regarded as one of the architects of the 1998 Anglo-Irish Agreement.

NOV. 1999
The Mitchell talks finally produce agreement between the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Féin, paving the way for the creation of a government with devolved powers—and perhaps a lasting peace and a new future for Northern Ireland.

APRIL 10, 1998
The Good Friday agreement is signed. A blueprint for radical reform, the accord calls for an elected assembly and a cross-party cabinet with devolved powers, in addition to cross-border bodies to deal with common issues such as roads and agriculture.

FEB. 9, 1996
The I.R.A. cease-fire ends with the bombing of London's Docklands, killing two and causing vast damage. The I.R.A. blames the British government for its inflexible response to the Mitchell report. The cease-fire is restored on 19 July, 1997.

DEC. 1995
Former U.S. senator George Mitchell is brought in to oversee peace talks. His report in January recommends all-party talks on the condition that all sides endorse six principles, including eventual paramilitary disarmament.

AUG. 15, 1998
In the worst single attack of 30 years of the Troubles, a car bomb set off by the dissident Real I.R.A. splinter group kills 29 and injures 220—Catholics and Protestants indiscriminately—among Saturday shoppers in Omagh, a rural town some 90 km west of Belfast.

THE 25 YEARS OF RESISTANCE
FALLS / CLONARD
DEMILITARISE NOW! 25 YEARS OF RESISTANCE DEMILITARISE NOW!



Main Dates	Main Events
August, 1969	Start and spread of bloody sectarian rioting in Londonderry and Belfast; the intervention of the British army; the birth of the IRA
Jan,30,1972	

1. Summary-Writing: Students use the notes to summarise the most important events in the Irish troubles to include in their own account.

Learn From the Professionals. Here is a poem on modern Ireland and the potato crop by the 1996-Nobel Prize winner, Seamus Heaney. Before reading the poem, read these notes on his background: Seamus Heaney was born in 1939 in Northern Ireland into a Catholic family in a farming community. As you already know from the previous texts, Ireland is divided into two countries. Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom and has a Protestant majority. It has at war with the predominantly Catholic Republic of Ireland since 1921. A lot of

Heaney's poetry explores the role of a poet in a war-torn society. Because of his farming background, his poetry often reflects a tension between work that is manual and land-based, and that which is intellectual and scholastic.

The Poem

Digging

1 Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.

2 Under my window, a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground
My father, digging. I look down

3 Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds

? Bennds low, comes up twenty years away

Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
slap

Where he was digging.

4 The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.

He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

5 By God, the old man could handle a spade.

Just like his old man.

"Digging" from *Death of a Naturalist*, by Seamus Heaney, 1969.

6 My grandfather cut more turf in a day

Than any other man on Toner's bog.

Once I carried him milk in a bottle

Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up

To drink it, then fell to right away

Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods

Over his shoulder, going down and down

For the good turf. Digging.

7 The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and

Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge

Trough living roots awaken in my head.

But I've no spade to follow men like them.

8 Between my finger and my thumb

The squat pen rests.

I'll dig with it.

Interpretation: Which of the following statements best capture (s) the meaning of the poem.

- ☐ The poem is in memory of the poet's father and grandfather.
- ☐ The poem explores the poet's family history.
- ☐ guns The poet is searching for a role in a society in which guns are the means of protest.
- ☐ The poet is seeking an identity both in the history of his family and in the history of Ireland.

4.3.3.4 Using True Facts to Create a Fictional Narrative

Using True Facts to Create a Fictional Narrative

Theme: Literature

Organisation: Fictional Narrative in Creative Writing

Strategy: Understanding and using Fictional Narrative Structure

Skill: Use of Time Sequencing Links

Performance: Devising a Story based on True Facts

Writing a Book Report

Material: Article from the New Yorker, 1993 (Liverpool's Children); Extracts from Allan Sillitoe's novel *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, 1959

A Poem/Song by Bob Dylan : 'A Simple Twist of Fate', 1974

Objective: To raise students' awareness of the text structure of a fictional narrative

Task 1: Devising a Tragic Story

Topic1: Liverpool's Children—The Brutal Murder of a Two-Year Old Toddler by Two

Eleven-Year Old Children

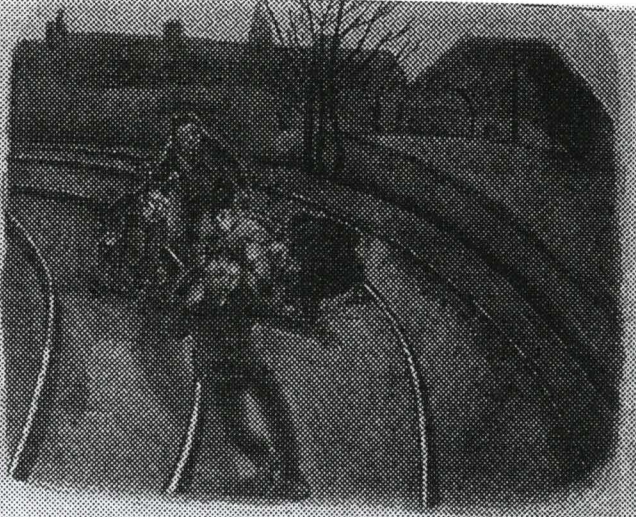
Directions:

1. Teacher makes and provides photocopies of the original crime pictures to pairs of students. Teacher introduces the structure and conventions of a fictional story:
 - Plot /Orientation: major characters, minor characters, the setting (place), the time sequence of the events, and the subject (topic);
 - Complication: a series of events unfolds and a crisis or problem happens (the subject)— the murder of a toddler by two children and the population reaction;
 - Resolution: how the crisis is eventually resolved
 - Impression: the final stage in which the writer may express an attitude/impression on the events.
2. Teacher asks students to have a look at the pictures and skim through the captions individually in order to get an impression of the time sequence and then ask them to answer orally the following questions:
 - What happened in Liverpool in November 1993?

- What sort of crime was it?
- Who was involved in the crime?
- Why did the crime provoke such violent reactions and strong passion among the population?



They dragged him through open streets and a graveyard.



Four boys playing on the benches discovered the mutilated body.

Liverpool's Children

In England last month, Robert Thompson and Jon Venables, both eleven, were sentenced to indeterminate terms of custody for the brutal murder of two-year-old James Bulger. Sue Coe, whose family lives in Liverpool, returns to a city mourning the tragedy of three of its children, to find the world that shaped them.

BY SUE COE



The police visited the homes of more than a hundred and thirty-five boys. After a suspect was released, there were riots.



*The New Yorker
December 13, 1993
pp. 400-406*



A surveillance video camera captured two juveniles leading the toddler away from the mall where he had been shopping with his mother.



Laid-off man: "What do I feed them? I got nothing."



"She got battered." A father brings his daughter to the Social Services office. Her husband beat her up.



"You teach children not to talk to strangers, now you have to teach them not to talk to children."

3. Students outline the plot of the tragic story in the outline table below.

Charaters	Events	Location	Time Sequence
Main			
Children: James	The murder	Liverpool	November 1993
Bulger, Robert	The search for the	Working-Class area	During the morning,the
Thompson,	murderers	The mall	toddler had been shopping
Jon Venables	the riots	the railway tracks	with his mother;
Minor	etc.	etc.	Then, they dragged him
The Police			through open streets...
The Family			Once in the railways,
The Neighbours			they...
			After that, four children
			playing...
			Soon after, the police...
			After a suspect was
			released, ...
			etc.

4. Still working in pairs, the students should start writing the plot for the story.
5. Students discuss the endings of the story (life custody, or the recent court decision to release the two teenagers under a new identity after 8 years of jail).
6. Students individually write the story, paying attention to the narrative structure, the time sequence, and the suggestion of a suitable title and their choice of ending.
7. Students write the story for homework. The best story will be published in the department magazine and receive a prize.

Task Sheet1: Dramatic and Emotive Vocabulary

Violent	Feeling	People	Showing no pity	Prison/Punishment
brutal	pain	suspect	merciless	jail
tremble	sadness	murderers	pitiless	imprison
ugly	mourning	thugs/mobs	ruthless	custody
tragedy	miserable	delinquent	heartless	prisoner
anger	horrify <i>horror</i>	criminal	clash	convict
cruel	shock	offender	riot	suspect

Task Sheet 2: Time Links and Adverbials

later on	suddenly	previously	earlier	subsequently	during
afterward	now	when	before	at last	finally
years ago	some time later	as	next	meanwhile	then

Task2: Writing a Book Report**Topic2: Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner (Extracts)****Directions:**

1. Provide students with a sample book report (a model to be followed) consisting of an:

- ☐ a picture of the front cover with title, year or publication, author, and publisher,
- ☐ an extract
- ☐ the plot with main characters and pictures,
- ☐ background notes on the author,
- ☐ the context in which the book was written (Britain in the 1950s).

2. **Card Index:** Ask students to read first the background notes on the novel to answer the following questions:

- ☐ Who is the author of the book?
- ☐ What is the title of the book?
- ☐ Is the title clear or obscure?
- ☐ What is the book genre (romance, social/real, science fiction, historical, detective, horror story, thriller)?
- ☐ When and where was the book published?

Ask students to record the answers in a card index to these questions so that they can include them in the introduction to their own book report.

3. **Author and Book Context:** Ask students to read the background information on the writer and the context in which the book was published to answer these questions:

- ☐ When and where was A. J. L. born?
- ☐ To which social class did he belong?
- ☐ What is L.'s hometown famous for?
- ☐ Did he go to a famous university?
- ☐ How was England in the 1950s?
- ☐ Why was there a group of writers called 'Angry Young Men'?

4. **Extract and Plot:** Ask students to read the extract and the plot to answer the following questions:

- ☐ Who are the main characters?
- ☐ What are they like?
- ☐ What is their social status, age, relationships, and feelings?
- ☐ Where does the story take place?
- ☐ What is the subject of the story (what is it about?)?
- ☐ What are the main events of the story?
- ☐ What do the events lead to?

5. **Interpretation and Appreciation.** Answer these questions:

- ☐ What is the message or purpose of this story?
- ☐ Is the writer saying something important about people ?
- ☐ Is the writer successful in realising such a purpose?
- ☐ If yes, which of the following caused this success: simple narration, vocabulary, figures of speech like metaphors, and / or interesting topic?
- ☐ If no, what cause this failure: too long narration, unrealistic story, redundant language, uninteresting topic?
- ☐ What was it like to read: easy, difficult, short, long?
- ☐ Did you enjoy reading the extract? Do you want to read the whole story?
- ☐ What have you learned from the story?

Homework: Ask students to write a report of a book they have read and enjoyed, using the studied model. Reports will be read aloud in subsequent classes.

Alan Sillitoe
THE LONELINESS
OF THE LONG-DISTANCE RUNNER
SAMPLE REPORT (1959)

A black and white illustration of a man running. He is wearing a dark tank top and shorts, and is captured in a dynamic pose as if in mid-stride. The background shows a simple landscape with a house and some trees on a hill. The overall style is that of a mid-20th-century graphic design.

Journalists called these writers the "Angry Young Men" though most of these writers objected to this label. They were never an actual group, many of the novel never met.

Learn from the Professionals: Expanding a Poetic Moment

A valuable exercise in writing narrative is to select a poem that describes a moment in time and to expand in your own language the scene the poet sketches. Read the following poems and then select one to expand. Think about the character of the person who speaks) and the meaning of the events. Try to expand the moment the poet presents in a paragraph of your own. And remember what one feels or sees after reading a poem is often quite different from another person's responses.

The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost, 1916

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden back.
Oh I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Paragraph

A Simple Twist of Fate by Bob Dylan, 1974

They sat together in the park
As the evening sky grew dark;
She looked at him and he felt a spark
Tingle to his bones.
It was then he felt alone
And wished that he'd gone straight
And watched out for a simple twist of fate.

They walked along by the old canal
A little confused, I remember well,
And stopped into a strange hotel
With a neon burning bright
Hit him like a freight train
Moving with a simple twist of fate.

A saxophone someplace far off played
As she was walking by the arcade
As the light burst through a beat-up shade
Where he was waking up.
She dropped a coin into a cup
Of a blind man at the gate
And forgot about a simple twist of fate.

He hears the ticking of the clocks
And walks along with a parrot that talks;
Hunts her down by the waterfront docks
Where the sailors all come in.
Maybe she'll pick him out again.
How long must he wait
One more time for a simple twist of fate.

4.3.3.5 Explaining Reasons and Opinion in Instructional Information

Explaining Reasons and Opinion in Instructional Information

Theme: Addiction and Abuse (Smoking, Drugs, and Alcohol)

Organisation: Warnings and Advice as Instructions in Problem-Solution Pattern

Strategy: Collecting facts on addicts and rewriting them as instruction in Problem-Solution Pattern

Skill: Writing short simple sentences (imperatives) to explain and modality (mood)

Performance: Writing an information brochure or broadsheet for teenagers in middle and secondary schools as a warning against taking drugs

Material: Alcohol and Drug Information Sheets (obtained from the Canadian Health Organisation Site (www.health.org/govpubs); Students' own interviews of real addicts (friends, neighbours, etc.); Time Magazine article, 'Why it's so hard to quit Smoking', May 1988.

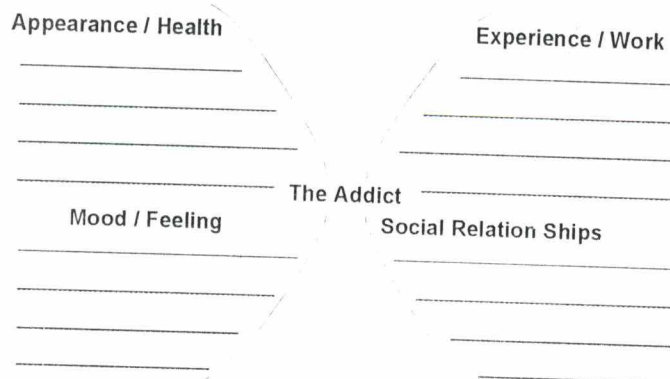
Objective: To encourage students to continue working in small groups to collect information, improve their sentences, and experience successful, useful writing (students feel that their writing contributes to a worthy purpose)

Task 1: Focus on the Problem— Warnings in the form of Instructions

Topic 1: Tips for Teens—The Truth about Drugs and Smoking

Directions:

1. Teacher explains to students the purpose of the task: to produce in small groups an information brochure or broadsheet for local school teenagers warning against the use of dangerous addictive substances like smoking, drugs, and alcohol. Each group should select one substance.
2. Brainstorming and Note-Making: Teacher asks students to look at pictures depicting addicted persons and to make and suggest notes on the following aspects: physical appearance, feelings, mood, living condition, health, etc. using the topic web below:

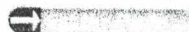


Tips For TEENS

The Truth About Methamphetamine

Tips for Teens: The Truth About Methamphetamine

Slam-Speed, Meth, Crystal, Crank, Tweak, Go-fast, Ice, Glass, Uppers, Black Beauties



Methamphetamine affects your brain. In the short term, meth causes mind and mood changes such as anxiety, euphoria, and depression. Long-term effects can include chronic fatigue, paranoid or delusional thinking, and permanent psychological damage.

Methamphetamine affects your body. Over "amping" on any type of speed is pretty risky. Creating a false sense of energy, these drugs push the body faster and further than it's meant to go. It increases the heart rate, blood pressure, and risk of stroke.

Methamphetamine affects your self-control. Meth may be as addictive as crack and more powerful. (1)

Methamphetamine is not what it seems. Even speed drugs are not always safe. Giga-jolts of the well-known stimulants caffeine or ephedrine can cause stroke or cardiac arrest when overused or used by people with a sensitivity to them.

Methamphetamine can kill you. An overdose of meth can result in heart failure. Long-term physical effects such as liver, kidney, and lung damage may also kill you.

<http://www.health.org/genpub/ph131.htm>

29/04/01

Tips For TEENS

The Truth About Alcohol

Tips for Teens: The Truth About Alcohol

Slam-Booze, Sauce, Brews, Brevskis, Hooch, Hard Stuff, Juice



Alcohol affects your brain. Drinking alcohol leads to a loss of coordination, poor judgment, slowed reflexes, distorted vision, memory lapses, and even blackouts.

Alcohol affects your body. Alcohol can damage every organ in your body. It is absorbed directly into your bloodstream and can increase your risk for a variety of life-threatening diseases, including cancer.

Alcohol affects your self-control. Alcohol depresses your central nervous system, lowers your inhibitions, and impairs your judgment. Drinking can lead to risky behaviors, including having unprotected sex. This may expose you to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases or cause unwanted pregnancy.

Alcohol can kill you. Drinking large amounts of alcohol can lead to coma or even death. Also, in 1998, 35.8 percent of traffic deaths of 15- to 20-year-olds were alcohol-related.

Alcohol can hurt you -- even if you're not the one drinking. If you're around people who are drinking, you have an increased risk of being seriously injured, involved in car crashes, or affected by violence. At the very least, you may have to deal with people who are sick, out of control, or unable to take care of

<http://www.health.org/genpub/ph132/>

29/04/01



Know the law. It is illegal to buy or possess alcohol if you are under 21.

Get the facts. One drink can make you fail a breath test. In some states, people under the age of 21 who are found to have any amount of alcohol in their systems can lose their driver's license, be subject to a heavy fine, or have their car permanently taken away.

Stay informed. "Binge" drinking means having five or more drinks on one occasion. About 15 percent of teens are binge drinkers in any given month.

Know the risks. Mixing alcohol with sedatives or illicit drugs is extremely dangerous and can lead to accidental death. For example, alcohol-sedation interactions may be a factor in at least 25 percent of emergency room admissions.

Keep your edge. Alcohol can make you gain weight and give you bad breath.

Look around you. Most teens aren't drinking alcohol. Research shows that 75 percent of people 12-20 haven't had a drink in the past month.



How can you tell if a friend has a drinking problem? Sometimes it's tough to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may have a problem with alcohol:

- Getting drunk on a regular basis
- Lying about how much alcohol he or she is using
- Believing that alcohol is necessary to have fun
- Having frequent hangovers
- Feeling run-down, depressed, or even suicidal
- Having "blackouts" -- forgetting what he or she did while drinking
- Having problems at school or getting in trouble with the law

What can you do to help someone who has a drinking problem? Be a real friend. You might even save a life. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help. For information and referrals, call the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 800-329-6686.

Q&A

<http://www.health.org/genpub/ph132/>

29/04/01

Halfpint Soraya

First Year English



Mai 2001

3. Students write down the notes as warnings and pieces of advice. Teacher writes them on the blackboard to show the different possible forms of instructions and the needed modals:

- ☐ Drugs can kill you.
- ☐ Don't try to be smart by smoking.
- ☐ You don't need to smoke to be a man.
- ☐ You can be infected with AIDS.
- ☐ Drugs lead to bad habits (stealing, prostitution).
- ☐ You won't succeed in studies.
- ☐ Keep away from addiction to succeed in life.
- ☐ Smoking can make you lose weight and give you bad breath.
- ☐ Don't be fooled by bad friends: smoking leads to cancer.

4. Teacher provides students with incomplete information sheets for further ideas and asks them to complete the sheets by writing further instructions (reasons) under each heading:

Task Sheet1: Warning and Advice Modals and Phrases

You <i>should</i> do	You <i>had better</i> stop.
The best thing you <i>can</i> do	You <i>need to</i> ...
You <i>may</i> develop a serious disease.	You <i>might</i> save a life.

Task Sheet 2: Purpose Connectives

Sometimes when giving instructions, we may give their purposes. the following connectives are used: to; in order to; in order not to; so as to; so as not to; so that; with the purpose

Examples: Exercise regularly to get real energy.

Talk to someone so as not to feel alone.

Task 2: Focus on Solution—Giving Advice as Instructions

Topic2: Tips for Teens—Drugs/Smoking: Just Say No!

Directions:

1. Prewriting: Making a list of tips on How to Be Smart and Feel Great without addiction . Write down all the possible tips that you may give to a teenage to encourage him/her not *to be tempted by drugs or smoking. Your advice should appeal to a teenager (i.e., make it simple and easy to follow).

- ☐ Make exercise part of your daily life.
- ☐ Just keep generally active and busy.
- ☐ Discipline yourself, be strong-minded.
- ☐ Exercise even if you do not feel like it.
- ☐ Listen to music.
- ☐ Play a clalm game.
- ☐ Talk with close friends.

2. Arrange the list of suggestions under the heading How to Help. Be a real friend:
Add the list to the headings in Task 1 to have a full brochure, with pictures and illustrations.

4.3.3.6 Describing and Explaining Processes

Describing and Explaining Processes

Theme: Children and Education

Organisation: Process Explanation

Strategy: Explaining and Analysing Processes Skill: Using Sequences in Process

Description, Connectives, and the Passive Forms of Verbs

Performance: Writing a Special Report on How Children Learn

Material: Newsweek Magazine Article (How Kids Learn, 1988)

Time Magazine Article (The I.Q. Gene, 1999)

Psychological Texts (*How Children Fail*, John Holt, 1974 and *Intelligence and Learning*, John Wittaker, 1976)

Song ('When I was Young', Roger Hodgson & Rick Davis, 1979)

Objective: Help students to continue understanding the importance of explaining in writing in terms of clear, precise language and logical, step-by-step sequence.

Task 1: Explaining the step-by-step sequence of the learning process

Topic1: How Children Learn—The Stages of Childhood.

Directions:

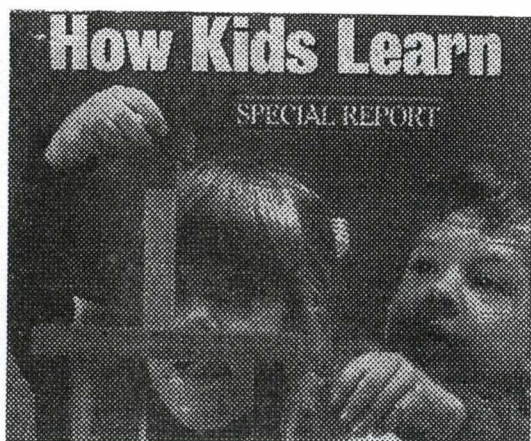
1. Teacher asks students to work individually to make a list of notes on their own childhood memories; teacher provides help with and introduce topic vocabulary:

- ☐ What do you think most children learn by the age of four?
- ☐ It is said that the first four years are the most important in learning?
- ☐ What do children learn themselves?

- ❑ How do you think parents can help?
- ❑ How would assess the way your parents brought you up?
- ❑ How do you think you would make a good parent?

Childhood Memories

- ❑ caretakers: mother, father, granny, nurse...
 - ❑ peers/siblings: brother (s), sister (s), neighbours, classmates
 - ❑ Playing: alone, with peers, toys (human, animal, objects), working with puzzles, painting, cutting with scissors, building things, playing with computer games, sports
 - ❑ behaviour: ask for help, give up a difficult game, insist on finding a solution, prefer reading, day-dreaming, listening to stories and jokes
 - ❑ Speaking: enjoy talking, telling stories to parents, asking questions, prefer silence
 - ❑ School: first day at school (joy, fear), classroom, clothes, teacher, classmates
 - ❑ other memories (difficulties, holidays, success, failure, etc...)
2. Teacher provides the text on 'learning' to individual students to read in order to fill in the chart below. Teacher reminds students of the importance of precise and clear description of the process logical sequence. As they read, students should also underline all the sequence connectives.



Ages 5 through 8 are wonder years. That's when children begin learning to study, to reason, to cooperate. We can put them in desks and drill them all day. Or we can keep them moving, touching, exploring. The experts favour a hands-on approach, but changing the way schools teach isn't easy. The stakes are high and parents can help. But first we need to know how children learn.

The Stages of Childhood

Each youngster proceeds at his own pace, but the learning curve of a child is fairly predictable. Their drive to learn is awesome, and careful can nourish it. The biggest mistake is pushing a child too hard, too soon.

Infants and Toddlers (0-17 months)

They're born to learn. The first important lesson is trust, and they learn that from their relationships with their parents or other caring adults. Later, babies will begin to explore the world around them and experiment with independence. As they mature, infants slowly develop gross motor (sitting, crawling, walking) and fine motor (picking up tiny objects) skills. Generally they remain ego-centric and are unable to share or wait their turn. new skill are perfected through repetition, such as babbling that leads to speaking.

18 months to 3 years

Usually toilet training becomes the prime learning activity. Children tend to concentrate on language development and muscle control through activities like climbing on jungle gyms. Attention spans lengthen enough to listen to uncomplicated stories and carry on conversations. Vocabulary expands about 200 words. They enjoy playing with one other child, or a small group for short periods, and learn that others have feelings too. They continue to look to parents for encouragement and protection, while beginning to accept limit on their behaviour.

3-year-olds

In the next stage, they're interested in doing things for themselves and trying to keep up with older children. Their ability to quietly listen to stories and music remains limited. They begin telling stories and jokes. Physical growth slows, but large muscle development continues as children run, jump, and ride tricycles. They begin to deal with cause and effect; it's time to plant seeds and watch them grow.

4-year-olds

After this, they develop better small motor skills, such as cutting with scissors, painting, working with puzzles and building things. They can master colours, sizes and shapes. They should be read to and could be encouraged to watch others write; let them scribble on paper but try to keep them away from walls.

Both 4s and 5s

During this stage, both groups learn best by interacting with people and concrete objects and by trying to solve real problems. They can learn from stories and books, but only in ways that relate to their own experience. Socially, these children are increasingly interested in activities outside their immediate family. They can play in groups for longer periods, learning lessons in cooperation and negotiation.

6-year-olds

Subsequently, they become acutely aware of comparisons between themselves and others. It's a taste of adolescence: does the group accept them. Speech is usually well developed, and children are able to joke and tease. They have a strong sense of true and false and are eager for clear rules and definitions. At this stage, children are more mature mentally than physically. They learn better by firsthand experiences. Learning by doing also encourages children's 'disposition' to use knowledge and skills they are acquiring.

7-to 8 -year-olds

In the last stage, children begin developing the ability to think about and solve problems in their heads, but some will continue to rely on fingers and toes to help them find the right answer. Not until they're 11 are most kids capable of thinking symbolically; they still use real objects to give the symbols (e.g., numbers) meaning. At this stage they listen better and engage in give and take.

(By Barbara Kantrowitz & Pat Wingert, *Newsweek*, April 1989, pp.23-24)

3. Students in pairs try to fill in the chart below. The first one is given as example.

STAGE	AGE	Learning Process (skills, abilities, and preferences)
1	Infants and toddlers	natural drive towards learning develop gross motor skills (sitting, crawling, walking) fine motor skills (pick up objects) babbling (producing words like mama, papa)
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

3. Students use the chart to summarise the main points in the text.

Task 2: Describing and explaining a process**Topic 2: How children succeed—The town that kids built.**

1. Students study a text which describes an American school programme which prepares children for real-life tasks and responsibilities. They read the text slowly (twice) to explain the main points and fill in the flow diagram.

The Town that kids built

"My children really understand solar power and geothermal energy," says a second-grade teacher in Saugus, California. "Some of them are building solar collectors and turbines for their energy course." These young scientists are part of City Building Educational Program, a unique curriculum for kindergarten through twelfth grade that uses the process of city planning to teach basic reading, writing, and math skills, and more.

...CBEP is a series of activities, games, and simulations that teach the basic steps necessary for problem-solving: observing, analyzing, creating possible solutions, and evaluating them based on the children's own criteria. Here are some highlights of the program. First, the children draw free-form maps of their town and analyze what's "good" and "bad" about it ("the freeway is good because it helps you get places fast, and bad because it produces noise and pollution") to decide what they want in their future city. To understand the way that towns are organized so that people can deal with the natural environment, the children create an imaginary landscape out of styrofoam with mountains, rivers, meadows, and forests; they then pretend they're in primitive times. Shelters are constructed. One child, using a hair dryer, pretends to be the wind; another with a lamp is the sun; and another stimulates rain with a water pistol. Those shelters that are too close to the river are washed away in a flood. Afterward, the children discuss their mistakes. In a second version, they may organise into tribes for survival and division of labor. With such simulation they get better at surviving.

After discussion and analysis, each group develops a plan for subdividing the site of their future city into land parcels, using hills, streams, and other features as natural boundaries. Areas are marked off for housing, industry, and open space, and the parcels are distributed to all the students. Subsequently, the children try out different forms of government—monarchy, dictatorship, democracy—in order to choose one for the planning phase of the city. At the end, they elect a ruler who appoints a planning commission to make the final design decisions for each building in the future city.

(Adapted from an article by Phyllis Rosser in Ms. in *Authentic Reading*,
Catherine Walter, 1984, 48)

Second grade: the second year of elementary school in the United States.

Curriculum: programme of studies

Styrofoam: a light plastic material that can easily be cut into different shapes.

2. The following are general statements about CBEP. For each statement, give the necessary details (examples, results, specific descriptions, etc.).

- ☐ The children have a lot of freedom.
- ☐ The children pretend they are in primitive times.
- ☐ The children subdivide their city.
- ☐ The children learn to be self-critical and responsible.

3. The following flow gives more explanation on the CBEP process. Fill in the boxes with information from the text above.

First Step:
↓
Second Step:
↓
Third Step:
↓
Fourth Step:
↓
Fifth step:
↓
Sixth step:

4. Use the flow diagram to describe and explain more clearly the process by which children learn to analyse and make decisions. The task sheet below gives some expressions commonly used when describing a process.

Task Sheet

Beginning	Middle	End
First	Second (ly)	Lastly,
Firstly	third (ly)	Finally,
To begin with	Next	The last stage
The first stage is	Then	step
The first step is	Afterward	end with
Initially	After this	
	Subsequently,	

Task 3: Devising a 'Parents' Awareness Charter'**Topic: A Primer For Parents—Suggestions**

Directions: Use the points below to devise a charter for parents to make sure that their children are getting the right education.

- ☐ talk between teacher and small groups of children or individual youngsters; not just lecturing
- ☐ work on projects, active experiments and play; not just sitting at desks all day filling in workbooks
- ☐ children's dictating and writing their own stories or reading real books
- ☐ classroom has reading and art areas and space for children to work in groups
- ☐ children's creation of freehand artwork, not just colour or paste together adult drawings
- ☐ look at children's faces: are they intellectually engaged, eager and happy? If they look bored or scared, they probably are.

(Notes adapted from Newsweek, 1989, 26)

You might start as follows:

A Primer for Parents

When visiting a school, trust your eyes. What
you see is what your child is going to get.

- ☐ Teachers should talk to small groups of children or individual youngsters; they shouldn't just lecture.
- ☐ Children should _____; they shouldn't be _____
- ☐ Children should be _____
- ☐ The classroom _____
- ☐ Children should be _____
- ☐ Most importantly, watch the children faces. They should be...

Learn from the Professionals: Expanding a Poetic Moment. Here is a thoughtful song on childhood with plenty of useful vocabulary and insightful ideas that you may like to expand.

The Logical Song

When I was young, it seemed that life was
so wonderful, oh it was beautiful, magical.
And all the birds in the trees, well, they'd be singing
so happily, joyfully, playfully watching me.
But then they sent me away to teach me how to be
sensible, logical, responsible, practical.
And they showed me a world where I could be
so dependable, clinical, intellectual, cynical.
There are times when all the world's asleep,
the questions run too deep for such a simple man.
Won't you please, please tell me what we've learned.
I know it sounds absurd, but please tell me who I am.
I said, watch what you say or they'll be
Calling you a radical, liberal, fanatical, criminal.
Won't you sign up your name, we'd like to
Feel you're acceptable, respectable, presentable, a vegetable.
(Super Tramp—Roger Hodgson & Rick Davies, 1979)

4.3.3.7 Organising Information in a Contrast and Comparison Text

Organising Information in a Contrast and Comparison Text

Theme: Education Systems

Organisation: Contrast and Comparison

Strategy: Information transfer, Reading for specific information, organising information

Skill: Use of contrast/comparison discourse organisation

Use of facts and figures

Performance: Write a longer essay (project) on two education systems

Material: British Council Web Site (Education in Britain) (www.britishcouncil.org)

Articles in *The Economist*, April 10th, 1999 and *Study UK*, 1997.

A CD Rom on teaching methods in British universities (Study UK, 1997)

Objective: To encourage students to explore ideas through brainstorming and incorporate different types of factual material in the writing project (facts, figures, quotes, etc.) and use the appropriate discourse pattern.

Task 1: contrasting and comparing factual information

Topic 1: State Education Systems in England and Algeria

Directions:

1. Discussion Questions: A Brief Questionnaire—The Aims of Education

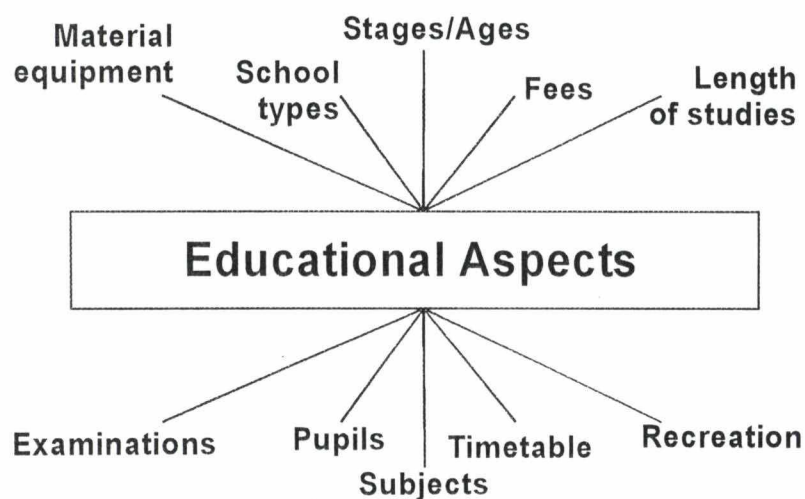
Students in pairs read a brief questionnaire to select and discuss the main aims of education.

- Work in pairs to read and select the main aims of education. In column A, put a number 0-5 according to the importance attached to these aims at the school you went to. In column B, put a number 0-5 according to what you think the main school's priorities should be.
- When you have finished, discuss the results orally with the rest of the class.

The main aims of education consist in:	☐	☐
☐ Helping you to develop your personality.		
☐ Helping you to do as well as possible in exams.		
☐ Teaching you about right and wrong.		
☐ Showing you how to get on with other people.		
☐ Teaching you about what is happening in the world today.		
☐ Keeping you occupied.		
☐ Teaching you how to read and write well.		
☐ Helping to get a good job.		
☐ Making school a pleasant place to be in.		
☐ Preparing you for life beyond school (see the previous unit).		
☐ Helping you to develop your personality and abilities.		

2. Prewriting: Brainstorming. Students use brainstorming to explore ideas and collect information on different educational aspects.

- ☐ Look at the following pictures to note down in the topic web what you observe: pupils' uniforms, movement around the class, organisation of the class, equipment, teacher's position, etc..
- ☐ Ask your teacher and each others for other things you would like to know.



3. Information Transfer: Note-Making and Outlining

Students study the facts and figures and the two charts which explain each how state education is organised in England and Algeria. They also have available documents on UK schools with recent information, facts, and figures that they can use to complete the comparative table.

Some Facts and Figures (British Council, 2000)

- In England and Wales there are 8.5 million children in 30,000 state schools of which about 1,000 are grant maintained (centrally funded).
- In England over 50 per cent of 3 and 4 year olds attend nursery schools.
- Primary education, up to age 11; secondary to age 16; higher for over 16.
- The law requires children to attend primary and secondary education (i.e., compulsory).
- There are 600,930 children in private school in the U.K.
- In Northern Ireland, there are 1,300 state schools, of which 53 are funded directly from central government.
- In Wales there are more than 70% of 3 and 4 year olds in nursery schools, in Scotland 38% and in Northern Ireland 50%.
- In Algeria, there are 8 million in primary, foundation and secondary schools.

ENGLAND

ALGERIA

Age	Stages of Education	
3	Nursery School (voluntary)	5 Kindergarten (urban)
5	Primary School	Primary Education
6	(compulsory primary education: at least 6 years)	6 (compulsory education: 6 years)
7		7
8		8
9		9
10		10
11		11
12	Secondary School	Foundation Education
13	(compulsory education: at least five years)	12 (compulsory education: 3 years)
14	General Certificate of	13
15	Secondary Education (GCSE)	14 Diploma of Foundation Studies
16	(examinations: 15-16)	
	Curriculum: Language, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Expressive Arts, Religious, moral and social education. Education for Mutual Understanding, Cultural Heritage, Health Education, Information Technology, Economic Awareness, Language Studies, Careers Education)	Secondary Education
		15
		16
		17
		Baccalaureate Examination (17/18)
		Curriculum: Subject Areas
17	Advanced level ('A' level)	17/18 Higher Education:
18	examinations (17-18)	State universities
		National Institutes (ENA)
		Polytechnics
18/19	Higher Education:	
	University	Military schools
	College of Education	
	Polytechnic	

4. Note Making and Outlining: Organise the obtained information into separate columns to indicate the similarities and differences between the Algerian and the British systems. Use also the topic-web information.

England	Algeria
Similarities ☐ Stages ☐ Age (entry/ leaving) ☐ Schools ☐ Examinations ☐ Compulsory education ☐	Similarities ☐ ☐
Differences	Differences

5. Organising Comparison/Contrast Information: Paragraph Structure Patterns. Students organise the collected information in one of the following patterns:

Pattern1 (deals with one system and showing similarities at a time)

Paragraph 1: similarities

1. General statement on main similarities
2. Main aspects of Education in England.
 - ☐ Schools
 - ☐ etc.
3. Main aspects of Education in Algeria (similarities with England)
 - ☐ Schools
 - ☐ etc.
4. Concluding Statement

Paragraph 2 (differences of one system at a time)

Pattern 2

Paragraph 1: Both Similarities and Differences

1. General Statement on main similarities and differences
2. England (one aspect) → Algeria (same aspect)
3. England (second) → (Algeria)
4. England → (Algeria)
5. Concluding Statement

Generally speaking, the English and Algerian educational systems reveal both similarities and differences with regard to a number of factors such as age, stage, type of schools, compulsory education, length of studies, and examinations. As far as similarities are concerned, both systems follow the same process. They start with nursery education and end with higher education. With respect to the length of studies, pupils spend six compulsory years in the two countries. Similarly, secondary and higher education offer more or less the same specialisations and subjects to students. Concerning differences, the English child begins learning at an early age (4), whereas the Algerian child must wait until 6. Unlike England, kindergartens are found only in large cities and not for all people. Moreover, the English students can start work after getting the GCSE at the age of 16. In contrast, the Algerian student must first get the Baccalaureate, then the Licence, and wait a year or two before, perhaps, finding a job. In sum, education in Algeria seems to be less developed than the one in England due to the lack of equipment and organisation.

Comparison

- ## Contrast

- [illegible]

Task 2: Text Structure Awareness**Topic 2: Britain's Education Reforms (an article from *The Economist*, April 1999, p.35)****Directions:**

1. Students read an extract from an article comparing and contrasting successful and less successful schools. They focus on how information is organised.
 - First, read the text quickly, then more carefully to identify the structure pattern of the text. Complete the graphic pattern, working with a partner.

BRITAIN'S EDUCATION REFORMS**Education, education, education**

Britain's education reforms are best understood as an attack on the "comprehensive ideal" of the 1960s and 70s. In the name of egalitarianism this ideal held that all teachers and all schools should be treated identically and equally. Any comparisons were invidious. The idea was that standards would rise for everybody. However, the current system has failed. A recent study revealed that 19% of British adults in their mid-30s have problems with basic reading.

In response to these problems, Britain's education reforms have tried to be much tougher about contrasting between successful and failing schools. The government has begun to close failing schools. Within schools there is more of a focus on basic literacy and numeracy, whereas "progressive" teaching methods are being discouraged. These measures are the suggestions of a five-year inspection programme, which tried to find an answer to: Why some schools do much better than others? Having overseen the inspection of all of England's 24,000 state schools, Mr Woodhead (the chief inspector) found out two things: good teaching methods and effective leadership by the head teacher.

In the failing schools, lessons were often poorly planned and undemanding. The pupils were often left to do their own thing rather than actually being taught — a result of the "progressive method" of the 1960s. In such schools, the head teachers were often too ready to believe that their staff are doing their best even though the evidence of failure was unmissable. In fact, they themselves were doing little to unite the school behind a plan for progress.

In the best schools, teachers spent rather less time dashing round the class offering encouragement to pupils as they worked on individual projects. In contrast, they spent more time addressing the whole class, posing challenging questions to the pupils in turn to ensure that they are keeping up. This method is called "whole-class interactive teaching". In the schools that do well, it is usually found that each lesson fits in to a carefully crafted plan of where the teacher wants to take the class each term. Moreover, the pupils' progress is carefully monitored. (The Economist, April 10th, 99)

- Complete the graphic structure below with information from the text.

Compare/Contrast Matrix: How are the successful and the failing schools different?

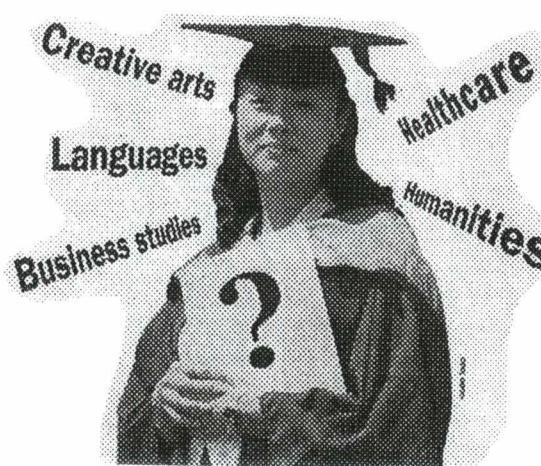
	Successful Schools:	Failing Schools:
Finding 1		
Finding 2		
Finding 3		
Finding 4		

Task 3: Using facts and Figures in Comparison/Contrast Texts

Topic 3: Britain by Degrees (An article from *Study UK*, 1997, p.8)

Directions:

1. Students read the Study Uk article to answer a set of statistical questions and complete a curve chart.



Britain by degrees

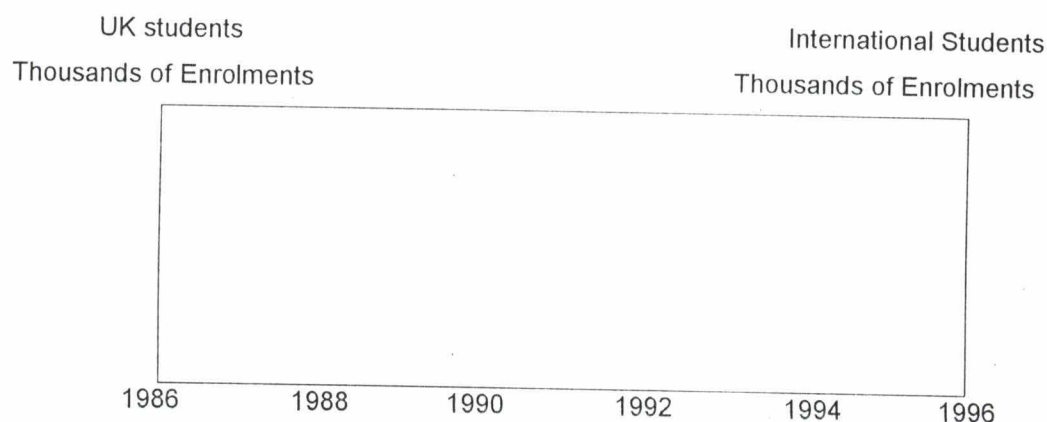
The last ten years have seen the number of UK students choosing to study at university virtually double, with more than 270,000 students being awarded a place on a degree course last year. But it's not just British students who are causing this increase. Around 10% of this number are international students. Since 1986, the number of international students accepted on to degree courses has grown annually from around 9,000 to over 26,000.

So what exactly are they studying? Traditionally, international students have always preferred solid subjects such as law, engineering and technology, and these have remained popular choices throughout the last decade. But since 1986 the number of both UK and international students enrolling on business administration and management studies degrees has grown dramatically. Ten years ago, just 4,000 British students and 566 international students chose business administration. At the moment there are more than 14,000 British students and 1,800 international students accepted on to business administration courses each year.

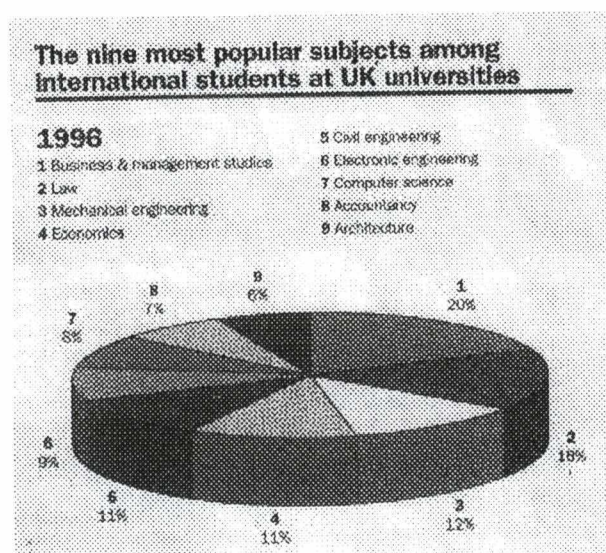
While almost 20% of international students are studying business and administrative studies, and a significant number are taking degrees in engineering and technology-based subjects, a significant number are branching out into other areas. Britain is an attractive choice for students because of the wide variety of degree subjects. These range from the more traditional such as law, mechanical engineering and economics to the more unusual like media studies, marketing and alternative health therapies. There are thousands of degree courses to choose from and many different combinations are possible

(Karen Banyon, Study UK, 1996, pp.8-9)

2. Compare and contrast the number of UK and international students enrolled at UK universities in 1986 and 1996.
3. Compare and contrast the choice of degree courses in 1986 and 1996.
4. Suggest some reasons for the dramatic increase in numbers and the choice of specific degree subjects.
5. Draw curves in the graph below to show the difference between 1986 and 1996 in terms of enrolments of both UK and international students.



6. Graphic Analysis and Interpretation: Pie Graph—The nine most popular subjects among international students



- ☐ According to the statistics in the pie graph, which subjects are the most popular?
- ☐ How are business and management studies different from the other subjects?
- ☐ How is architecture different from the other subjects?
- ☐ How do subjects 3,4,and 5 compare with each other?
- ☐ How does subject 2 compare with subject 7, and 3 with 6?
- ☐ According to you, why are the front-runner subjects so popular with international students?

Task Sheet: Increase/ decrease Expressions& Superlatives

rapid/sharp/steep/dramatic/significant rise/increase/jump
 slow/slight/gradual/barely noticeable fall/ decrease/decline/reduction

According to the statistics/graph/table/figures,

It can be seen from the statistics that

Business administration knew the highest increase in numbers.

was the most popular among students.

Language and religious studies were the least popular.

UK living • university life

UK living • university life

A time to remember

If you're planning to come to the UK to study you're probably wondering what to expect.

Four international students reveal how they made the most of their first year of university life

Ozozoma Ehinlalye, 21, from Nigeria, is studying geology at the University of Liverpool

I was at a university in Nigeria for three years studying town and country planning when the opportunity presented itself for a period of foreign study. I grabbed it.

I decided to study at Liverpool because I had a cousin who was attending the university and who was living there. Also, while applying to universities I was pleased to see that the geology department had a good rating and to find out that there was a good international community there.

Another reason for coming to the UK was that I liked the way the officers at the university communicated with me while assessing my application. All in all, Liverpool seemed to be closer to me, although I could have gone to Aberdeen, Birmingham or Sunderland where I was also offered places.



I am getting on very well. Things are very interesting and quite different from where I come from. Learning is much easier – help is offered every step of the way, so I don't anticipate any problems.

First and foremost I love reading and writing and I recently won a competition that was organised by the Merseyside International Network which is a charitable organisation. It was open to all the international students in Merseyside and we had to write a poem or an essay, take photos or make a video. I decided to write a poem and won first prize and £150. I went to the Town Hall to meet the Mayors and receive my prize.

Learning is made quite easy – help is offered every step of the way

I'm thinking of writing about stories, but I'm scared that with all that I want to write, it might turn out to be a big novel. So I think that I'll just wait and see where the tide takes me.

I love sightseeing and travelling and I have just returned from a field trip to Wales which was great, despite the weather.

Life in Liverpool is exciting and very different to life back in Nigeria. I'm even becoming a bit like a Liverpoolian and have started speaking the way they do. I'd like to thank you in the Liverpoolian dialect and I am catching on fast.

20 Study UK

Doga Tokay, 18, is a first-year law student at the University of Wales in Cardiff. Doga comes from Northern Cyprus

I usually Northern Cyprus decide to stay in Cyprus to study or go to Turkey to do so. However, I came to Britain three years ago to study English before applying to British universities.

At first I found it difficult to get to grips with speaking English. It's much easier to put words on to paper, but when you start trying to communicate by talking you're afraid you won't be understood and that you won't be able to speak. But when you practice you improve and you overcome that anxiety. If you're thinking of coming here, you English is likely to improve but you do have to take the risk and try!



I was really surprised to receive a Christmas card from the law department this year

The law school gives a lot of support to its foreign students. These include additional English lessons, as well as some other "extras". I was really surprised, for example, to receive a Christmas card from the law department this year.

Half of my friends in Cardiff are international and half are from the UK. I am lucky to have found work behind the bar in the Students Union because this gives me a chance to meet lots of interesting people. I live in a shared flat in halls of residence together with UK students. This can sometimes cause problems on a day-to-day basis. The way we eat, or the way we behave is quite different. Sometimes, for example, we eat with our hands.

As an uncommemorated country, Northern Cyprus has a similar legal system to the United Kingdom, which I hope will make it easier for me to find a job. I would like to stay in the UK to work as a solicitor or a barrister, but I'm Cyprus. If you look at it as a purely financial basis then Britain is better than all my family and most of my friends are in Cyprus.

Overall, I can honestly say that I really enjoy studying in the UK. The universities have a very high profile and Cardiff is a capital city and as a result there is so much more lively than it is back home in Northern Cyprus.

Gro Stømen, 19, from Norway, is studying for a BA in Journalism and the Social Sciences at City University in London

In many ways, London is not very different from my home town of Oslo. You have a very urban culture in both the Norwegian and in the English capitals. Most Norwegians think there's not that much difference between the two countries because we identify a lot with England.



People in both cities look similar but society is very different. I notice the difference in political systems, for example. Norway has been a social democracy for many years, but Britain hasn't and you can see it in so many ways. For instance, in the UK it would be up for discussion whether people should receive child benefit. That surprised me. It would just never happen in Norway – it would be an automatic entitlement.

Socially, the whole movement thing is very different here in as far as who drinks up whom. And people never buy you a drink in Norway because it's just too expensive.

It was no problem setting into academic life, although the first term was very hectic. But it was a lot of fun because you meet so many people.

It was no problem setting into academic life, although the first term was very hectic. But it was a lot of fun because you meet so many people

I never studied at a Norwegian university but I know from my friends that studying in England is a lot more like being at school than it is in Norway. In England, you find in essays and have to do assignments and your tutors chase you up a bit more. In a way you have more support but you have more freedom at a Norwegian university where it's a bit more up to you. And there you don't write essays – you have an exam at the end. I chose to come to England because I wanted to do the journalism but first and then find out what I wanted to do – maybe an MA. Most people do a degree and then study journalism but I wanted to do it the other way round.

I'd like to spend my summer break in Norway and work, but I also want to go on holiday to Ireland.

Sook Wan Yee, 21, is a first-year pharmacy student at the University of Wales in Cardiff. She is from Malaysia. To most students at Cardiff she is known by her adopted English name of Debbie so there are no problems pronouncing her Mandarin Chinese name

I came to the UK to do an ASEC in pharmacy because the education system is very advanced and Cardiff is extremely famous for that particular subject. At first it was very lonely but after a month I got used to it because the environment here is very friendly and the British are very approachable.

Being in the UK is a good chance for me to learn to be more independent and more sociable. It will also test whether I can really hold on to my own culture. My parents were very worried when I first came here – they thought I would spend all my time in pubs. But I don't really like that aspect of British culture and I find adjusting more relaxing.

Being in the UK is a good chance for me to learn to be more independent and more sociable

I live in fully-catered university halls of residence with British students. I eat a cooked breakfast every morning and love it!

I am looking forward to actually working in a pharmacy during the summer vacation in Cardiff where I will follow the British eight-week training scheme for students.



I will study in the UK for five years then I'll return to Malaysia. I will miss the British weather, though. I like the four seasons including the winter which I find cool and soothing.

The Malaysian economy is not that good at the moment and many parents will not send their children overseas. But my parents still think studying abroad is very important and I really enjoy it here.

Interviewed by Victoria Singh Elliott and Bethan Thomas

Study UK 21

4.3.3.8 Describing and Explaining Cause and Effect in Problem-Solution Texts

Describing and Explaining Cause/Effect Relationships in Problem-Solution Texts

Theme: Our Environment—building up a better world

Organisation: Cause-effect relationships in problem-solution texts

Strategy: summarising, discussing, to practise group-decision making skills, reporting, and organising information in a problem-solution pattern

Skills: Use of cause-effect links to create coherence between ideas

Performance: Writing a broadsheet on the main environmental problems in Algeria and the rest of the world

Material: ETF Poster (Our Environment, 1993)

Greenpeace Advertisement, 1996

Issue Forum in *International Herald Tribune*, November 2000

Article in *Today in English*, March 1999 (Water Crisis)

Short texts on the environment from *Encarta Encyclopedia*, 1996

Objectives: To introduce and increase awareness of the nature and extent of environmental issues around the world; to provide an opportunity to students to evaluate prior knowledge on the topic and explore current debate and issues

Task 1: Testing students' current environmental knowledge and awareness

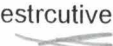
Topic 1: What do you already know?

Directions:

1. Divide the class into pairs and distribute the quiz. Give one copy to each pair of students. Explain the aims of the activity: to find out what they already know about the environment.
2. After marking the answers, volunteers take turns reporting their answers to the whole class.
3. Teacher writes their answers on the board and read off the correct one to the class after students have reported their answers.

Environmental Quiz

What do you already know about the evironment? 

1. How much of the earth's land surface is covered by forests?
 - a. 90%
 - b. 60%
 - c. 30%
 - d. 10%
2. Which three countries contain the world's largest remaining rain forest?
 - a. Brazil, Indonesia, and Zaire
 - b. Brazil, Canada, and the U.S.
 - c. Brazil, Mexico, and Panama
 - d. Austria, Brazil, and Russia
3. At what rate are the world's forests disappearing?
 - a. 100 acres a day
 - b. 100 acres an hour
 - c. 100 acres a minute
 - d. 100 acres a second
4. How many animal species are becoming threatened of extinction?
 - a. 1,000
 - b. 1,200
 - c. 1,500
 - d. 2,000
5. How many dolphins were killed in the past 30 years?
 - a. 2 million
 - b. 4 million
 - c. 6 million
 - d. 8 million
6. What is meant by the Greenhouse Effect?
 - a. A rise in hot temperature
 - b. A rise in the amount of ice and snow
 - c. A drop in temperature
 - d. A drop in rainfall
7. What is the function of the ozone layer ?
 - a. To facilitate rainfall
 - b. To facilitate the penetration of the sun's rays
 - c. To protect the earth from the destrcutive sun's rays
 - d. To control earth's temperature 
8. Air pollution is a common hazard in
 - a. America and Europe
 - b. Asia and Russia
 - c. Africa
 - d. The whole word

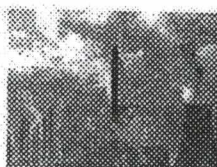
4. Class Discussion: Lead a whole-class discussion on the following questions:
 - What did you learn from the quiz?
 - What else would you like to know or you may already know?
 - Should we care about such environmental issues?
 - What should we do to protect the environment?
5. Homework Preparation: Each pair selects a specific environmental topic to carry out library research, collecting and making relevant notes for the next class (rain forests, animal extinction, pollution, ozone hole).

Task 2: Describing Cause and Effects in informational/persuasive texts

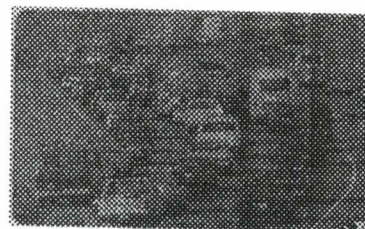
Topic 2: Our Environment (Greenpeace ad and ETF broadsheet)

Directions:

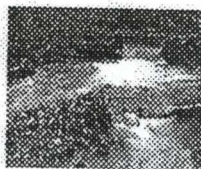
1. Teacher shows students a set of pictures illustrating a specific environmental problem, namely, pollution and solicit explanation for each type: air pollution, oil spills, polluted rivers, hydrocarbon pollution, soil erosion, and the ozone hole.
2. Ask students to make a list of causes and effects for each type of pollution, and write them down under each picture.



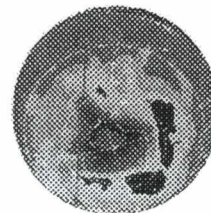
Air pollution



Oil Spills



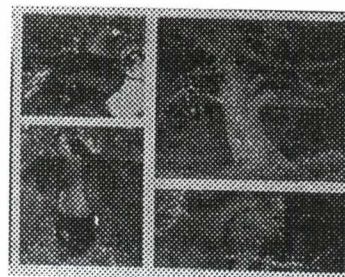
Polluted River in the United Kingdom



Hydrocarbon Pollution from Vehicle Exhaust



Soil erosion



3. **Reading and Summary Skills:** Ask students to read carefully the text to complete a table summary consisting of two main problems, the main causes, the effects, and the solutions.

Our Environment

Perhaps, the most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers and sea with dangerous and even lethal chemicals.

Air pollution is the result of man's use of lethal chemicals, and is a common hazard in both industrial and developing countries. One form of air pollution is acid rain.

Acid rain results from the release into the atmosphere of sulfur oxide and nitrogen oxide. Electrical generating plants, industrial boilers, large smelters, and automobiles are among the chief source of these emissions. The gases react with water droplets, forming a diluted mixture of sulfuric acid and nitric acid, and it is this mixture that returns to earth in the form of acid rain, mist, or snow. Pushed by wind currents, the acid rain often falls to the ground far from its point of origin.

Acid rain is killing vast stretches of forests around the world. Every species of trees is affected. Symptoms include thinning of leaves and needles, deformed growth, and, in some cases, death. Acid rain has acidified lakes and streams, rendering them unable to support fish, wildlife, plants, or insects.

Another result of man's contamination is the ozone hole. The ozone is a thin veil that protects the earth from the sun's destructive ultraviolet rays. This protective layer is being damaged by chemicals known as CFCs, which are released into the atmosphere by the daily

use of such industrial and household chemicals as refrigerators, air conditioners, foam insulation, cleaning chemicals, and food packaging. The CFCs rise into the ozone layer, attack the ozone molecules, thinning or even making a hole in the layer. This hole allows more UV rays to penetrate to the earth.

Overexposure to UV rays can increase the risk of skin cancer, weaken the immune system, and damage the retina. Not only are humans at risk; so, too, are animals, plants, and the environment in general. With the thinning of the ozone layer, UV rays can penetrate the oceans, seriously impairing the growth of plankton, an essential part of the marine-life food chain, and can reduce the yields of economically important crops such as soybeans, cotton, and rice.

This is why Greenpeace is trying to protect our fragile planet. Dumping of radioactive waste in the ocean has been stopped. Incineration at sea of dangerous toxic chemicals has been stopped. By applying political pressure, major industrial countries have agreed to reduce CFCs (Kyoto agreement). However, there is still a long way to go. Deforestation and the depletion of the ozone layer are just two major problems we are aiming to overcome; there are countless others. To carry on the work, we urgently need your help.

(adapted from Greenpeace Ad 1996 and ETF broadsheet 1993)

4. Ask students to use the notes in the table to sum up the main points in the text using the structure: problem- (cause-effect) –solution. They may start as follows.

The earth is being ravaged and its limited resources are fast disappearing due to man's alarming contamination and harmful intervention.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Task 3: Organising general and specific information in problem-solution pattern

Topic 3: Water Crisis (Article in *Today in English*, March 1999)

Directions:

1. This activity contains 4 jumbled paragraphs. The following statements are general statements (topic sentences 1,2,3, and 4) from related paragraphs. The remaining sentences from the 4 paragraphs are in jumbled order. Find the supporting statements or examples which belong to each general statement.

Note: The general statement introduces the main idea and sums up the content of a paragraph. It is often found near the beginning of a paragraph, and may be re-stated near the end of a paragraph.



Burkina Faso: a pump gives villagers access to clean water, a relatively rare commodity in the Third World

General Statement 1: A quarter of the world's population do not have access to clean water.

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

General Statement 2: Conditions in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, demonstrate the problems which more and more cities in the developing world may suffer in the next 50 years.

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

General Statement 3: The world's population will probably rise by one million every ten years for the next 50 years.

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

General Statement 4: There are ways in which the crisis could be eased.

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Scrambled Sentences:

- ☐ About 7% of the human race does not have enough water to survive at all, and scientists calculate that, with world population growth, this proportion could go up to 70% by the year 2050.
- ☐ These settlements are not connected to the city's water supply, so people have to buy water which may cost 40% of their income.
- ☐ The pressure which this will put on the water supply will be immense, and could easily lead to war.
- ☐ To date, there are only eleven signatories.
- ☐ As well as ensuring the availability of clean water, governments and international aid agencies need to make sure that the water gets to the people who really need it.
- ☐ Infections from dirty water cause 600 deaths an hour in the world.
- ☐ Much of the population lives in unofficial settlements, unrecognised by the authorities.
- ☐ Already there is tension between Egypt and Ethiopia over water which is taken from the Nile.
- ☐ The United Nations has established a convention on water, which suggest ways for different countries to share rivers and lakes.
- ☐ It is a very alarming picture.
- ☐ Often they bathe in rivers polluted with industrial effluent just to save money.
- ☐ Egypt has said that any country which increases its intake from the river will be committing an act of war.
- ☐ To come into force, this needs to be signed by 35 nations before May.
- ☐ At the same time, the world could do much more about the water that it wastes.
- ☐ During the floods that frequently hit Bangladesh, the water supply system breaks down, and typhoid and cholera claim many lives.
- ☐ Good-quality drinking water is often wasted because it is sent through holed pipes, or stored in reservoirs from which it evaporates in the hot sun.
- ☐ Syria and Turkey have a similar dispute over the River Euphrates.
- ☐ With global warming causing more extreme weather conditions, such emergencies are becoming more and more frequent all over the developing world.

2. Organise the four paragraphs into a text, using the structure, problem-(illustration)- solution.



Homework: Mini-Research: In order to further increase students' awareness of environmental problems around the world, they may be asked to carry out a mini-research in small groups of four. The task will focus on referencing (reading), note-making, and drafting following the problem-solution pattern and using cause-effect links.

Research Task Sheet: Teacher prepares a chart listing the names of four countries, including Algeria, with specific environmental problems and supplies a number of relevant documents to help the students get started. Students should be encouraged to do their own research through the web and available library references.

Research Questions:

Focus on Problem

- ☐ What are the common problems of all the listed countries?
- ☐ What is the most serious problems of each country?

Focus on Illustration:

- ☐ What are the facts and figures (statistics) that show the extent of the problems?
- ☐ What pictures can truly reflect the problems?

Focus on Solution

- ☐ What are the most convenient solutions to such problems?
- ☐ How effective are such solutions?

Class Poem on Earth Saving: Students can write a simple poem following a poem frame to express their own personal feelings and attitudes toward saving the earth. They may do this individually or in pairs.

EARTH POEM

There is no saving Planet Earth

Without (1)-----

No (1)-----

Without (2).....

There is no (2).....

Without (3).....

No (3).....

Without (4).....

There is no (4).....

Without (5).....

No (5).....

Without (6).....

There is no (6).....

Without (7).....

No (7).....

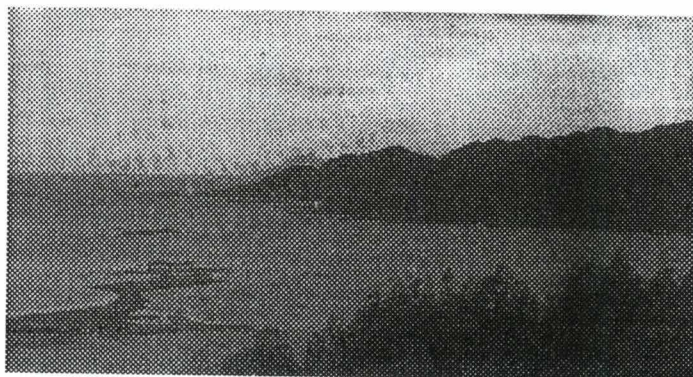
Without (8).....

There is no (8).....

Without (9).....

No (9).....

Without (10).....



(Poem frame from Leonard Nimoy's, *Come Be with Me*, 1978,
in Stempelski, 1993:8)

4.3.3.9 Providing Reasons and Explanation in Argumentative Texts**Providing explanation and reasons in argumentative texts**

Theme: Social Issues

Organisation: Argumentation

Strategy: develop research skills—designing a questionnaire and reporting findings

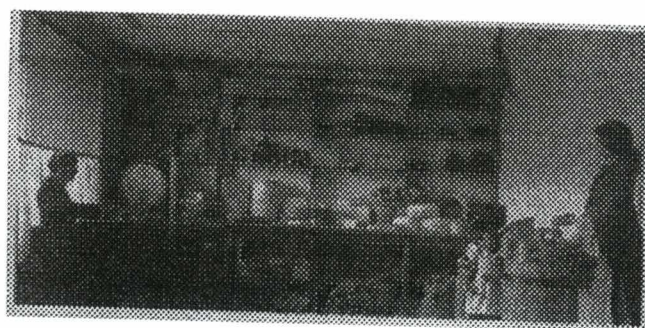
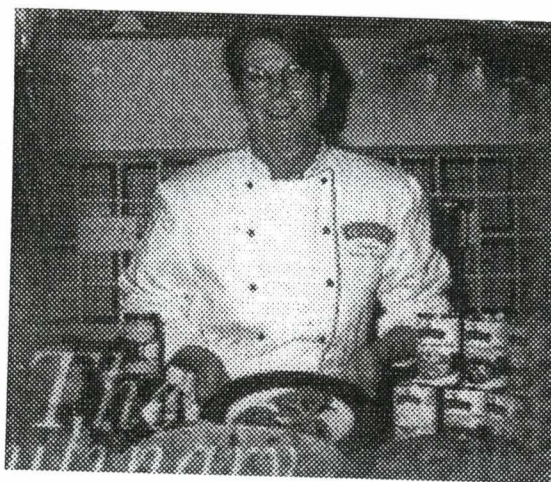
become aware of and use the discourse pattern of argumentative essay

Skills: use of language forms needed in questionnaire design and report —questions, adverbs of frequency and verbs used in noun clauses

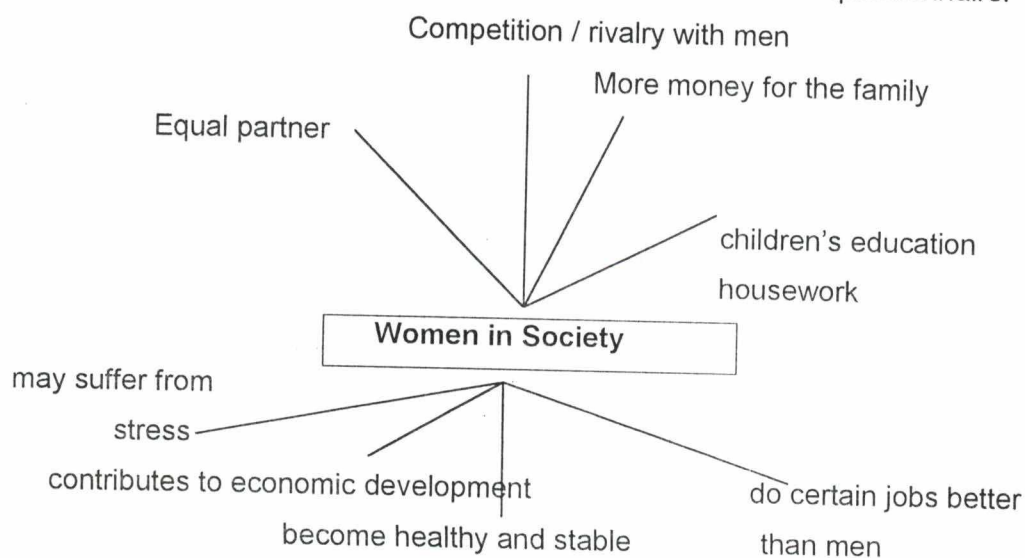
Performance: Writing an argumentative essay based on research findings

Material: Students' own generated and collected ideas, findings, and facts;

Objective: To provide students with an opportunity to carry out concrete research about a social issue of their own choice and to practise report writing and develop awareness of argumentative discourse.

Task 1: Designing a Research Questionnaire and Reporting the Findings**Topic 1: Women's Place in Today's Algerian Society—Opinion Poll****Directions:**

1. **Brainstorming: Topic Web.** Teacher tells students that they are going to design a questionnaire of their own in this unit to write a longer essay on the place of women in society today. Students use brainstorming (topic-web) to explore, generate, and discuss the type of information they wish to collect from the questionnaire.



2. 1 Students decide on the type of language forms to use in the questionnaire: questions or statements:

- ☐ Do you think women should work or stay at home? No. Yes.
☐ Women should have equal work opportunities. Agree Disagree

2.2 After making decision on the questionnaire form, each group (4) makes a list of questions or statements related to the topic-web points. Teacher monitor the group work and suggest reformulation whenever needed.

2.3 After completing the questionnaire, they use the questionnaire to interview members of the class, other groups, teachers, and friends.

Sample Questionnaire: Please, say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. Put a tick in the appropriate box.

Statements	Agree	Disagree	No idea
1. Women should have equal access to jobs.			
2. Capable women should assume high responsibilities.			
3. Women make more sensible managers than men.			
4. Certain jobs are better done by women than men.			
5. A woman is happier when she can work outside her home.			
6. A woman should stay at home to take care of her family.			
7. A woman should spend all her time educating her children.			
8. Women take more jobs than men.			
9. A woman cannot manage many workers.			
10. Work stress will affect a woman's health and family.			
Total			

3. Homework: Students write a short report on the research results and conclusions. The reports will be presented orally to the whole in the next session.

Task Sheet: Reporting forms

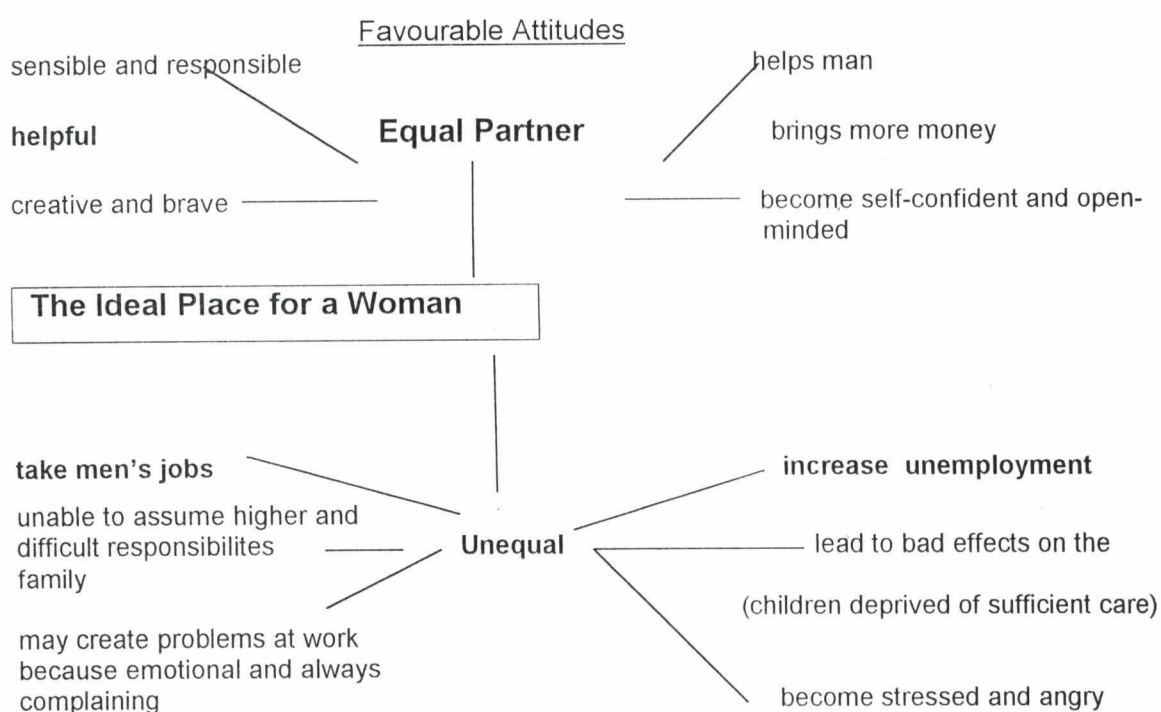
The vast majority of informants said that.....
 All respondents believed that.....
 Some of the informants, about %, thought that.....
 Most men reported that..... (nearly %)
 The majority of female respondents complained about
 Few informants (men) answered that

Task 2: Organising controversial points in an argumentative essay**Topic 2: The ideal place for women in today's Algeria**

'What is right for the young Algerian woman today: to work and follow a career or devote her energies to her family?' Discuss the arguments for and against.

Directions:**1. Planning the Content:**

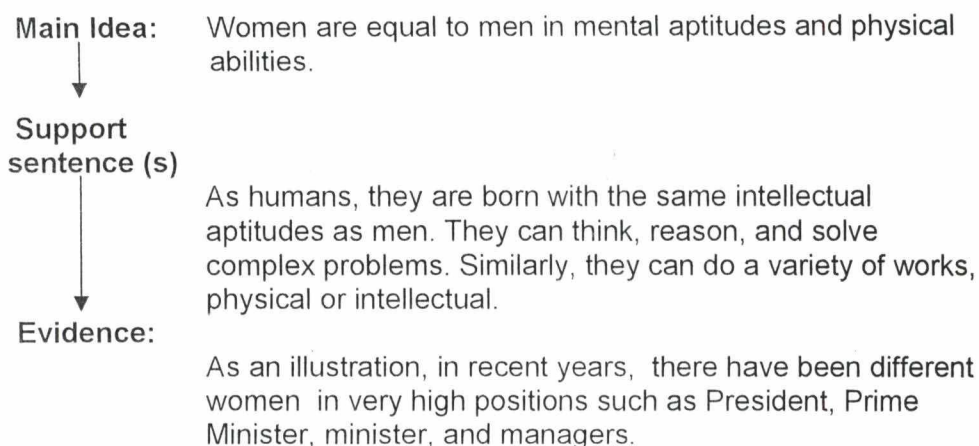
- 1.1 Topic Tree: Students use the information from the homework reports to plan information using a topic tree.



- 1.2 Organising Selected Main Points and Supporting Details: Students select two or three main points to be developed as arguments, and provide for each supporting details (examples, explanation, facts, etc.).

Main Points	Supporting Details
A woman is equal to man in competence and performance	Women are able to do different types of works.
A woman should stay at home and devote her energy to her family.	
Own opinion (conclusion)	

Teacher shows students how to develop a coherent argument by structuring each paragraph around a main idea (idea unit).



Students follow the same coherence pattern to develop each main idea to build up the whole argument.

- 1.4 **Redrafting:** After completing the three paragraphs, the students redraft the first draft into an essay, with introduction, development, and conclusion.

Own Opinion	Others' Arguments	Suggestions
In my opinion, From my own point of view It would seem to us that... I would think that... I would argue I would believe	One of the main arguments for... ...against It has been said that... ...argued that ... It can be said that... It is a fact that... It is undeniable that...	It is essential that... It is only natural that... It is fair to argue that... I would suggest... It would be a good idea if...did I would only suggest that...

Topic3: Man or Woman of the Millennium?

Directions:

1. Students, individually or in groups, select a man or woman who contributed to the humankind well-being and expose his or her main contributions .
2. The text should take the form of a formal letter to be addressed to *The Independent* as part of the contest: 'Man of the Millenium—a search for a hero that helps us to define ourselves'.

4.4 Conclusion

On the basis of assessment of the total teaching/learning context, the analysis and testing of relevant writing theories, and the experimentation of sample tasks, Chapter Four has attempted to formulate instructional plans and develop materials from which additional sequential materials and tasks can be created. The proposed material development has sought to accomplish the following aims by: (a) planning theoretically sound and appropriate objectives; (b) setting meaningful learning tasks and activities to attain objectives; (c) informing learners of what tasks they have to perform and why; (d) providing guidance on how to perform authentic tasks; (e) providing ongoing and collaborative practice in performing tasks; (f) giving positive and helpful feedback; reflecting on and evaluating the learning processes and outcomes; and (g) revising the lessons accordingly.

It was possible through ongoing professional reading to find and collect useful and relevant authentic materials that made it possible to design tasks that challenge not only the students' understanding, but also their ability to reason, make associations, generate, and organise genuine content. In addition, through the use of authentic and varied texts, it was possible to develop activities where students are asked to do some research, to make notes, to summarise, to cut, to colour, to use the internet, and to share information with each other. This reflects the fact that the difficulty with authentic texts does not lie in the text itself, but in the types of tasks the students are asked to do with the information they obtain from the text. The diversity of the chosen texts allowed us to create a variety of tasks requiring students to put to use their English and their knowledge of the world (i.e., language use). This is to say that the texts were primarily chosen because of the content and not because of the language. Most first-year students have not had enough preparation in study techniques. By teaching them reading techniques and drafting strategies, they would be able to master this vital life skill. What is more, the material provided a preparatory tool to face texts written in English that students will likely come across in their university life and perhaps in their future work and life. Learning to write honestly and frequently in a foreign language, to share work, and to respond to another's work constitutes new

behaviours for EFL students that, in spite of being difficult to achieve, are worth nurturing and developing.

Finally, the effectiveness of the proposed material depends on the extent to which the given teacher is able successfully to communicate his/her intentions, maintain student involvement and interest in the class, and carefully monitor student performance. After class, the teacher should assess the use of those materials and revise or modify them for future use. To put it simply, learning material is not simply a means but a means to an *end*—to develop as an effective learner and writer for life beyond the university.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHER AND LEARNER DEVELOPMENT : STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Learner Development

5.3 Evaluation and Improvement

5.4 New Conceptions for Teacher Education Development

5.5 New Technology and Teacher Education Development

5.6 Conclusion

Chapter Five

Learner and Teacher Development : Strategies for Change

5.1 Introduction:

In order for educational reform to be effective and lasting, teacher education development must undergo a transformation, from undergraduate training in the final year (the fourth one) to lifelong professional development. Tomorrow's teaching environment will bring new challenges and possibilities as foreign language instruction undergoes curricular changes (witness the regular changes in programmes) in order to meet the needs of an increasingly multilevel student body in a constantly changing world of new technology. For example, the spread of education technology to teachers of English nationwide and worldwide is set to expand even more rapidly in the new millennium ; increasingly, the challenge is not the availability of hardware and software , but how it can be effectively exploited to enhance the teaching and learning of English to multilevel students. Therefore, foreign language learning should no longer be seen as secondary, but as a key force in the new Algerian socio-economic orientation.

In addition, the language teacher's knowledge base should be expanded and enlarged as information expands in relevant disciplines as language acquisition theory and research, learning styles and strategies, intercultural communication, and research on classroom instruction. Tomorrow's foreign language teachers will need a more thorough grounding in the psychology of learning than is the case at present as well as a superior preparation in the linguistic and intercultural content that they teach, including the ability to use language in real life contexts, both social and professional, and to teach academic content in the language, in particular, at the university level. Good-quality education depends on teachers knowing and understanding their subject, having the skill not only to sustain

students' motivation, but also to match their teaching to the specified learning goals and to assess students' progress appropriately and positively (Cf. Chapter Four).

Moreover, language teachers should understand the social, political, historical, and economic realities of the English-speaking nations. The traditional emphasis on replication of transmitted knowledge through rote learning at the expense of critical reflection and thinking has produced language teachers who typically lack communicative abilities beyond sentence-level, rational reasoning, and have only a haphazard cultural knowledge of the foreign language.

Similarly, the teacher's pedagogical knowledge and skills are of equal importance. These include knowledge about human growth and development, learning theory, and a repertoire of strategies for establishing community in the classroom and for developing proficiency and cultural understanding in diverse learners. It requires practice in making informed decisions about classroom management and about lesson and curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation. To meet such challenges, these new teachers will need to be professionals—leaders and agents for change, responsible for their own continuing professional development and that of their colleagues. They should conduct action research, reflect on their teaching and on their students' learning, and use their knowledge and experience to make necessary changes in collaboration with others. It is clear therefore that teacher professional development must change to equip new teachers and facilitate the transition from university-based theoretical preparation (a limited number of classroom observation and theoretical courses in TEFL make up the training system) to the job situation in order to meet the new challenges. This holds especially true for Algeria where the theoretical model of teacher training (rather than education) and certification remains the major model by which language students become teachers. The challenge for research in this important area is to carefully suggest and describe cost-effective developmental activities which complement in-service training for prospective and practising teachers. Accordingly, this chapter attempts to highlight and discuss ways in which new and experienced teachers alike can develop a repertoire of skills and knowledge that enhance *teacher education development* (TED). To do so, a set of questions are asked and convenient answers brought forward :

- What is teacher education development?
- Why is *development* an important concept in teacher education ?
- What are the key features of learner development ?
- How do language teachers and learners continue to upgrade their skills and knowledge?
- How can practitioners maintain their enthusiasm and commitment ?
- What types of developmental activities and in-service training can lead to teacher development ?
- Why is it important for learners to see that their teachers are engaged in a process of critical reflection and development ?
- What is the effect of technology-enhanced environments on teacher development (e.g., virtual professional development via the internet) ?

5.2 Learner Development

It may be fair to argue that a sea change in the philosophy of learning is needed to ensure the beneficial link between teaching and learning. Such a change should start with the student by making available a university education in which learning should not be assessed in terms of the passing on of well-established knowledge, but always in terms of not yet completely solved problems. Thus, any activity that is not in this sense *problematic*, is not appropriate for a university, especially the unquestioning teaching of well-established matter. Within that definition, it is possible to make an evaluation whether a particular teaching activity is 'developmental'—that is, capable of achieving the major educational aim of *autonomy* of individuals both as members of society and learners. In other words, it is a principle of the educational system at all levels to foster autonomy, reflective learning, and learning strategies.

5.2.1 Autonomy

Autonomy means firstly a mode of learning— one in which the individual is responsible for all the decisions connected with his/her learning, and undertakes the implementation of these decisions. Secondly, it refers to an educational process leading to independent individuals able to think for themselves. Teachers can help further this important aim by, firstly, accepting that language learning and teaching is a part of the total educational process, and, secondly, recognising the potential of language learning and teaching as a facilitator of the development of autonomy. In like manner, teaching materials can help learners to take greater responsibility for their language learning, thereby gaining a sense of independence and control over their learning that will allow them to continue their development after the class has ended (Chapter Four). As Dickinson (1996:28) explains

Assuming that autonomy grows through, inter alia, individuals being given practice in taking decisions and so accepting responsibility for their own learning, through co-operating with others in groups to work on problems and to produce a mutual solution, through exchanging ideas and opinion with others, and through discovering about authority figures and autonomous individuals through reading, then there are great opportunities for the development of autonomy in language teaching/learning.

Thus, each student is a unique individual, with unique needs, and to meet those needs, each of them has to find his/her own way of learning. Students need to learn what works for them, as individuals— what they need to do, where they are in relation to their goals, and what to change. Fostering students' awareness of the learning process becomes a way of fulfilling two salient needs: paying attention to process and catering to individual needs as Wilson (2001b:10) explains:

Learner autonomy is a key feature of individualised learning and teachers need to train their students to use self-access centres in the most effective way. The emphasis on individualised learning requires an increased focus in teacher education programmes on needs analysis and syllabus design.

This can only be done through the students' own *reflection* on how they learn and what they need to do in any given moment.

5.2.2 Reflective Learning

Reflecting is a skill which has to be learnt and practised. Its promotion is nowadays considered to be an important goal in learner development:

Fostering our students' awareness of the learning process is clearly in their own interest; however, making them more active, responsible, Autonomous and positive has to be in the teacher's interest, too.
(Robles 1998:46)

When students stop for a while (by means of developmental activities) to reflect on their learning, they stand to benefit from the following gains:

- Reflection implies adopting an active role in terms of the learning process (to learn to monitor themselves helps them to become active).
- Reflection shifts responsibility from the teacher to the student, contributing to his/her autonomy.
- Reflection transforms failure into feedback by encouraging students to use mistakes as a source of information about their weaknesses and to find out ways to learn to do better next time.
- Reflection encourages students to adopt a positive mindset in relation to their learning and the language.

And last, but by no means least, there is the opportunity for personal and cultural development through the use of suitable cognitive, social, and communicative strategies.

5.2.3 Language Learning Strategies

Learning a language involves communicating with other people and therefore requires not only suitable cognitive skills (i.e., mental processes or operations concerned with memorising, inducing rules, guessing meaning and rehearsal that contribute directly to the learning of the language at a cognitive level) but also a certain social and communicative skills (social processes concerned with seeking opportunities to try out the language with other people and to get closer contact with the language, e.g., writing to a penfriend or chatting on the internet). Strategies can be a worthwhile objective if they encompass 'total development', that is, their use can be a crucial factor in the process of 'development' of 'whole persons' as self-directed agents and autonomous learners (Williams and Burden 1997:154-155). Even though evidence for the long-term effects of learner strategy training is as yet limited, learners may still stand to benefit from making explicit the most relevant strategies through *practice* (cooperative learning tasks, peer tutoring, and group discussion), *evaluation* (evaluate own strategy by means of dialogue journals), and *expansion* (develop transfer of strategies to new tasks) (O'Malley and Chamot 1990: 158). The ultimate aim is then not to be constantly thinking about one's learning, but to move towards a situation where 'the use of appropriate strategies becomes unconscious, where the skills of learning become intuitive' (Williams and Burden 1997:155).

5.2.4 Developmental Activities

The implementation of developmental activities—portfolios, projects, journals, surveys, student text-based research, and web-authored pages—is primarily intended to favour the ongoing development of learners by providing them with tools and experiences that are relevant to their current and future lives outside language classes. An activity can be qualified as 'developmental [if] it takes on a real personal value for the people involved' (Head and Taylor 1997:5).

5.2.4.1 Surveys and Projects

Directions: Topic Selection: A questionnaire is given to students at the beginning of the course consisting of a list of topics that students will rate according to their interest before selecting a specific one for a survey.

- Evaluate the topics listed below according to the following scale:
3=Very Interesting 1=Not so interesting 2= Interesting 0=Boring
- Rating Topics :Write the number of the rating next to the category.
1. _____ Crime (justice, aggressive behaviour, moral harassment,
drugs, prevention, etc.).
2. _____ Ecology (pollution, energy preservation, urban
renewal, etc.).

3. _____ Education (problems, experience versus academic requirements, etc.).
4. _____ Moral/Ethical Issues (abortion, transplants, artificial insemination, cloning, genetic modification, test-tube babies, etc.).
5. _____ Health, Fitness, Beauty (dieting, exercising, appearance, doping, advertising, etc.).
6. _____ Prejudice and stereotyping (cultural stereotyping, regional conflicts, men vs women, old vs young, etc.).
7. _____ Intelligence and Learning (nature versus nurture; beauty vs intelligence, environment vs heredity, etc.).
8. _____ Human relations (dating, marriage, divorce, etc.).
9. _____ Civic Relations (smoking in public places, caring for the elderly, respecting each other, children's rights, etc.).
10. _____ Information and Communication (the mass media, sky channels, the internet, etc.).
11. _____ Britain and the USA (cross-cultural aspects, politics, racism, technology, economy, environment, music, sports, etc.).

- ☐ Please, rank the five topics you are most interested in investigating.
- ☐ Are there any other topics that you may like to survey.
- ☐ In pairs, select two of the five topics to carry out a survey on, one for each term.

The questionnaire aims at introducing students to a set of topics that they may be interested in and preparing them for more careful selection. It shows students how exploration, selection, and then planning and organising for more formal pieces of writing are very important strategies. After selection, they have a whole term to search for relevant information, create content, modify plans, and spend time on drafting and revising. The most informative surveys or projects could be presented to local school pupils as broadsheets, maps, or reports with facts and figures (Cf. appendix 8:391).

5.2.4.2 Class Newspaper

The most enthusiastic students can be encouraged from the beginning of the course to be responsible for the class newspaper. They will work on it as a special project throughout the first term. The groups make decisions on the responsibility for the work: interviews, advice columns, jokes, quotes, fashion, books, and selected students' texts and poems. They can form a committee that will type and lay out the newspaper in the computer laboratory. Each pair or small group organises itself around a task (gathering information, drafting, revising and publishing the final draft). Students should learn to work to meet a deadline.

5.2.4.3 Individual Journals

As well as introducing students to research early on, they might be willing to participate in the *reflective research enterprise* (i.e., sharing our own reflection and exploration) by keeping journals or diaries to record their learning experience and development. As Allwright and Bailey (1994:200) argue:

Bringing about fruitful collaboration between researchers, teachers, and learners is a long-term project, and one that calls for very considerable sensitivity as well as determination.'

As such, journals offer a number of substantial benefits to both student and teacher—being by nature student-centred, they allow the former to express themselves individually, and the latter to assess student's ability to think about topics and express them freely. Genessee and Upshur (1996:121) sum up the main objectives of dialogue journals:

- They provide useful information for individualising instruction, for example, writing skills and strategies, students' experiences in and outside the classroom, learning processes, attitudes and feelings about themselves, their teachers, schooling, and their expectations, interests, and goals.
- They increase opportunities for functional communication between teacher and student: real, genuine, functional written communication.
- They give students opportunities to use language for personalised reading (genuine).

- They promote student involvement in and ownership of learning.
- They allow to get to know their students better

In order for journals to be sincere and language-use oriented, teachers should naturally avoid the temptation to provide direct evaluative feedback to students about the language form or specific writing skills. Evaluation can be used subsequently in case there is firm evidence of recurrent writing difficulties to plan writing activities of a more formal nature to individual students

5.2.4.4 Book Report: Reading and Writing about Literature

There is no doubt that reading and writing about literature provides genuine content that heightens both cultural awareness and language awareness. In fact, literature presents a huge potential as a pedagogical, cultural, and more importantly, reflective tool since reading and then writing about literature offers students situations not only to analyse but to appreciate aesthetic quality, and relate the story to their own lives.

The use of literature paves the way for self-expression because a story that unfolds line by line reflects human issues such as loss, friendship, responsibility, innocence, experience, family, school, and choice (i.e., accessible universal themes). These themes cross many cultural barriers and will likely heighten students' sensitivity and help them in their development. This is especially true for first-year students whose main assets are fresh minds, strong drives to learn and a growing awareness of the foreign language and culture. A stimulating approach to literature is the use of multi-media: reading a short story, watching a film of the story, and then writing own interpretation and appreciation.

5.2.4.5 Student Portfolios

A portfolio represents a purposeful collection of the students' best work during the academic year; it displays to students and others (parents, friends, etc.) their efforts, progress, and achievements (the inspiration comes from professionals such as photographers, painters, and architects who keep a record of their accomplishments). The portfolio could be a conventional file folder or a computer-typed document with texts, illustrations, and pictures. Students should

choose 8 or 10 texts they have written and revise them again during the last month of the year (May or June), applying the knowledge of writing they have accumulated and the cognitive changes they have undergone as they revise their selected texts. Johns (1996:132-134) considers portfolios as 'an important element in students' academic lives, an attractive document showing where they have been and where they may be going. ' Johns (op.cit) recommends two types of portfolios: one a selection of favourite reading texts and the other for own writing.

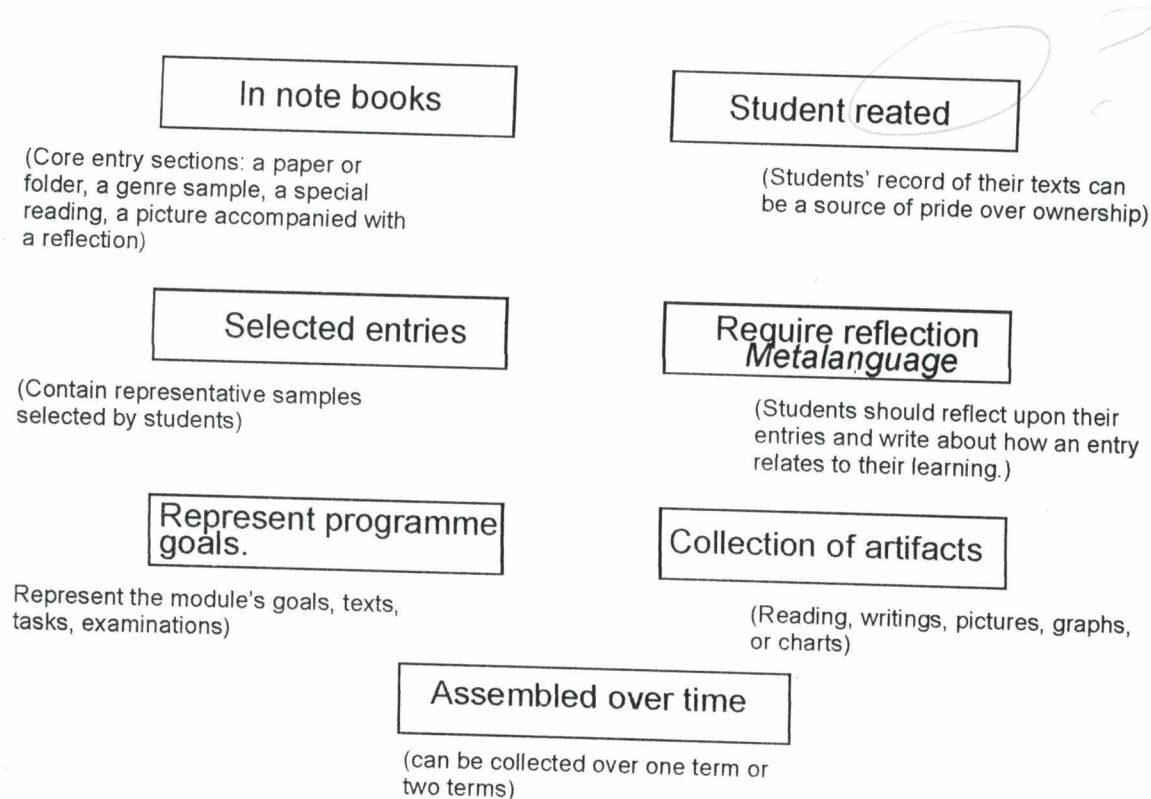
The primary value of portfolios lies in the provision of a continuous record of students' writing progress. Besides, portfolios enhance student involvement in and ownership of their own learning. This arises from the opportunities they afford students to become actively involved in monitoring their learning. The success of portfolios depends on the students' adherence to and awareness of their benefits as well as the teachers' conscientious efforts to use portfolios as a collaborative learning strategy and assessment process. That is why, they should be used *actively* and *interactively*, and they should be an integral aspect of instructional planning. As with any innovation, the implementation of portfolios takes time and a willingness to explore alternatives before the optimal *strategy* emerges. Students will clearly need guidance and negotiation to set up portfolios.

Genesse and Upshur (1996:103-104) suggest the following guidelines to promote students' involvement in learning:

- Students choose the pieces of writing/reading to be included in their portfolios;
- Negotiation with students determine how the work will be assessed;
- Encouraging students to review and share their portfolios with other students ;
- Students should be taught how to provide positive, constructive feedback to one another ;
- Ensure that discussions of student portfolio are positive, collaborative, and under the control of the students ;

- Always adopt a positive, collaborative, and supportive attitude.

Johns (1997:132- 134) recommends two types of portfolios: one a selection of favourite reading texts and the other for own writing:



A Reading Portfolio

- Two texts from the same genre
 - Two textbook entries
 - Summaries
 - A reader's choice
 - A difficult (or easy) reading
- Each entry is followed by reflection

A Writing Portfolio

- A timed piece: argumentative, expository, or reflective
- A research-based project
- A summary
- A writer's choice
- Overall reflection

Each entry is followed by reflection

Diagram 5.1: Literacy Portfolios Basic Features (Based on Johns 1997:149)

To prepare students to reflect on the works they intend to include in their portfolios (writing assignments, book reviews, or a project), the following questionnaire may be provided at the beginning of the course:

- What makes this a good or an interesting project ?
- What is the most interesting part of this project ?
- What was the most difficult part of this project ?
- What did you learn from doing this project ?
- What skills did you practise when doing this project ?
- How is this project better than the other ones ?
- What resources did you use to complete this project ?
- How would you make this project better ?

Such reflective questions encourage students to discuss and analyse through their reflections, their successes, and problems in approaching different tasks (expansion strategy).

5.2.4.6 Reflective Practice : Student Text-Based Research

At an advanced level, developing student-writer should be given opportunities to go beyond mere accomplishment of a writing assignment, into reformulation, negotiation, and creation.

1. Critical Analysis of Specific Genres (essays, encyclopedias): one or more samples from the same genre should be collected in order to compare them.
 - Identifying specific and general vocabulary : students can work in groups to identify those words in the texts that may be specific ;
 - Exploring rhetorical features : to discover how information is organised according to audience, purpose, and topic.
 - Analysing encyclopedia entries : these entries are commonly consulted by students. The analysis involves identification of the labels of the entries, their particular organisation, and the writers and likely readers of these texts ;

- Developing hypotheses about who wrote the text, when and where, and for whom the texts are written are important if students are to process texts intelligently. (Johns 1997:99).
- 2. Research Processing Strategies : Reflective Learning
 - Reading. Processing and comprehending a text with new, difficult information and vocabulary in a foreign language is considerably difficult. It can be useful for students to study how other expert readers process texts for different purposes : goals for reading a particular text, the difference between reading this text and another, the strategies used, note-taking, using a dictionary to look up words,...

With this processing research should come analysis and reflection. For example, students can write what they have discovered about expert text processing and compare it with their own experiences with processing. If students conduct research and reflect upon these factors and develop a repertoire of their own processing strategies, they will be able to face future reading tasks with more confidence.

- Writing. The aim of asking students to research their approaches to writing tasks is to encourage them to reflect upon their goals for writing and their strategies for accomplishing a task. Questions like the following will help them to reflect upon their writing processes :

How do you prepare to write ?

Where and when do you write ?

How do you improve your own writing ?

Do you use the same preparation for writing ?

A written reflection is one way for students to know their own approach to writing. Students need to develop a sense of the complexities of learning : texts are varied and influenced by a set of factors, and text processing will change for a number of reasons. Such research projects provide some of the most important ways to prepare students for 'lifelong literacy' (Johns 1997 :113) and equip them with vital life academic skills (to be able to think constructively, argue coherently, judge dispassionately, and tackle problems effectively).

5.2.4.7 Reading Peer Writing

Students can read their own authentic writing and the writing of others in the class. Writing about their reading provides students with ways to respond to writing, and eventually, to elaborate, clarify, and illustrate their responses by references to associations and prior knowledge. Asking students to reread their own writing enables them to invent, plan, and draft. Less experienced writers should be taught the strategies of rereading and given opportunities to reread their drafts so that they can re-establish contact with the purpose of the paper. Moreover, students should have multiple opportunities to read the writing of peers and respond to that writing, sharing relevant feelings and attitudes, interpreting, questioning, and evaluating.

Because student writing is inherently interesting to student writers, students are providing their own reality, their own authenticity, the classroom has become not only a 'community but a real-world community' (Reid 1993). As students work with authentic texts, reading and analysing ideas, structure and style, and also analysing purpose and audience, they develop an *awareness of and respect for* other texts and authors.

5.2.4.8 Students Own Book— It is Our Book. We Wrote It!

As the highlight of the instructional course, every student can join classmates to write REAL books. Just imagine the excitement when the teacher tells his/her students that they will soon see their words in the pages of a book, with a title, the department name, and the words identifying the students as the authors of the book. The teacher can select any topic, assigning fact or fiction, short first-person essays, research/survey reports, poetry, or previously written material. Student write or enter their material on computers in the language lab; the teacher or group of teachers do the necessary editing, and then publish the written material as a book. This idea is not a teacher's 'wishful thinking', but an educational competition sponsored by www.educationworld.com and actually applied in primary and secondary schools worldwide with great success; so why not apply it to develop literacy in our own context.

5.2.4.9 Student-Authored Web Pages—promoting writing and computer literacy skills through electronic magazines

Education Technology is increasingly available to teachers of English in universities. It is fair to admit that Algeria has recognised the need to equip foreign-language departments with computer labs and universities with internet links (this is the case of our own context). Increasingly, the challenge is not the availability of hardware and associated software, but how it can be effectively exploited to enhance the teaching and learning of English. EFL students worldwide are designing and exchanging electronic documents via the World Wide Web (www). Does such an enterprise seem unlikely for the Algerian students or is it just another teacher's pipe dream? It may not be as farfetched as some might believe. With the availability of a computer lab and Internet access, our students, too, can engage in a wide range of Web publication projects. In so doing, the students' experience of the internet will not be confined only to just surfing websites and chatting. What is more, students can create websites and have fun, and teachers can enrich and develop the curriculum further.

Interested students, with the help of a computer specialist, can for instance produce a web magazine as a source of information on their university (e.g., Tlemcen University Online) and the English Department (studies, students, etc.). The task of researching information about the university and its host city would also help the students to develop concrete research and writing skills...and provide worldwide audience for their writing (Bicknell 1999:22)

5.3 Evaluation and Improvement: Roles and Procedures

Text improvement and writing evaluation constitute an essential part of the teaching/learning process. Mere exposure to writing conventions and practices does not necessarily lead to the improvement of student writing. In this light, the remaining of this chapter considers a range of possible responses to student writing, and the different pedagogical objectives which motivate them. It also discusses the different roles that teachers can take on when evaluating texts. Responding to and evaluating student writing is itself an ongoing process that parallels the processes of content generating, drafting

and revising. It is not a *single act* as the majority of teachers have a tendency to assume.

5.3.4 Teacher Roles

The teacher's role as evaluator starts well before the finished student drafts are given for evaluation. Responsibility begins before the writing is assigned, with writing tasks that are thoughtfully designed, clearly defined, and precisely expressed for the students. Writing assignments specify the objectives, priorities, and the structure of a writing course; they reflect some of the assumptions held by the teacher—how an assignment fits into the objectives of the class syllabus, the sequence of lessons, and the overall curriculum.

Teachers should also form an approach to error in student writing that strikes a balance between accuracy and content, without necessarily overburdening or inhibiting the student. The feedback should be clear, adequately describe the problem, and suggest methods of correction. Besides, teachers planning their evaluation procedures will choose among a variety of response forms (i.e., having a repertoire of evaluation strategies) that depend on a number of variables:

- The expectations of students from prior learning experiences;
- The gravity of certain errors in obstructing communication;
- Assessing students' varying needs (form, discourse, content); and
- The criteria set for a particular piece of writing.

Similarly, because writing tasks are in some or another form of testing, they should provide students with a kind of diagnosis of the task's strengths and weaknesses, the motivation to revise and improve their writing, and a reward for hard work (Brown 1992).

To be effective, teacher responses need to be, therefore, comprehensible to the student, easily implemented, and to lead to text improvement. To achieve these results, they should be genuine and timely, that is, taking place in a *formative* way (immediate intervention is discrete parts of the text) or *summative* (a response that is an overview of more

general considerations in a text). In both cases, the feedback should be detailed enough to allow students to act and take responsibility for the text improvement (Reid, 1993). Students do want clear, unambiguous feedback on the language they have used; they want to know if they are right or wrong so that they can learn from their mistakes. This can apply equally to sentence-level tasks, and to quite extensive pieces of writing where the teacher and the student have agreed that the main purpose is to practise the foreign language in a controlled way.

However, this approach is not likely to be appropriate for writing is such a complex, multi-faceted activity that teachers have to respond to learners' many needs by taking a variety of *roles* — not simply that of judging whether a sentence is correct/right or incorrect/wrong. In this light, four main roles have been found to result in effective evaluation: audience, assistant, evaluator, and examiner (Raimes, 1983; Hedge, 1988; Reid, 1993; Brown, 1994; Tribble, 1996; Genesee and Upshur, 1996). A teacher can select one specific role as respondent:

- Audience: the teacher assumes the same type of responsibility and concerns as any reader. He/she becomes the audience in order to ask questions about the purpose of the text, the ideas, feelings, or perceptions that the writer tried to communicate through the writing process (Is the text interesting? Is it easy to understand? Is the argument logical enough to follow? Is the evidence convincing?).
- Assistant: the teacher helps the student render the text as effective as possible for its planned purpose. He/she becomes a consultant by sending the student back to the drafting process and helping by suggesting the most convenient way of writing the text (This paragraph needs more illustration; refer to background reading to collect more convincing information; advise about the appropriate language, genre, subject-matter) and asking).
- Evaluator: the teacher comments on the student's overall performance, including strengths and weaknesses. He /she becomes a describer of the main discourse features and content organisation (There are too many short sentences in this paragraph; why not combine some in reduced clauses; the text type is not very clear,...).

□ Examiner: the teacher provides an objective assessment of how well a student can write within the constraints of a formal examination, or that of a longer project or portfolio that has been completed over a period of time. He/she becomes a neutral examiner who applies clear marking criteria to give a mark that shows what the student writer can and cannot do as a writer.

Each of these roles can be maximally effective in enabling students to improve only if it provides constructive timely feedback which can be channelled into the processes of redrafting the ongoing work and editing the final product.

Perhaps the most promising role, the one that fits well with the proposed tasks, is that of assistant/consultant because it makes use of *learner development* techniques such as conferencing, peer editing, reformulating, and group writing. These evaluation procedures adopt a positive approach to writing—one which indicates to students how they are developing as writers and stresses both strengths and weaknesses. Students need positive feedback on the way their writing is improving, either through encouraging comments at the end of a text through a grade (A, B, C,D). Brown (1994:340-341) suggests the following helpful guidelines for responding to students' writing.

First Draft

- Resist the temptation to treat minor grammatical errors;
- Resist the temptation to rewrite a student's sentences;
- Comment wholistically, in terms of the clarity of the overall discourse;
- Comment on the introductory paragraph;
- Comment on features that appear to be irrelevant to the topic;
- Question clearly inadequate word choices and awkward expression within those paragraphs/sentences that are relevant to the topic.

Second Draft

- Minor grammatical and mechanical errors should be indicated, but not corrected for the student;
- Check cohesive devices within and across paragraphs;
- In factual writing, comment on documentation, citing sources, evidence, and other support;
- Comment on the adequacy and strength of the conclusion; and
- Make explicit the need for a clear statement of the topic or thesis.

It may be added to this list of suggestions, the need to make the concept and practice of revision as close as possible to the concept and principle of planning. Another major issue that significantly affects the effectiveness of the evaluation approach is the application of a consistent and explicit marking policy throughout the Department or concerned institution. This holds true when students are taught by different teachers having different, if not conflicting, evaluation assumptions and practices. According to Hedge (1988:150), the key to such a thorny problem is to agree on a marking policy and a marking code to be used by all teachers through staff meetings. The following schemes could be proposed for discussion in such meetings and for eventual classroom research action so as to arrive at a consensus. After trial, the Department Staff (reading/writing teachers) might consider the language that seeks to quantify the evaluating process each, then modify and construct language of their own, and share the results with students.

Grading Criteria	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Inadequate	Weak
<u>Discourse/content</u>					
Development Mode					
Genuine Content					
Coherence of ideas					
Audience Awareness					
<u>Writing Micro-skills</u>					
Lexical variety					
Sentence Accuracy					
Syntactic complexity					
Paragraphing					
Spelling					
Punctuation					
Presentation					

Figure 5.1 EFL Writing Evaluation Scheme (adapted from Hedge 1988:148)

Introduction	Informative title and lead-in	1	2	3	4	5
	Clear thesis statement	1	2	3	4	5
TOTAL _____ (out of 10)						
Support	Specific examples and details	4	8	12	16	20
	Connections between ideas	2	4	6	8	10
TOTAL _____ (out of 30)						
Organisation	Transitions	2	4	6	8	10
	Paragraph unity and coherence	2	4	6	8	10
TOTAL _____ (out of 20)						
Style	Sentence structure	1	2	3	4	5
	Vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
	Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
	Mechanics	1	2	3	4	5
Rhetorical Stance						
	Purpose clear throughout	2	4	6	8	10
	Audience expectations met	2	4	6	8	10
TOTAL _____ (out of 20)						
Grades: A=90-100 B=80-90 C=70-80 D=60-70 F=below 60						

Figure 5.2 Sample Analytic Rubric

Grades: A=90-100 B=80-90 C=70-80 D=60-70 F=below 60

Figure 5.2 Sample Analytic Scale (H.Jacobs et al., 1981 in Genesee and Upshur 1996)

Attendance and satisfactory participation at scheduled conference	10%
Attendance and satisfactory participation in peer review groups	10%
Adequate pre-writing and drafting, turned in with final draft	10%
Final draft:	
Clear purpose and audience	10%
Clear overall organisation	10%
Clear inner paragraph organisation	10%
Sufficient development in each paragraph	10%
Coherence and cohesion techniques	10%
Correct grammar	10%
Well-structured sentences	10%
TOTAL	100%

Figure 5.3 Sample Grading Criteria (Adapted from Larson 1986:111 in Reid 1993:246)

As well as selecting appropriate grading criteria, teachers can use cover sheets as a first page for each student paper. Such a sheet is beneficial for both the teacher and student. It permits the former to add further comments and to adhere to the criteria established on the sheet and given to students as they draft their texts. It serves as a revision checklist and a resource for conference for the latter.

Sample Cover Sheet

Name _____ Date _____		
Essay _____		
Strengths and Problem Areas	Strengths	Problems Areas
Purpose and audience		
Focus		
Development		
Organisation		
Grammar and Sentence Structure		
Suggestions for revision:		
Writer's plans for revision:		

Figure 5.4: Sample cover sheet

The above schemes reflect an approach to evaluation that consists of multiple criteria which view the text as being the result of a complex host of different skills and knowledge. What is more, they attempt to be fair since students know the basis on which their work is being assessed. The evaluation and marking schedules can be printed as a public document made available in the Department library so that each student can consult it at the beginning of the academic year. Ultimately, the basis of effective evaluation lies in the formulation of a clear approach and explicit criteria that complement the selected teaching approach.

5.3.5 Draft Improvement Procedures: Sample Activities

The key to successful draft improvement procedures to student writing is the availability of different audiences—students, teacher, and peers play important and complementary roles in the response process. The following are some of the activities that could be used to encourage students to improve their own drafts through conferencing between teacher and student, reformulation, peer review groups responding to each other's writing, and class analysis of selected drafts.

5.3.5.1 Conferencing

The writing conference is a face-to-face conversation between the teacher and the student, taking place outside the classroom. It is a negotiated teaching event, an opportunity to discuss and respond to the student's individual needs. There are several reasons for implementing conferences, notably, selection of a topic and revision of work in progress. Conferencing clearly illustrates a positive approach towards writing since the teacher acts as a supervisor, encouraging the student to think about his/her writing as work in progress, how to be organised, reformulated, and improved. By the end of the conference, the student should have agreed on a plan of action to improve the current draft. To be effective, the teacher should carefully organise the conference sessions and explain their purposes by providing planning worksheets beforehand. Depending on the context, conferences can be limited to individual students or to small groups of students.

Like dissertation supervision, conferences give students opportunities to use language with teachers in ways that rarely occur during class time. In addition, when used interactively, they can serve as a basis for individualising instruction (Dickinson, 1997) and modifying instructional plans to be better attuned to students' needs; hence, the 'shift of emphasis from students as objects of evaluation to agents of evaluation' (Genesee and Upshur, 1996:116) by promoting allowing students:

- to be self-reflective;
- to assume greater responsibility for their own learning;
- to assume ownership of learning (like writing a dissertation);
- to recognise and enjoy their accomplishments;
- to communicate orally in one-to-one conversations about [learning matters] in ways that are important to them. (op.cit. 109).

It is their focus on work in progress (drafting) that makes conferences quite different from other types of teacher evaluation procedures and , therefore, distinctly relevant to instructional planning.

To facilitate discussion and ensure tangible results, conferences should be well prepared in advance. The preparation consists in the use of clear protocol (a set of questions to be asked) and worksheets such as the following:

Sample 1: Teacher-Led Conference

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Tell me about your writing. | How does it show improvement from previous texts? |
| ☐ Can you show me the improvement? | Did you have any difficulty with this piece of work? |
| ☐ Can you show me where you have difficulty? What is the part you like best. | |
| ☐ Does it say what you want it to say. | Where does your story take place? |
| ☐ What do you mean by '.....'? | I don't understand the part about..... |
| ☐ How could the order of your ideas be changed to be clearer? | |
| ☐ Does your beginning encourage the reader to read on? Explain why? | |
| ☐ Do you like the ending? Could it be improved? | |
| ☐ Are there things about this work that you would like to improve? | |

Figure 5.5 Sample Writing Conference Protocol (Sources: S. Schwartz (1987) in Genesee and Upshur 1996)

Sample2: Student-Led ConferenceFirst Conference

1. Topic for my essay: _____
2. Intended purpose of my essay: _____
3. Intended audience for my essay: _____
4. Pre-writing about my topic: _____

Draft Conference

1. In group work, my peers asked about the following questions about my topic: _____
2. They made the following suggestions: _____
3. They identified the following problems with my draft: _____

Revising Plan Conference

1. According to my analysis, the best part of my essay was: _____
2. According to you (teacher): the strengths and weaknesses can be listed as: _____
3. Based on your feedback, this is my revision plan: _____

Figure 5.6 Conference-Planning Worksheet (Source: Reid 1993)

Sample3: Metacognitive Conference (factual writing)

Can you please answer 3 or 4 of the following questions.

1. What I hope most readers will not notice.
2. A risk I took when I wrote this text.
3. How the audience I chose most influenced me.
4. How my background reading and note-making helped me to generate genuine content.
5. what I learned about choosing this topic.
6. What I learned about reading other students' drafts.
7. Writing strategy that I rejected, and why?
8. How I experimented with vocabulary and syntax.
9. What I really want the teacher to look for is...

Figure 5.7 Meta-cognitive Conference

While student-teacher conferences have been used in dissertation supervision with advanced students by a number of EFL lecturers and researchers, not all teachers may be willing to use conferencing. This reluctance may be due to structuring which may take excessive amounts of time, to students' own learning styles which may prevent advice-seeking on an individual basis (perhaps, it is cultural), or teachers themselves may be less comfortable with individual conferencing than others. It may also be the case that the more proficient students (those who need less help) will be more enthusiastic about conferencing and draft improvement. In any case, it is up to the teacher to make careful decision on the relevance and effectiveness of conferencing as an evaluation procedure for his/her students and to remember that cognitive change and development takes time. However, the cognitive and learning benefits are so tangible that even leery teachers should allocate at least one session a term for brief one-to-one conferences with each student in the class.

5.3.5.2 Draft Reformulation

Draft reformulation is another technique that promotes a positive approach towards student writing. It provides ongoing feedback to students after a first draft has been written. This technique, also called 'cumulative improvement', was first used in ESP courses with Arab students by Clive Holes (1983), and has since been developed into an instructional strategy by Andrew Cohen (1983) and Allwright et al. (1988). The teacher explains what the reformulation procedure will entail, and then students and teacher agree on a topic and students prepare a first draft. The teacher selects a draft among the different drafts which displays clear problems that other students will benefit from studying and analysing:

**Unless a student can learn to analyse for himself why a text is deviant, there is little reason to think he will ever achieve any lasting improvement, however much superficial 'correction' he gets from his teacher.
(Holes 1983:241)**

To ensure individual analysis and help preserve anonymity, the text can be retyped. The next step is to have the class suggests improvement at different levels (lexico-grammatical, rhetorical, and discourse) without changing its content

and purpose. The teacher can contribute by reformulating the same text. In this way, the students have available three drafts: the original, the reformulated draft, and the teacher's. According to Hedge (1988:159-60), the benefits of reformulation are so tangible and the advantages so substantial that the technique is clearly worth implementing:

It enables students to see a writer model with which to compare their own attempts. It encourages students to discuss issues concerning organisation, the development of ideas, the writer's sense of audience, and appropriate style. These important issues are often neglected in correction activities.

5.3.5.3 Student-Student Responses and Peer Editing

To give students opportunities to share their strategies and their work, teachers can create non-teacher audiences for their students: class newspapers, pen pals, web-chat, electronic mail exchanges, and particularly peer editing groups. If students are to master writing as language use and understand its interactive nature, they must not only write regularly but also regularly try out their drafts and get feedback from multiple readers. Such feedback allows student writers to adopt the perspectives of their audiences and to review their writing in terms of how their readers may react to or comprehend their text.

Classroom-based student responses include writers reading aloud from their drafts, and class members listening and responding; writing tentative topic sentences or thesis statements on the board, and the class responding; interviewing each other about topic ideas, plans, and revision techniques; and students identifying and making explicit metadiscourse features of their texts. In peer editing, students work together to develop drafts before the teacher sees them. They need to recognise the roles that they are taking on in responding to texts that have been written by fellow students. Through regular practice, they become more confident and begin to see the benefits of this novel way of working. Students are always ready to recognise that their peers can see problems in their texts more easily than they can themselves. White and Arndt (1991:130) suggest a useful example of a cycle of activities for peer editing:

Materials: Students' own drafts

Procedure: Have students work with a partner, and get each to read what the

other has drafted so far. They should make notes of places in their partner's drafts:

- ☐ that they particularly liked or enjoyed;
- ☐ that they particularly disliked or found unnecessary;
- ☐ that they found unclear;
- ☐ that they would like to know more about.
- ☐ Lastly, they should summarise their partner's draft, indicating the main ideas and purpose.

As well as peer response groups, other additional readers of student writing should be sought. Using multiple audiences for feedback offers three advantages: (a) students are led to spend more time working with their writing; (b) they become aware that different readers have different responses; and they work on their oral skills as well as their writing skills. Among the possibilities for multiple audience response is the creation of a Department or University Writing Centre to provide assistance to students who need to improve or simply share their writing. The Writing Centre should be staffed with writing teachers, advanced students and professionals whose job it is to advise and encourage inexperienced writers.

The above evaluation procedures pinpoint the fact that students need and deserve responses to their writing during the process itself, with negotiation and discussion of initial mental plans and ideas for writing and then comments (teacher, peer, own) on student writing that will enable and empower the writer to communicate more effectively and genuinely. Such feedback should be positive and informative to help the student writer to complete the task of writing, to feel good about what he/she has done and be aware he /she can always improve what has not been effectively.

5.4 New Conceptions for Teacher Education Development

The rationale behind *teacher education development* lies in considering *development* as a process of change and growth which is motivated by teachers' own questioning of who they are and what they do, rather than by any external training programme or policy, i.e. a bottom-up change. The objectives are as follows :

- To promote the role of reflection, self-enquiry, and self-evaluation as a means of professional development ;
- To create a community of reflective practitioners among EFL teachers within and across institutions ;
- To prepare such teachers to be models of reflective teaching and practice for the future teachers they impact ; and
- To select activities which make it possible to explore beliefs and practices within a reflective framework applicable to the Algerian educational context.
- To introduce an educational component in the English Language Degree curriculum

In order to be of greater value to teachers and students, development must be reconceptualised. Rather than exclusively relying on methodology teaching and theory transmission, a more reflective and holistic view of the development of a teacher from novice to advanced practitioner is needed. Similarly, in order to establish a rich learning environment for teachers throughout their careers, a number of novel concepts must be introduced to reflect the new paradigm shifts.

The recent shifts can be clearly seen in 'a movement away from " methods" and other "external" or "top down" views of teaching toward an approach that seeks to understand teaching in its own terms' (Richards, 1996 :ix). This type of orientation is based on the practitioners themselves and the actual teaching processes. The main objective is to gain a better understanding of these processes by engaging into an exploration with teachers of what they do and why they do it in order to arrive at the development of a 'bottom-up' or an 'internal' view

of teaching. Such a conception of development, called differently 'reflective teaching' (Richards and Freeman 1996), 'exploratory teaching' (Allwright and Bailey 1994), and 'teacher development' (Head and Taylor 1997) is essentially teacher-based :¹

[It] draws on the teacher's own inner resource for change. It is centred on personal awareness of the possibilities for change, and of what influences the change process. It builds on the past, because recognising how past experiences have or have not been developmental helps identify opportunities for change in the present and future. It also draws on the present, in encouraging a fuller awareness of the kind of teacher you are now and of other people's responses to you. It is a *self-reflective process*, because it is through questioning old habits that alternative ways of being and doing are able to emerge.

(Head and Taylor 1997 :1)

The conception of TED as a reflective process is then one in which every aspect and stage of teacher education experience becomes open to critical examination and reconsideration. It asks teachers to observe themselves, collect data about their own classrooms and their roles, and to use the data as a basis for self-evaluation, and for change. In other words, TED encourages teachers to benefit from the procedures of classroom research and self-reflection to understand better themselves and what is happening in their own classrooms in order to gain a renewed sense of purpose and direction :

As an individual, the teacher is the only one who knows where he begins his professional development and thus where he needs to go. The teacher knows best what steps need to be taken to become a better language teacher, researcher, or teacher educator.

(Clair 1998 :465)

This means that the teachers themselves decide what they are going to do. They are in charge. It seems that an activity is likely not to be developmental unless it takes a real personal value for the people involved.

Accordingly, the main features of teacher education development can be enumerated as follows :

- It is about dealing with the needs, wants, and lacks of the individual teacher in ways that suit that individual : the needs may range from confidence-building to language awareness or technical expertise.
- Much of TED is seen as relating to new experiences, new challenges and the opportunity for teachers to broaden their repertoire and take on new responsibilities and challenges. This helps them to fight a feeling of jadedness and also to develop their careers as well as themselves.
- TED is not just to do with language teaching or even teaching :it is also about language development, computing, cultural broadening, etc.
- TED needs to be 'bottom-up' ; otherwise, it may lose its essence—own self-reflection and assessment. This does not mean that caring and competent teacher-trainers have no role ; in contrast, they are vital to the success of each TED experience through counselling and collaboration.
- Self-reflection and enquiry can be an important source of learning about one's teaching : at the university level, the only source of feedback comes from the students, whose comments may not be fully reliable. Also, putting aside experts' opinions, theories, or external sources of knowledge (top-down views), teachers can examine and assess their own teaching through classroom research.

The following is a summary of suggestions concerning the new conceptions and implications for teacher education development , which may be relevant to the Algerian educational context.

□ From **deficit-based to competency-based**, approaches in which teachers' knowledge, skills, and experiences are considered assets : teachers will be able to shift away from dependency on external sources for the solution to their problems and toward professional growth and self-reliance in instructional decision making. Classroom research action and well-designed case studies of learning to teach will allow prospective teachers to learn from and value the experiences of others (i.e., they become training instruments) (Smylie and Conyers, 1991).

□ From **replication to critical reflection**, in which practising teachers focus less on the transfer of knowledge and more on analytical and reflective learning : reflection will sharpen teachers' skills in problem solving, determining students' needs, and conducting action research that is designed to develop new knowledge and skills related specifically to their teaching contexts and classrooms. Good-quality teaching involves an extensive knowledge base and an informed, resourceful teacher. A teacher with extensive knowledge base and a deeper understanding of the complex nature of teaching can make appropriate judgements and decisions in teaching (Richards and Lockhart, 1996).

□ From **external assessment to self-inquiry**, in which teachers themselves learn about their own teaching : through reflection, teachers can effectively examine and assess their teaching practices by collecting classroom data, proposing initiatives, and selecting strategies to achieve them. Developmental activities, especially, journals and portfolios, allow teachers to understand their own teaching strengths and weaknesses and to examine their beliefs, knowledge, and experiences over time.

□ From **learning separately to learning together**, in which practising teachers are jointly responsible for their work in classrooms, and their experiences are perceived as professional resources : learning/teaching contexts should be reorganised to be places for teachers to learn as well as to teach. This paradigm shift solves one of the most pervasive conditions of classroom teachers – *isolation*, or the inability to learn and to communicate with colleagues in the same institution. Only through selective practices like peer observation, peer feedback, and creating opportunities to exchange



pedagogical knowledge and ideas, could teachers ensure their professional growth, make classroom teaching visible, and avoid isolation.

- From **theoretical recommendation to practical collaboration**, in which caring outstanding experienced teachers explain effective practices, share procedures and materials, and help solve problems with less experienced or novice teachers: Given their long experience and wisdom, such senior teachers can promote reflection and foster the norms of collaboration and shared inquiry within an institution or across a set of institutions.

- From **centralisation to decentralisation**, in which programmes and curriculum goals are determined by the specific learning/teaching institution: Such a shift makes room for more convenient tailored programmes and professional development activities according to needs assessment in the institution itself.

- From **emergency reaction to a vision-oriented education**, in which the core educational values are clarified, a sense of purpose and mission is specified, new strategies and new ways of thinking and doing are introduced in order to define the way forward.

These new concepts and ensuing implications clearly call for the provision of an opportunity to learn within a teacher's day-to-day work and to implement innovations and change. In order to ensure effective development, teachers need also the opportunity to have a breathing space, time to consider fresh ideas, an escape from downward spiral of weekly routine. 'Growth implies space to grow into' (Head and Taylor, 1997). Ways should be considered to help teachers escape the boredom of routine by bringing them into touch with fresh personal and professional influences.

5.4.1 Practical Suggestions for Initiating Cooperative Development

Depending on their own specific perceived needs and objectives, teachers within a given language institution can and should agree on and develop strategies for intervention or change, making decisions on the relevance and efficiency of each developmental procedure. In their role as researchers and

practitioners of their own context with the aim of improving the teaching/learning situation of the English language, they need to come together to discuss some procedural issues and take some decisions that will guide them in the process of development and improvement. This is the basis of *healthy* development and collaboration within an institution and the most efficient means to serve their common aim. By *healthy* it is meant '*cooperative development*' (Edge, 1992) — the teachers' genuine caring and sharing of views and experiences. Working with colleagues provides the power to accomplish things and to convert one's vision into reality. Within such a framework of developmental activities and the establishment of an Action Research Workshop, teachers can collectively decide WHAT they should do, HOW, and WHY at this stage of their professional development.

The issues to be raised and discussed need to stem from practical classroom experiences for 'each lesson and each classroom constitute practical events that the teacher [s] can use to reflect on and develop an in-depth understanding of teaching' (Richards and Lockhart, 1996 :6). That is to say, classroom lessons and experiences represent momentum for reflection and discussion that may eventually result in change. The following are some of the issues that a group of teachers can discuss with a view to implementing change :

- Involvement in research : Who ? How ? Why ?
- Areas of research (teachers need to suggest relevant topics, preferably related to problem areas)), how (narrow or broad focus) ? Why (e.g., priorities) ?
- Ethical considerations : sharing, caring, ownership, dissemination, and publication of the data and findings ; access to each other's classrooms, peers, and students ; confidentiality.
- Incentives : motivation, professional development versus money.
- Communication with each other : noticeboard, pigeon holes, weekly meetings, workshop presentations, etc.
- Deadlines : presentation of data and findings.

The success of the teachers' attempt to change and improve themselves and their students depends on effective planning and personal involvement. Putting their heads together trying to solve their problems and improve things is clearly of vital importance. Teachers are ultimately the owners of the Developmental Project whether it fails or succeeds. They should bear in mind that their capacity to go on seeing and doing things in new ways are a powerful example to their students of how it is possible to embrace the opportunities that change brings with it. In other words, initiating development is equally beneficial for teachers and students alike.

It is essential for teachers to find ways of managing and responding positively to change, not only so that they themselves are not left behind as the world moves on, but also because they have a responsibility to prepare their students to cope with a world in which change is the norm. To fulfil this duty, teachers should accept development as a reflective way of approaching whatever it is that they are doing as teachers and at whatever level of experience they are doing it. Perhaps, the most convenient time for teachers to embark on a developmental perspective is when they are starting out. This start should consist of adapting developmental insights and translating them into practical developmental tools, making decisions on the usefulness and feasibility of each.

The following procedures, intended for both individual and collaborative teacher development, appear to hold a great relevance for developing language teachers in the Algerian educational context given their potential for critical reflection (reflective teaching), easy application (small investigative tasks) and concrete benefits (change and professional growth). The following is a selective synthesis from the extensive works of pedagogues (such as Nunan 1988, 1990, Allright and Bailey 1990, 1994, Richards and Lockhart 1996, Freeman and Richards, 1996, Johns 1997, and Head and Taylor 1997) about the investigations that teachers can make into their teaching practices and the opportunities for critical reflection to improve their teaching. Their works include a variety of checklists and self-analysis sheets that allow teachers to observe their teaching in retrospect and make ongoing improvements.

Teachers embarking on an education development scheme might begin by considering the following questions :

- What should happen in an [EFL] writing classroom ?
- What should not happen ?
- What should the learners be doing in an EFL writing class ? What should they learn ? Why ?
- What forms of interaction (teacher-students, student-students, student-student, teacher-student) are successful in the writing class ?
- What do I know about myself as a teacher now ? What would I like to learn about myself as a teacher ? (Nunan, 1989).

They should also get acquainted with and select reflective procedures that suit their learning preferences and best demonstrate how successful a teaching practice and a learning opportunity are :

- Teaching journals (individual or collective): written or recorded accounts of actual classroom teaching experiences ;
 - Lesson reports : written accounts of lessons which describe the main aspects of a given lesson and the activities used to achieve instructional objectives) ;
 - Surveys and questionnaires : to collect information on a particular aspect of teaching and learning ;
 - Video-recording : recordings of a lesson or part of a lesson ;
 - Peer observation : a teacher observing a colleague's class ;
- and
- Action research : initiating an action plan aimed at bringing about change in a given aspect of a teacher's class and reporting the impact of change.
 - Developing a web-based bulletin to report information and carry out conversations

Some of these developmental procedures are subjective and relatively easy to carry out, while others are objective and depend on research experience as shown below :

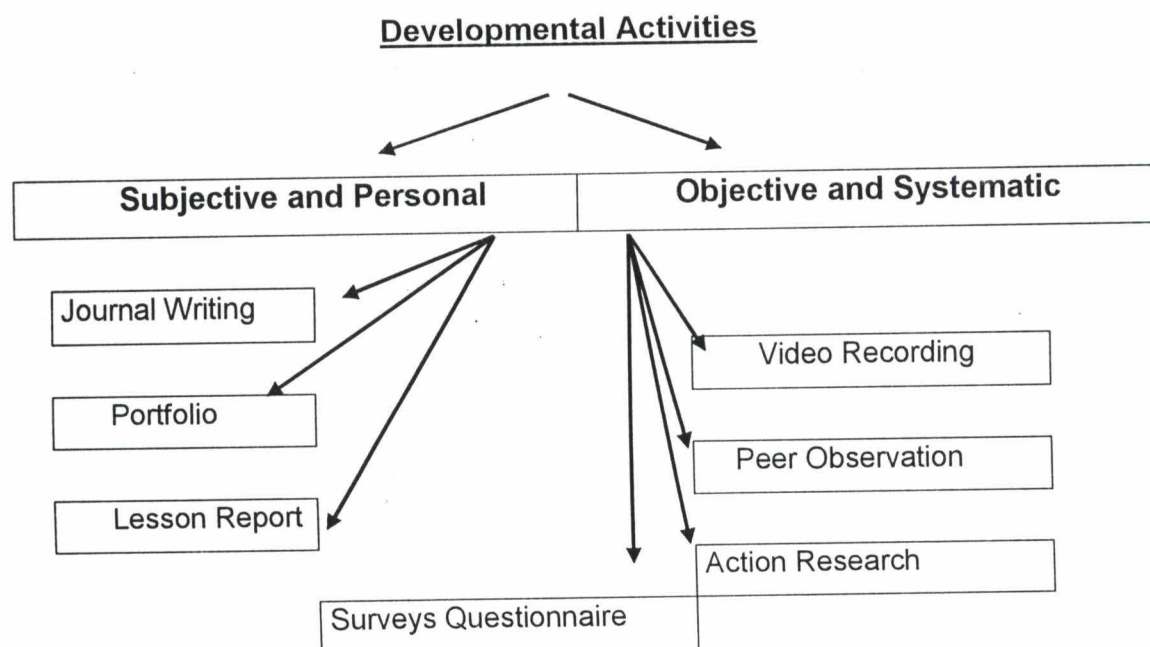


Diagram 5.2 : Developmental Procedures

Both categories of activities complement what teachers normally do as they teach. They provide them with an opportunity to make their own decisions on the aspects to be investigated and the convenient procedures to be employed.

5.4.1.1 Teaching Journals

A journal is a teacher's tool for reflection taking the form of a written response to teaching events. The advantages of journal writing are varied : it can provide access to covert variables influencing the customary way of teaching ; it also helps to generate relevant questions and hypotheses for eventual research action ; and it constitutes a simple recording method without an outside observer in the classroom. In like manner, the purposes of journal writing are twofold : a) to record events and ideas for subsequent critical reflection, and b) the fact of writing itself may serve as a discovery process. Journal writing can investigate different aspects of classroom processes and outcomes :

- ❑ questions or observations about problems that occur in teaching ;
- ❑ description of lessons ;
- ❑ ideas for future analysis.

In journal writing, teachers may pose the following questions :

- What do I do as a I teach ?
- What principles and beliefs guide my teaching ?
- Why do I teach the way I do ?
- What roles do learners play in may classroom ?

To be effective, journal writing, be it individual or collaborative, should be well-structured and recursive based on a clear sequence of reflective steps like the following :

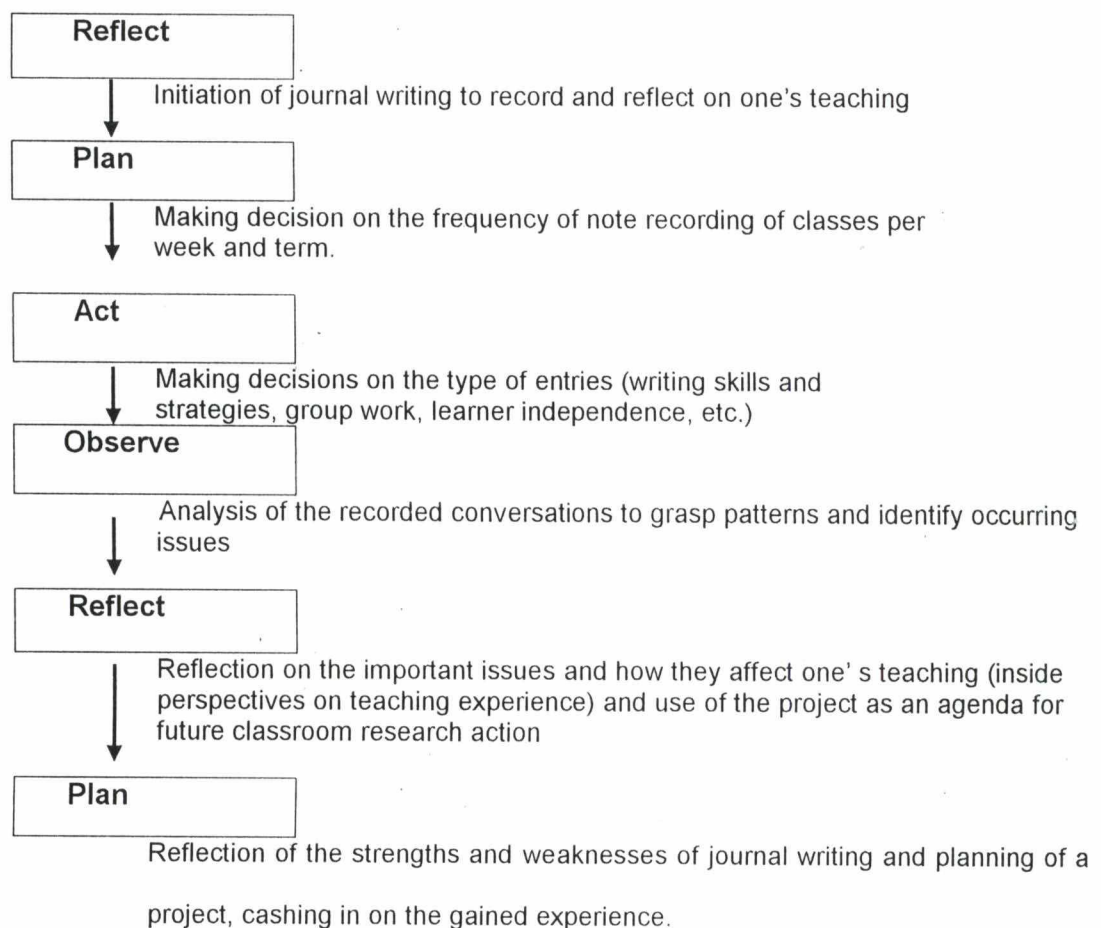


Diagram 5.3 Sequence of Steps in Journal Writing

The entries in the reflective journal focus on how to get students to take more responsibility for their learning (learner development). At the end of each teaching day, some time should be spent reflecting on the extent and kind of learning acquired during the day. To cash in on journal writing, teachers read each other's entries, preferably, on a web-based bulletin board and may carry out conversation with each other. This type of discussion requires teachers to carry out a new depth of preparation in order to read and post a reaction to the material. The reluctant teachers and shy teacher learners, who do not like to attend meetings or seminars, may find this venue enjoyable because they have sufficient time to think about what they want to say before they say it. This activity can help us to grow as both teachers and teacher educators.

5.4.1.2 Lesson Reports

The objective of a lesson report is to provide a structured inventory which makes it possible for teachers to record and report the main aspects of a lesson. In so doing, the teacher can regularly control the processing of a lesson, and to what extent the lesson was effective. Unlike a lesson plan, a lesson report describes the step-by-step processing of a lesson and records its main characteristics as the teacher perceives them. Richards and Lockhart (1996 : 9) advise teachers to prepare lesson reports that correspond to the objectives and content of their particular teaching course. They suggest the following procedures in preparatory self-report forms :

- First, identification of the approach underlying the course : activities, procedures, and available resources.
- Second, preparation of a lesson report form ; for example, teachers can collect information about how writing was presented and practised during a lesson.
- Third, use of the lesson report form on a regular basis to record the activities, procedures, and resources used throughout the course.
- Regular meeting to review and compare lesson reports among teachers of the same module ; discussion of likely differences in teaching techniques

and the rationale behind them ; and rethinking and modification of the teaching strategies and materials being used.

The following is an example of a lesson-report form for recording and structuring a lesson :

Class _____	Date _____
Goals and Content of the Lesson _____	
Openings	
The activity I used to open the lesson was _____	
The purpose of this activity was _____	
The effectiveness of this opening was :	
a) very effective	
b) moderately effective	
c) not very effective	
Sequencing	
The lesson contained the following sequence of activities : _____	
The purpose of sequencing the lesson in this way was: _____	
The effectiveness of this sequence was :	
a) very effective	
b) moderately effective	
c) not very effective	
Pacing :	
Strategies I use to achieve pacing were _____	
The effectiveness of this strategy was :	
a) very effective	
b) moderately effective	
c) not very effective	
Closure :	
The activity I used to end the lesson was _____	
The purpose of this activity was _____	
The effectiveness of this closure was :	
a) very effective	
b) moderately effective	
c) not very effective	

Figure 5.8 Lesson-report form (source :Richards and Lockhart 1996 :137)

Alternatively, after each class, a teacher might simply review the lesson plan and ask the following questions :

1. Does lesson plan
 - A. accurately reflect what went on in the classroom ?
 - B. only marginally describe what went on ?
 - C. not reflect at all what went on ?
2. What changes did I make in the lesson plan during the class?
3. What changes might make the class more successful next time?
4. What did I learn about teaching today? about my students?

Some of the answers to these questions can also be gathered from students at the end of a lesson orally or preferably through short three-to four-minute journal entries

assigned at the end of each week or each class module. These student entries will enable the teacher to view each class from the students' eyes and perceptions.

5.4.1.3 Surveys and Questionnaires

Surveys and questionnaires can be effectively used to investigate some aspects of teaching, especially, input factors like dimensions such as beliefs, attitudes, motivation, and preferences. They represent research possibilities for ongoing development that can lead to improved teaching and learning in all classrooms. As well as being rapid tool for data collection, the information they provide is valuable for planning and assessing a whole course or a teaching unit. Evaluative information collected at the end of a course can be used to modify instruction for the present students. Using questionnaires to collect assessment information at the end of a course can be particularly beneficial because they provide permanent, systematic records of feedback from all students. Feedback from questionnaires has the added advantage of being easily quantified if structured (Cf. appendix 1.1: learners' questionnaire as an illustration).

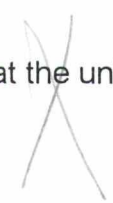
Questionnaires and interviews are similar because both consist of questions or statements the student is expected to respond to. Responses to questions can take several forms. They can be open-ended :

- Why do you want to learn English ? _____

Conversely, they can require multiple-choice questions :

- Why do you want to learn English ?
 - a) to travel to English-speaking countries ;
 - b) to chat and communicate with English native speakers ;
 - c) to get a job in a foreign firm ;
 - d) to read English books and magazines ;
 - e) to carry out further studies in Britain or the USA .

Another form of multiple-choice questions asks the students to choose a point along a rank scale :

- It is important for me to learn English in order to succeed at the university.
- 

Disagree strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Agree strongly

Interviews and questionnaires function as conversations between students and teachers providing valuable qualitative information. For instance, they are useful for needs assessment (language, skills, strategies) and profile description (linguistic, psychological, cultural, and educational).

5.4.1.4 Observation

Observation is an integral part of everyday teaching : teachers continuously observe their students' learning in the classroom. Teachers observe how students respond to and use instructional materials and how they interact during group work ; teachers also observe how effectively they themselves are presenting particular lessons. On the basis of their daily observation, teachers assess what students have and have not learned ; they infer the learning strategies students may be using that are either impeding or facilitating learning ; they determine which instructional activities and materials students enjoy. 'The information derived from such observations is fundamental to the day-to-day functioning of the classroom...' (Genesee and Upshur 1996 :79) .

Teachers observations of themselves may lead them to infer that they are using instructional strategies that are not working ; perhaps they had not been very clear when explaining a given task. Similarly, observation of how particular lessons worked with the current class may lead to decisions to retain, drop, or modify them with future classes of learners. Lessons or specific tasks may be dropped because they were too easy, too difficult, uninteresting, or irrelevant. Certain lessons may be modified because observations of their effectiveness with the current students suggested deficiencies or areas of improvement. The main reasons behind classroom observation can be listed as follows :

- ❑ To make decision on whether students are progressing ;
- ❑ To select difficulties that particular students may have ;
- ❑ To plan appropriate instruction and remedies ;
- ❑ To evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching lessons and tasks ; and
- ❑ To assess the appropriateness and relevance of learning materials.

Observation can be either individual or collaborative (peer observation). The former consists of a teacher observing the ways he/she teaches in the classroom ; the latter serves to observe a colleague's different aspects of teaching taking place in the classroom. In both cases, observation serves to gather useful information about teaching rather than as a way of evaluating teaching ; it is therefore a positive rather than a negative experience. The main challenges facing classroom teachers as observers are 'how to organise observations in a systematic and manageable way, how to record the resulting information and inferences, and how to make use of this information in planning effective instruction (op.cit. 81). The task is therefore to develop a coherent strategy for organising classroom observation. In general, teachers make use of one or more of the procedures listed below :

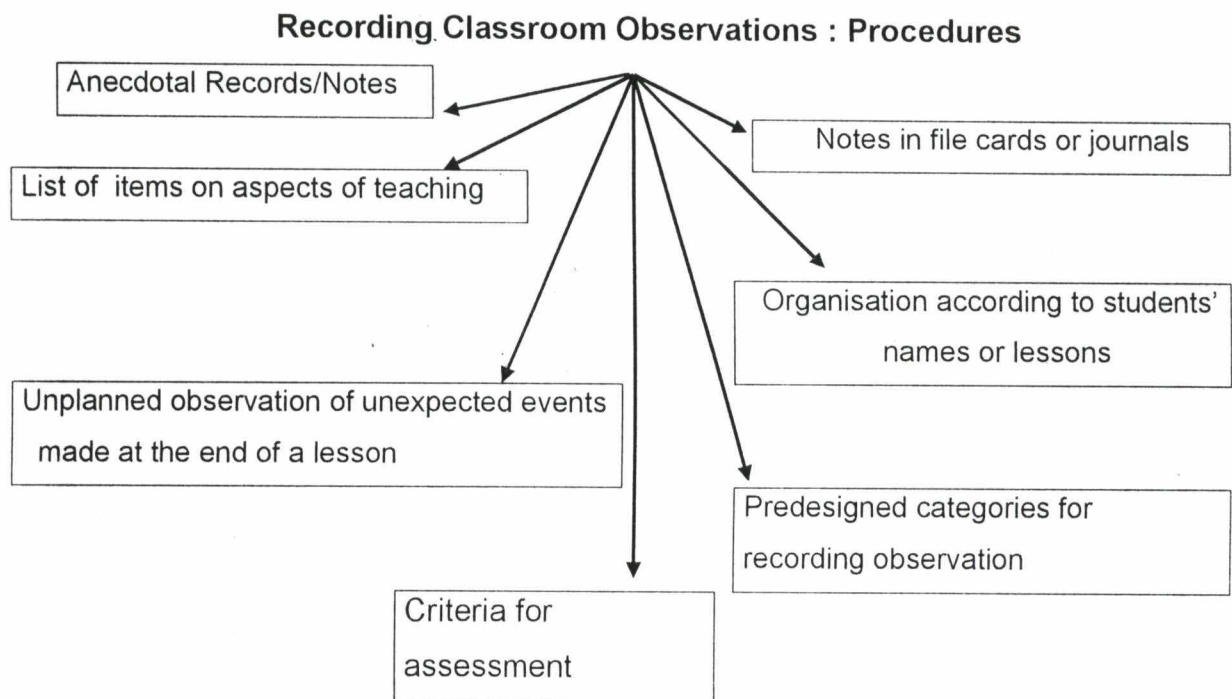


Diagram 5.4 : Classroom Observation Procedures

These observation procedures can serve a variety of purposes, for example, to assess plans, activities and materials and to be aware of the existing learning styles in the classroom. Observable classroom behaviour includes aspects of language use, work habits (punctuality, assignment accomplishment, search for assistance), and social behaviour (cooperative work, peer work, class participation). They can also include learning strategies (risk taking,

improvisation, focus on meaning, form, coherence, use of first language), affective strategies (self-reliant, resourceful, enthusiastic, passive, dull), and reactions to the course (active participation, need extra guidance, exhibit initiatives).

To record observation in a systematic way and ensure insightful critical reflection, it may be advisable to prepare and follow observation sheets for both peer exchange and self-observation. The following is an example of a teacher observation sheet for both own observation and peer observation, with a focus on lesson plan analysis and writing assignment.

Lesson Plan Analysis (Self-Reflection)

1. What are the specific objectives for the class session ?
2. How can I set the scene for the lesson ?
3. What is the general pacing strategy, that is, about how much time will the students spend on each major objective ?
4. What learning activities and tasks will the students participate in to accomplish those objectives,
5. How will the learning be assessed, and how will the students receive feedback ?

Peer Exchange Descriptive Observation

Teacher _____ Observer _____
 Class _____ Attendance _____ Date _____

Lesson Outline

_____ minutes _____
 _____ minutes _____
 _____ minutes _____
 _____ minutes _____
 _____ minutes _____

Assignment : _____

1. Brief description of the class : objectives and activities
2. Methods of instruction used
3. Interaction Ratios

- A. teacher-talk to student-talk : _____
- B. teacher-student (lecture) : _____
- C. student-students : _____
- D. teacher-student : _____
- E. student-students : _____

Descriptive Self-Observation of Writing Assignment

1. Objectives for the writing assignment :
2. Purpose for writing :
3. Sequence of activities :
 - A. students prepared for writing assignment
 - B. motivation for writing
 - C. group/pair/individual work
 - D. response and feedback opportunities
 - (1) by peers
 - (2) by teacher
4. Assessment of written assignment : _____
5. Assessment of learning : Learning was checked by asking students to
 - A. perform a task : _____

B. do an exercise : _____
C. answer questions : _____
D. other : _____
6. How was class work organised to permit the check on individual learning ?
7. What forms did the feedback take ?
A. teacher : written _____, oral _____, other _____
B. student : written _____, oral _____, other _____
8. How successful was the feedback ?
9. What evidence of learning was collected ?
A. written _____
B. oral _____
C. other _____

Figure 5.9 Teacher Observation Sheets (adapted from Reid 1993 :285-87)

Clearly, classroom observation is fundamental to all forms of reflective teaching and ongoing education development. Self-observation and peer observation are credited by different teacher trainers (Nunan 1990 ; Wallace 1991 ; Richards and Lockhart 1996 ; Richards and Freeman 1996 amongst others) as excellent ways to analyse and understand how successful a learning opportunity is. Observing colleagues teach provides insights into teaching approaches and activities, and the comments of peer observers offer opportunities for change and improvement. But to benefit both teacher development and student learning, it is essential to implement the observation strategy in educational institutions in a manageable, systematic, and positive way—they should have a clear focus and a prior preparation. Without such a coherent strategy, classroom observation may not yield the expected benefits.

5.4.1.5 Action Research

Classroom research action , as the present dissertation has tried to demonstrate, constitutes an excellent reflective means of investigating a specific aspect of the teaching process and learning outcome. It highlights the teacher's own awareness of the need to change and improve by initiating classroom investigation. There are many areas in language teaching which need investigation. They include vocabulary load, processing and reflective learning in FL reading and writing (the focus of this work), learner factors, communication strategies, error correction and feedback, and group dynamics. In effect, each aspect of language learning and teaching can be subject to classroom investigation (e.g., teacher's language use in the classroom) Classroom

research action can be formal (applying triangulation) or simply a small-scale investigative task .

(1) Formal Action research

A formal action research must follow a precise paradigm and make use of different data-collection procedures. It involves a set of steps recurring in cycles. The following diagram indicates the possible sequence of steps to follow in action research paradigm and proposes some questions to guide the classroom investigation :

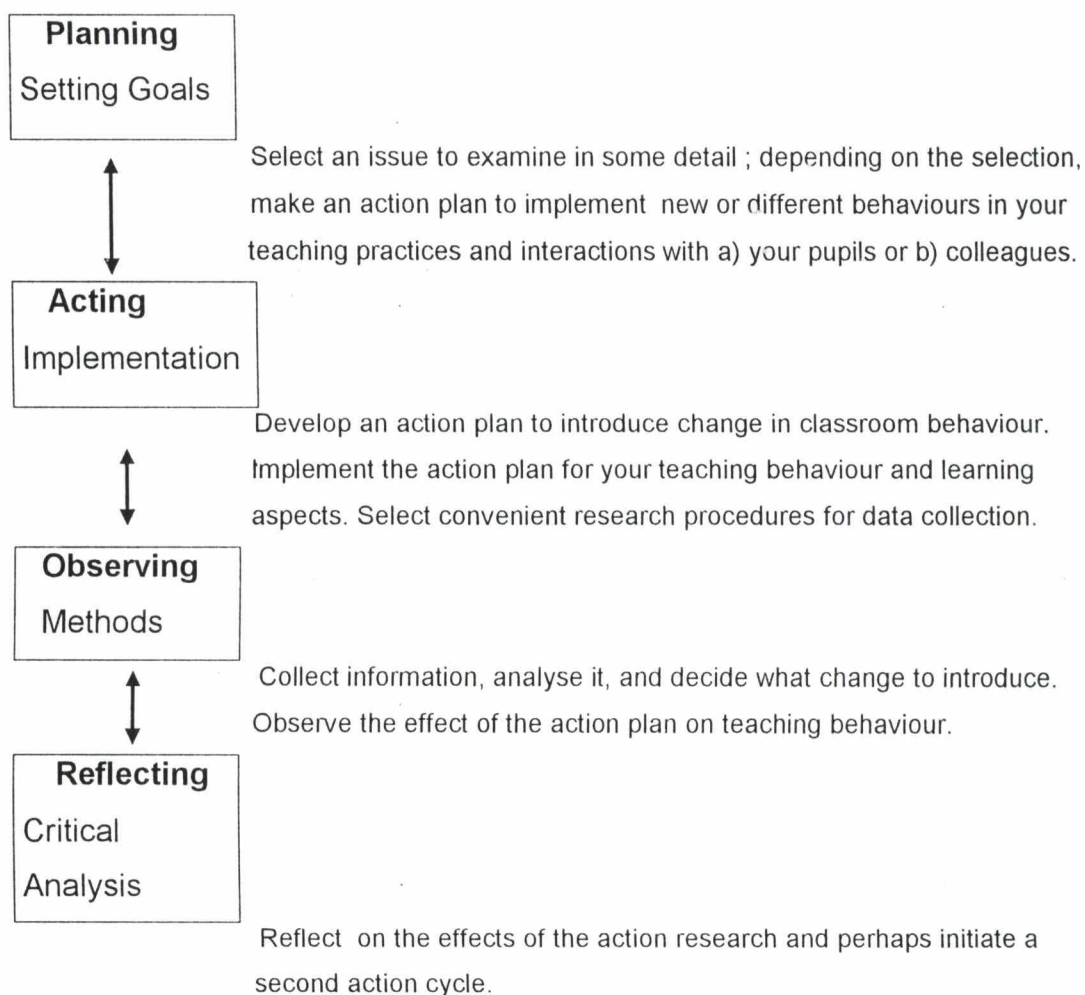


Diagram 5.5 Sequence of Steps in Action Research

Like observation, action research can be individual or collaborative. In the former, a teacher first selects an aspect to investigate in some detail ; second, he/she

selects convenient research tools for data collection (e.g., lesson report, observation, or/and questionnaires ; third, he/she analyses and interprets information to make decision on the type and extent of change to introduce in the classroom ; fourth, he/she develops an action plan, implements it in the classroom and records its impact on teaching behaviour and learning outcome ; eventually, he/she may initiate a second action cycle.

In the latter, a group of teachers meet to identify worthwhile issues to investigate together (e.g., type of feedback to written assignments) or to solve problems that face their classes (e.g., discipline, demotivation, etc.). Following the action research paradigm, they could discuss and agree upon the most suitable and time-saving research procedures, analyse the data, make deductions, and decide how to implement change in their different classes. Eventually, they could collaborate in elaborating an informative report for publication for fellow teachers or seminar presentation. Due to the few opportunities available for development in our context, it must surely be worth working with a group of colleagues, or at least, a colleague.

(2) Planning a Classroom Research Action

In case the research paradigm, outlined above, may appear daunting and time-consuming (i.e., another burden) to some teachers, a small investigative task like Action Plan (AP) may be the alternative. The reason is the same : the attempt to do things better. This constitutes a reflective process and the first step in action planning. An action research plan involves setting a target to accomplish some action or series of actions (e.g., doing an activity better in the next lesson). It also involves making oneself responsible for those actions. When a teacher writes an action plan, he/she voluntarily commits himself/herself to a course of action (Grice's honesty principle in speech acts, 1974). It is this commitment which is the important aspect of an action plan like the one below :

1. Setting Goals

General : be a better teacher

Specific : Giving space to learners to answer and participate ;

Eliciting : answering to students when necessary ;

Explaining : make students aware of the rationale behind certain activities, group work, pair work

2. Implementation Date

To set a target date for implementation ;

To set a target date for completion ;

To record a lesson and analyse it to see whether it develops naturally (without stopping the students at every mistake)

To experiment with different ways of encouraging revision and redrafting

3. Methods

To select specific strategies for intervention : reformulation, peer editing etc.

4. Standards

To set standards to appraise the results. The students' feedback may provide the key to the success or failure of a particular strategy. The standards concern both the changes in the students' output and their views on the process.

Diagram 5.6 : A guide to simple action research (Adapted from Wilson 2001 :60)

G S A R

(3) Planning an Action research Workshop²

Action research, whether large-scale or small-scale, could be extremely useful if established as regular workshops for improving one's teaching as well as promoting own personal development as teachers. The vital role of an Action Research Workshop (ARW) is to focus on tangible, achievable, and mutually beneficial actions.

- **Achievable targets** : an action research plan for personal development could include setting achievable targets for reading articles and chapters in background books in the weekly ARW. The aim of the teachers' reading is to stimulate reflection, which will subsequently lead to action. For instance, the main goal of the ARW could be to read one article a

week presented by one member, and the sub-goals to try out one or two suggestions in it. If teachers find this plan too heavy a schedule, there is a possibility of setting a less intensive one. The idea is achievability.

- **Writing** : Writing an article for a newsletter could be an item in the regular activities of the ARW. The article could describe the current process of reflection and experimentation undertaken by a teacher or group of teachers in a particular area. Focusing on what to be written gives teachers the added advantage of reflecting on what they write to and for their students. How they deal with their written work ? Do they correct it or reformulate it ? Do they focus on form or content, or both ? The action research can include a goal in this area, too.
- **Team Action** : as said above, working collaboratively and joining heads together could be the key to the shortage of development opportunities in our teaching/learning context and an effective remedy to teacher's isolation. Indeed, teachers can sit in on each other's classes and use the joint experience of the lesson as the basis for a discussion on teaching and learning, and perhaps a starter for a specific action research (step 1 in the classroom research action paradigm).
- **Team Teaching** : team teaching is perhaps the most collaborative developmental activity. Due to the necessary careful joint preparation and difficulty, this activity is not practised in EFL contexts. It may be however an efficient way of bringing teachers together to prepare material and tasks for the same class. Johns (1997 :81-83), mentioning the Birmingham ESP experience, lists the following benefits : 'collaboration, concentration on identified student needs, and use of authentic classroom discourses,...'. Though team teaching may be difficult, it can be worthwhile to experiment with the idea and then reflect on the experience and the outcomes.
- **Reading Circles** : Small groups of teachers can set up a reading circle, where each participant reads and reports on an article. This is especially beneficial for our context where materials and resources are at a premium. It is essential therefore that teachers share their ideas and

produce summaries of interesting articles as a simple news sheet or newsletter for circulation among colleagues.

- **Professional Development Teams (PDTs)**: setting up teams for professional development by running seminars and workshops, building professional networks, and creating opportunities for continuous professional development that produces tangible evidence of change.

(4) Experience Timeline

This activity requires the teacher to think over the teaching experience accumulated so far and represent this reflection in the form of an experience timeline, specifying the most important stages in his/her development process.

First, the teacher is asked to answer these questions :

- Can you recognise and identify the main stages in your development as a teacher so far ?
- Which of them were the result of your own experience ?
- Which of them were the result of contact with other people ?

STAGE	REFLECTION
1. Beginning of Teaching Career (1986) :	Enthusiastic and eager to teach First contact with the real classroom world : different from theory and in-service training Think about appropriate method and teaching activities to meet the students' varying needs
2. Encounter with experienced educators (1993) :	Involvement in post-graduate course Applied linguistics Start thinking about completing one's post-graduate studies (doctorate)
3. Becoming aware of the urgent need to change and develop (1994) :	Planning a reading programme to update and enrich one's background knowledge ; keeping a journal to record classroom learning processes and outcomes
4. Participation in seminars and pedagogical activities(1996-98) : starting	Writing reflective articles, discussing with experienced colleagues ; classroom research action on writing
5. Connecting with educational networks through the Web (ELTeCS ; Globalesl network ; TESOL) :	sharing and exchanging insightful experiences with EFL/ESL teachers worldwide ; becoming aware of different actions and issues in language teaching ; improving one's writing proficiency through ongoing writing

Figure 5.10 Researcher's own development reflection

5.4.1.6 Teacher Decision Making : Planning

Teachers have to continuously make appropriate decisions to the specific dynamics of the lesson being taught. The ability to make decisions to arising changes is an essential teaching skill, which reflects the teacher's evaluation of the learning process. According to Richards and Freeman (1996 :82) there are three types of complementary decisions : decision planning, interactive decisions, and

evaluative decisions. Planning decisions, whether they are macro-plans or micro-plans, involve questions such as the following :

- What are students going to learn from the lesson?
- What are the objectives of the lesson?
- How will the lesson connect to what students already know?
- Is the lesson going to be too easy/difficult for this class?
- What should be done to deal with the students' different ability levels in the class?
- What role should I take during the lesson?
- What role should the students take during the lesson?
- What alternative plans are there in case of problem with some aspect of the lesson?

Interactive decisions reflect the teacher's evaluation of the learning process and highlights his/her ability to make decisions to arising changes during the lesson. Interactive decisions involve the following strategies:

- Monitoring one's teaching as the lesson unfolds,
- Recognising the feasibility of alternative courses of action ;
- Selecting a specific course of action ; and
- Evaluating the results of the particular choice.

Evaluative decisions are those which a teacher makes after a lesson has been taught. They include questions such as the following :

- Was this lesson successful ? Why or why not ?
- What were the main strengths and weaknesses of the lesson ?
- Did the students learn what they were intended to learn ?
- Did the lesson address the students' needs ?
- Was the lesson at an appropriate level of difficulty ?
- Was the topic interesting to students ?
- Was the lesson sufficiently prepared ?

- What would be a suitable follow-up to the lesson ?
- Should I have employed alternative teaching strategies ?

(Richards and Freeman 1996 :87°

Evaluative decisions of one's teaching largely reflect the teacher's personal belief system and underlying assumptions about learning and teaching.

In sum, the aim of action research should not tend to eliminate existing classroom activities but to build on current practices, approaches, and procedures through collaborative thinking, planning, and acting for the benefit of the educational institution as a whole, including teachers and students. That is why, action research should be carefully interpreted, collectively debated, and reasonably implemented. It should welcome and make extensive use of the increasing availability of new technology to enhance teacher development and learner independence.

5.4.1.7 Development and Education-Based Training

In order to prepare prospective teachers adequately, it may be time to implement development into teacher training programmes during the last year at the university. These would-be teachers, apart from the taught theoretical module and few classroom observations in secondary schools, complete their Licence in English Language Teaching (The Algerian university degree for higher studies in English) with very little training and no teaching experience. Trainees who are encouraged to adopt a developmental perspective will not only inform their teaching, but also improve their social skills, attitudes, and self-awareness. The following is a summary of some concrete suggestions that can be taken to combine training and development at the university level :

(1) Teaching Practice

- Allow plenty of time to prepare for and give feedback on teaching practice.
- Encourage trainees to make their own suggestions about lesson content and procedures.

- Get the trainees to specify lesson aims for themselves as well as for the learners, e.g., to give equal attention to all learners in the class, or to ask questions only once and avoid repeating or reformulating them.

(2) Seminars

- Avoid giving models of 'correct' teaching, as they can be threatening.
- Use seminars to discuss and review different types of lesson observed or taught by trainees, and guide the discussion towards a typology of appropriate procedures based on the trainees' own observations.
- Devote some seminar time to discussing ways of developing after the course finishes, e.g., peer observation, self-observation, teaching diaries, teachers' groups, professional conferences, etc.
- Devote some seminar time to 'process reviews' which look at the trainees' feelings and reactions to being a course participant : topics such as coping with tiredness, confusion, what's happening in the group, etc.

(3) Observation

- Make space for the tutors to teach the learners with the trainees observing. Trainees can use the same procedure for observation and feedback that the tutors are using when they observe a trainee. In this way it can be seen that the tutors, too, acknowledge the value of exploring and developing their own role as teachers and trainers.

(source : Head and Taylor 1997 :14)

(5) EFL Teacher in-Service Training

Today, the need for well-trained teachers of English calls for a radical reform in thinking and acting so that teacher training would be in line with current socio-economic development of the country. One promising innovation would be the

introduction of a field-based Teacher Programme to replace the traditional training which appears to be more concerned with offering professional training in its widest sense than with the preparation of teachers alone. The trainee in English specialisation at the Department of Foreign Languages does not have to go into teaching, and can go into any other available profession which needs a certain command of English. The proposed programme should be able to adjust to the changing needs of the English teacher in Algeria, and more able to create new courses in the light of the latest research. What is then clearly needed is a search for

Improving the certification of qualified teachers of English by ensuring anew that a high level of language proficiency is a prerequisite for language teaching and compensating the absence of an educational component and teaching practice (micro-teaching). The success of a field teacher programme depends on a number of factors :

- The trainees' potential, attitudes, and motivation. The candidates in this group should be new Baccalaureate holders with very high academic grades. The trainees should have very good general potential and a positive attitude towards the teaching profession.
- The education-based curriculum should be more balanced, logical, and potentially fruitful, responsive to the needs of the trainee rather than a reflection of what the faculty members in the department want to teach.
- An education component is completely absent from the traditional pre-service programme offered by the departments of English. The education component should include an introduction to almost all that a trainee needs in order to build up professional competence as a prospective teacher of English as a foreign language in Algeria.
- Universities should be equipped with Teacher Education Faculties with high-tech facilities for micro-teaching and referencing should be made available to allow the achievement of these objectives (softwares, books, and other resources). These centres will be used by university professors, students, and school teachers.

Unlike traditional training at Departments of Foreign Languages, the new programme will consist of three main components: language, education, and linguistic.

Language Component	Education Component	Linguistic Component	TEFL Methodology
Reading	Introduction to education	Transformational syntax	Micro Teaching
Comprehension	Language and Education	Semantics	Classroom
Writing	Curriculum and	Phonology	interaction and
Grammar	instruction	Sociolinguistics	management
Oral Comprehension	Developmental	Psycholinguistics	Problem of EFL
Oral Expression	psychology	Language change	teaching and
Pronunciation and	Educational psychology	Language planning	learning
Phonetics	Methodology		
Language/Linguistics			
Literature and			
Civilisation			
Study Skills			

Table 5.1: Education based Programme for In-Service Training

The educational component, completely absent from the programmes offered by the Departments of Foreign Languages, includes an introduction to almost all that a trainee needs in order to build up professional competence as a prospective teacher of EFL. Similarly, it is very important that the student teachers consider the course as a new beginning rather than a continuation of their previous learning experience, which was largely an experience in failing to master the foreign language. Consequently, teachers should avoid lecturing and devoting class time to grammatical explanation. Instead, most of the class time should consist of activities carried out by the students, with the teacher as guide and facilitator of learning.

5.5 New Technology and Teacher Education Development

There is no doubt that new technology—particularly computers and the Internet—constitutes a growing and significant force in all language education, including English language education; hence, the concept *education technology* (ET). At present, the impact of the Internet and other Information and Communication Technologies can be clearly shown in the actions taken by education institutions to perform a radical review of the delivery and support of learning throughout the world.³ This means that Algeria should follow suit and introduce reforms that make room for the implementation and use of education technology. The rationale that should guide its use in this regard is one of benefit to the learner, the teacher, and to society as a whole. Technology should not be adopted for its own sake as used to be the case before, but, rather, should have some demonstrable benefit to the key factors in the learning process.

Education technology is increasingly available to teachers of English throughout the Algerian universities.⁴ The spread of computers, network communication, and, to some extent, sophisticated video production facilities, is set to expand even more rapidly in this new millennium. The challenge then is not the availability of hardware and associated software, but how it can be effectively exploited to enhance the teaching and learning of English, and by the same token, to contribute to learner and teacher education development. The educators who can use the new technology will be able to develop practical expertise in producing and using materials based on e-mail, the internet, interactive multimedia and video and perhaps create and modify useful application softwares (word-processing, presentation programmes) of their own to interact with their learners. This section examines therefore the potential of education technology in English language education and makes practical proposals for introducing *information literacy* (the emerging literacy skill of the new millennium) and developing material relevant to the teaching/learning situation as a way of further elaborating a content-rich curriculum. The success of ET integration depends on the classroom teacher.

What, then, does the teacher need and what should the teacher do in order to reap the full benefits of ET?

5.5.1 Required Skill : Information Literacy

The first type of knowledge that the language teacher needs to develop is *information literacy*. This refers to the 'ability to find, organize and make use of information... and to read and write in a new medium' (Bicknell 2000 :20). The Internet is playing a major role in the emerging new literacy. Listing the use of e-mail, the ability to conduct Internet searches, and Web page production are skills that teachers should learn and teach their students. New technology is no longer just another tool for teaching English but an essential new medium of language and literacy practices, alongside the printed page (ibid. 21). Barnes (1994:22) writes

Students and teachers who overcome the barriers of hypertext literacy skills enter into a new type of literacy experience. This experience transforms students from passive learners to active information explorers. Moreover, hypertext provides a method for students and teachers to interactively collaborate on projects and present ideas with interactive visual and verbal messages.

It is clear that the traditional definition of literacy is being rapidly reshaped to include the ability to exploit the new education technology and make it part of the curriculum goals. Having teachers and students produce web pages, search the Internet to collect information for their projects, and interact with readers worldwide, for instance, is an ideal means of teaching literacy skills for the 21st century. What follows, then, is a set of practical suggestions for introducing the new technology in language teaching (Cf. learner development, Chapter Four).

5.5.2 Ways of using ET (the Internet) in language teaching

- A student's experience of the Internet should be more than just surfing websites or chatting. Teachers and students should be encouraged to create their own websites and to collaborate in

international teams to build websites around a common theme that interests them (e.g., the British Council Environment Project which invites students worldwide to take part in website creation or enriching). *What?*

- Setting up an e-journal : the aim is to set up and publish an e-online journal for teachers of English in Algeria twice a year.
- Initiating collaborative research projects of ET and language teaching : to conduct research about ED in Algeria.
- Organising workshops on teaching with technology : offering basic advice on the effective use of computers and the Internet.
- Metacognitive Academic reading: to set up a project that involves students on particular topic. To ensure the use of metacognitive strategies students will need to: 1-Plan how they will find the text (Where on the Internet do they think there are texts on that topic?). 2-Organise their search. (What search engines or databases can they use? What key words are going to be most useful?). 3-Evaluate how effective their strategies for finding text have been and discuss how they could improve them for similar projects in the future.
- Making long passages of text more interactive: Students try to find links on the Internet to pages on the same topic as the passage they are reading. In groups they discuss how the first part of a text might continue and word process their own version, which they might put on the Web for others to read.
- Exploring particular topics (Cf. Chapter 4:276: www.RainforestFactfile.oup.) 1- Students list words and phrases about the environment an rainforest. 2. In groups they should take on the roles of people involved in exploiting the rainforest. They can search the Web to find information to help them prepare their arguments.
3-Students try to write a poem (Chapter 4:284) on this topic. They can put their work on Web pages of their own.

5.6 Conclusion

The value of teaching lies in learning ways to reflect upon and question one's beliefs and current knowledge base, develop adequate repertoire of teaching practices, and try out instructional procedures and materials that fit the needs of learners, broadens one's thinking, and impacts the teaching pedagogy. This is true for a complex skill like writing as for the other skills, which all make teaching itself a complex process. As argued in this chapter, one effective way to deal with such a complexity is to adopt a developmental perspective, which helps teachers to cope better when they are facing change within and around their work environment. Genuine development comes about through self-awareness, reflection, and open-mindedness to other approaches and styles. That is why this chapter has highlighted what *teacher education development* means, as regards teachers' own understanding of how they go on learning and becoming better at what they are doing. Indeed, good teachers need not only knowledge but enthusiasm, confidence, self-value, and a desire to question, experiment, and grow professionally.

Since the current teacher training model at the university level seems to be rather narrow and too inadequate to provide prospective teachers with the necessary skills and strategies to cope with real-life teaching (i.e., teacher needs, learners' needs, and institutional needs), it seems urgent to complement 'training' with 'teacher development'. *Development*, as understood in this work, focuses on the teacher's own awareness as a person as well as conception of teaching. This kind of development, which should start right from the very first year through learner development activities (Cf. Chapter Four), involves the learner-teacher in a process of reflecting on experience, exploring the options for improvement and change, deciding what can be achieved through personal effort, and setting appropriate goals. Prospective teachers can be encouraged to learn from their own learner developing awareness (learner development) and reflection alongside feedback from peers and experienced teachers, for whom development is a way forward for career-long learning. Thus, teacher education development through ongoing reflective teaching and practice is clearly a key component in developing knowledge and theories of teaching throughout a

teacher's career. 'Good-quality' education ultimately depends on teachers knowing and understanding their subject, having the skill to sustain students' motivation, the awareness to match their teaching practices to the specified learning goals and needs, and the eagerness to develop professionally. As such, educational institutions should incorporate education development in their curricula and educational practices and support teachers in this fundamental shift from theoretical training and mere knowledge transmission to teacher education and learner development. Last but not least, academic institutions need to be able to make clear statements about teaching methodology, materials and strategy throughout the institution, and undertake a meaningful process of values clarification.

Notes to Chapter Five

- ¹ The concept of teacher education development is an aspect of educational reform that is receiving enormous attention worldwide. It is also an area about which surprisingly little is known so far, with only a handful of studies and books that document its provision and effect educational change. .
- ² The activity of Action Research Workshop was introduced to the researcher during a short academic stay at the ESP Centre, Damascus University, 1997. The invitation to take part in such an activity allowed the researcher to become aware of the importance and usefulness of working together within an institution.
- ³ In recent years, the advent of new information and communication technology has led to a new information literacy that societies cannot do without (Bicknell 2000:20). 'Information literacy involves the ability to find, organize and make use of information' (op. cit). The internet, including the WWW, is playing a major rôle in the emerging new literacy.
- ⁴ For instance, the Department of Foreign Languages, Tlemcen University, was fortunate to set up a high-tech computer laboratory in 2000. If this investment is rationally used, it will significantly contribute to teacher and learner development.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

The present teacher-initiated research has gradually shifted from an initial narrow focussing on writing and thinking as academic life skills to a broader, more encompassing emphasis on the key influences on language learning and teaching, conducive to educational change. This ongoing process of reflection and innovation itself highlights the dynamic nature of the individual's experiential pedagogy and the likely relationship with the evolution of the collective pedagogy of the wider professional and academic community (this relationship is itself a significant issue for both teacher education and research in language teaching).

Of particular value in this dynamic process is the delineation of an emerging reflective framework which, though grounded in a specific micro setting, provides principles applicable across similar educational contexts. An important finding of this work is that change agents need to develop contextually-appropriate models of curriculum innovation and empirically-based tasks for understanding how best to translate intentions into practice, thus revealing a strong affiliation towards a reflective approach to foreign language education. As a key change agent, the teacher (both as a classroom practitioner and action researcher) is encouraged to reflect on existing principles and procedures and develop new ones that are perceived to be new and useful learning devices. In envisaging teacher involvement as a crucial means of building support for innovation, the research has tried to reveal a commitment to a *participatory* form of curriculum and teacher development by means of experiential-reflective learning and practice.

There is no doubt that the challenges (and the possibilities as well) of teaching and learning a foreign language have never been greater as schools and universities undergo gradual curricular and structural changes. The range and type of knowledge that university-level teachers and students need to know far exceeds that of previous decades. The academic expectations for and the needs of an increasingly multilevel student body keep increasing in a constantly changing educational and socio-economic environment. University teachers and students

need to upgrade their skills or to acquire new ones—to use new technology as a language teaching and learning tool, be able to think constructively, argue coherently, judge dispassionately, tackle problems effectively, and combine language skills plus skills in other areas (language skills alone are no longer sufficient).

It is clear that the mission of a university education should be changed from a knowledge-transmitter oriented process to a knowledge-developer one for the hallmark of a university education is not transferring knowledge, but developing it in the form of academic, personal, and interpersonal skills. In other words, there is an urgent need to perform a substantial review of the delivery and support of knowledge development. Learner and teacher education development must therefore change to equip future teachers with the necessary tools to meet the new challenges. In this respect, this doctoral dissertation has attempted to both highlight and investigate ways in which learners and teachers can and need to develop an adequate repertoire of skills, strategies, and knowledge conducive to better educational processes and outcomes; hence, the focus on language education rather than mere language proficiency. Throughout the research work, there has been a selective focus on the major strands of learning and change: *education*, *development*, *awareness*, and *literacy skills* (writing and reading) for our everyday academic and social lives, as teachers and students, is essentially mediated and evaluated by print. The whole project, therefore, acquires an educational and humanistic purpose, urgently needed in our university classes. One hopes and strives, through own and team action, to restore to critical reflection and practice its own place by gearing it to the students' and teachers' own benefit of self-discovery and reasoning.

Chapter One tried to carry out a comprehensive systemic analysis of the Algerian education system with a view to closely examining the host of contextual variables that impinge on the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in general, and that of writing in particular, moving from a general macro-level to a more focussed, micro-level. The chapter identified the four key elements of the learning process: the *learner*, the *teacher*, the *context*, and the *curriculum*. What the situation analysis made clear was the discrepancy between those elements in terms of needs, expectations, assumptions, strategies, and practices.

The varied and constantly changing official curriculum goals and syllabus objectives at the different levels of education appeared to generate a chronic gap between the teachers' current teaching strategies, the actual language classroom practices, the learners' language performance and cognitive awareness, and the teachers' confusion with regard to changing programmes and practices. The most noticeable effect of such a serious *mismatch* is the much debated 'skill failure' (especially, writing failure). Moreover, the systemic analysis revealed the impact of broader variables on language education such as language policy and the overall aims of the education system in Algeria.

Chapter Two laid the groundwork and emphasised the need for a coherent theoretical framework within which the potentially valuable contributions of different relevant theories of writing, composition, discourse analysis, psychology of learning (especially, social interactionism), and schema theory, could be drawn together for the benefit of the practising language teacher and learner. The main challenge was to develop a curriculum that best suited the identified needs of the learners and implemented informed pedagogical choices. A major pedagogical implication was the need for language teaching to acknowledge the value of writing for building a prerequisite background knowledge, developing language awareness through reflection, and generating words, sentences, and stretches of discourse to communicate them as language use. In a similar way, the chapter argued for the need to contribute to *joint curricular planning* and reach a consensus on what constitutes appropriate effective classroom practices for university students learning to write in English. Such a collaborative contribution would put an end to the alternative instructional practices that result in confusion more than teaching.

Chapter Three tried to provide classroom-based empirical data and support for curriculum and material development proposals. Critical reflection and investigation through action research aimed at experimenting and evaluating the classroom instructional practices and their potential for developing an explicit awareness of text-creation processes and discourse-contextual conventions. The use of triangulation research tools helped to uncover the salient teaching and learning assumptions and the subjects' entrant and exit skills and strategies in writing performance. Statistically, the majority of subjects were able to improve at

the macro-level : discourse coherence, rhetorical organisation, and use of relevant genuine content. The fact that they developed awareness of their role as reader-writer helped them to remove the ego-centric aspect from their texts and to view writing as an act of commitment to a purpose. Another major finding of the action research was the persistence of difficulties at the linguistic system for a number of subjects. This might suggest that, unlike discourse-processing knowledge, linguistic mastery requires intensive practice in specific problem areas and involves a different set of strategies like individual conferencing.

Chapter Four sought to make proposals, accompanied with illustrations, for curriculum and material development at the university level. The goals for such development were manifold: planning theoretically sound and appropriate classroom teaching objectives, setting meaningful tasks and developmental activities (reflective and language awareness), providing ongoing practice in performing the tasks, and adopting a positive evaluation approach by giving helpful and clear feedback. The proposed tasks were designed in such a way to challenge not only the students' understanding and perception, but also their growing ability to think, generate, and organise genuine content by adhering to norms and conventions of written discourse in English. The developmental activities aimed at introducing students to the academic life skills of a university graduate : do some research, to make notes, to summarise, to paraphrase, to argue coherently, to tackle problems effectively, and to learn to share and exchange information and effort with others. These skills constituted new behaviours for EFL students that were (and are) worth nurturing and developing.

Chapter Five dealt with the issue of learner and teacher development and argued for the vital need of adopting a developmental perspective in teacher training and education development. Such a perspective would likely help teachers, prospective and experienced, to cope better with the ever-increasing changes inside and outside their educational institutions. This is especially true for the current model of teacher training which is rather narrow and clearly inadequate for equipping teachers with the necessary teaching skills and strategies. The concept of *development* focuses on the teacher's own awareness as a person as well as his/her conception as a teacher. It encourages teachers to learn from their

own developing awareness, and collaboration with colleagues through team actions like peer observation, joint journal writing, collaborative classroom research action, and connection in national and international professional teaching networks. 'Good-quality' teaching ultimately depends on teachers working together to know and understand their subject or module (to widen their knowledge base), to have the skill to sustain students' motivation and enthusiasm to learn, and to keep the will afoot to change and grow professionally and intellectually.

In effect, it is only by means of involvement in collaborative research, peer supported learning, reflective practice, and encouragement of university-level students to follow suit, can we hope to prevent isolation, change positively and provide language classrooms with opportunities to investigate, understand, analyse, judge dispassionately their current assumptions and practices, and tackle creatively and effectively problems. To do so, research ought to be fully integrated into the role of teachers to enable them to develop observation and research skills to better explore their own teaching and/or that of others and to analyse the outcomes not only of their own current area and interests but also of those concerning the present institution and the education system as a whole. This is clearly a demanding and difficult task because it encompasses issues related to teachers' attitudes, community involvement, and educational change (an area that is worth exploring for future research).

Similarly, the Algerian educational institutions, especially the university, face similar challenges. They will have to clarify their underlying values, develop new strategies, and new ways of thinking, learning, and doing. Urgent work is needed specifically when deeply ingrained beliefs and attitudes have to be contested, when particular ways of doing things are questioned. New roles, new relationships, new values, new behaviours, and new approaches to work have to be forged. This is quite a challenge that requires patience, practice, and perseverance so that the university, as an educational institution, can effectively play its major role as a driving force, able to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country in times of radical change. In sum, what the education system in Algeria needs is a clear vision, which preserves guidance about what future to aim for—that is, what kind of education does Algeria want for the future? What types of citizens is the education system able to develop to steer the country forward? What types of

teachers and learners are needed to help break the plague of failure ? As well as being important areas for future research, the answers to such questions will help transform the Algerian educational institutions into vital places of active learning, into sites of professional enquiry, and reflective practice, and in which the emphasis is on the principle of lifelong learning and a vision built upon core values such as patience, perseverance, commitment, trust, empowerment, and collective improvement.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: A Typology of Text Types and Organisation Methods

Type	Method	Purpose	Properties
1. Narrative Fiction Non-Fiction	To tell a sequence of past events, focusing on the sequence started, developed and ended.	To express the writer's opinion and reaction towards the events; To inform the reader; To interest the reader (arouse his/her curiosity)	Use of be (copula) Use of there (presentative) Use of descriptive relative clauses Textual markers of time (e.g., later on, years ago, afterward, before, etc.) Adverbs of frequency
2. Description	Static description: to describe an object, a person or system; Process description: to describe a sequence of events in a linear or cyclical way	To inform To guide the reader; To reproduce detail; To give and share views and sensations; To explain how something works, takes place; To advise how to accomplish a goal	Neutral (imperative and passive constructions); Purpose clauses; relative clauses; Use of cataphoric references (esp. the) Use of be (copula) Use of prepositional and adverbial phrases (locating objects) Presentative (there is/are) Descriptive adjectives (shape, size, colour, shape, number) Character adjectives and nouns Simple present tense modals (may, can, etc.)
3. Expressive/	Impressionistic writing is related to the writer's impressions received from a particular stimulus.	To reflect on a particular event; To give one's personal reaction; To share an intimate experience with the reader; To express one's opinion, mood and feelings	Use of the present tense; Use of impressionistic and character adjectives; Use of references; Use of modals; Use of personal style; Use of active voice
4. Expository	Expository writing is essentially meant to explain common as well as complex topics and phenomena by mean of either/or: -Classification (to organise a description into a hierarchy of groups); -Definition (to define and illustrate a complex topic: object, concept, idea, person, system); -Cause-effect (to show how events are mutually linked)	To inform the reader by providing clear, honest and relevant information; To present data and facts logically; To explain through clarification and illustration; To analyse through a clear representation of relationships between facts	Textual lexis and markers of elaboration (to illustrate, for example, for instance, that is to say, as an illustration...); Classification (to divide into groups to distinguish, former, latter,...); Definition (both form and naming); Relative clauses, Passive voice, Comparison and contrast (as...as, similarly, however, on the other hand, ...); Textual markers (clearly, plainly, undeniably, it has to be admitted that...; it is true that...); Probability (it is generally agreed that...; in all likelihood; certainly...)

Ve

5. Argumentation (persuasive)	To put forward an argument for/against; To present clearly the various aspects of an issue in a logical and balanced way; To provide evidence, facts and illustrations; To rely on a conventional academic method: Analytical, objective, intellectual impersonal and rational	To persuade the reader of the rationale behind the argument; To convince the reader of the relative truth of the propositions; To explain through details, evidence and facts	Use of subjunctive nouns and hedging (recommend that, advise, request, suggest...); Textual markers of clarification and elaboration (first, second, next, last, for example, for instance, also, besides, moreover...); Use of passive forms of verbs; Impersonal pronouns and phrases (it may be that...); Qualifying words and phrases (appear, seem, perhaps, claim...) Complex sentence structures Specialised register
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Appendix 2

Questionnaire One. Research Informants : First-Year English Language Learners

Learning to Write in a Foreign Language

To gain a better understanding of yourself as both a learner of and developing writer in the English language, you need to evaluate and become aware of the ways in which you learn the foreign language. You need also to become aware of your own difficulties, preferences and needs. To help you know yourself better as a learner, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions by putting a cross in the appropriate box or selecting the letter (s) which best reflects your opinion.

I. Personal Information

1. Age :
2. Sex :
3. Secondary-School Stream :
4. Total number of years in English learning :
5. Choice of the degree of 'Licence' in English Language : Personal ☐
Orientation ☐

II. Affective Orientations (Motivation & attitude)

1. According to you, are the new university studies in English very important for your future professional life ?
Yes ☐ No ☐

If YES :

To some extent.

☐

To a great extent

☐

2. In your opinion, is your effort to learn English enormous ?

Yes

No

☐☐

If YES :

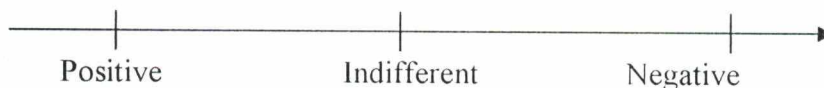
To some extent.

☐

To a great extent.

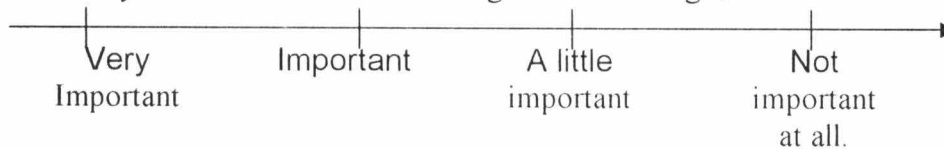
☐

3. What is your attitude towards learning English, in general ?



☐☐☐

4. What is your attitude towards learning to write in English ?

☐☐☐☐

5. Is your experience as a foreign language learner an enjoyable one ?

Yes	☐
-----	--------------------------

No	☐
----	--------------------------

If YES :

To some extent.

☐

To a great extent.

☐

6. Did you learn to write in English only to pass the Baccalaureate examination ?

Yes	☐
-----	--------------------------

No	☐
----	--------------------------

7. Are you interested in the British culture ?

Yes	☐
-----	--------------------------

No	☐
----	--------------------------

If YES :

To some extent.

☐

To a great extent.

☐

III. Writing Experience, Preferences and Difficulties

8. Relying on your own writing experience, can you describe how you usually write in English ?

I generally write in English the same way as I write in Arabic or French. ☐

I think in Arabic or French, then I write the words in English. ☐

I first write sentences in Arabic or French, then I translate into English. ☐

I try to think in English, organise my ideas and then write the text. ☐

9. Relying on your own writing experience, can you list which writing aspects you prefer to concentrate on ?

The organisation of ideas (to take main ideas and think about their development) ☐

The choice of grammatical structures (to follow the basic sentence models to avoid errors) ☐

The choice of relevant vocabulary (selecting the right words) ☐

The concentration on writing mechanics (spelling, capitalisation and punctuation) ☐

Selecting first the type of text that you wish to write (essay, article, story) ☐

Selecting logical links for a specific organisation ☐

Neat handwriting ☐

A good title and a clear writing purpose ☐

10. Do you face serious difficulties when writing ?

If YES :

Yes ☐

No ☐

Concerning which aspect ?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Insufficient amount of vocabulary | ☐ |
| Writing mechanics | ☐ |
| Sentence construction | ☐ |
| Organisation of ideas | ☐ |
| Expression of meaning | ☐ |
| Absence of ideas | ☐ |
| Unclear instructions | ☐ |

11. In your opinion, are the causes of the above difficulties due to

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Uninteresting topics | ☐ |
| Insufficient writing practice | ☐ |
| Insufficient reading | ☐ |
| Lack of textbooks and writing materials | ☐ |
| Poor teaching methodology | ☐ |
| Lack of cooperation in the classroom. | ☐ |

12. Which of the following suggestions may help you overcome your writing problems ?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Have a good and solid knowledge of grammar. | ☐ |
| Have a rich vocabulary by constant reading. | ☐ |
| Have a lot of writing practice. | ☐ |
| Have cooperation and group composition. | ☐ |
| Have self-access writing material (use of additional textbooks and CD.Roms without the teacher's intervention). | ☐ |
| Have interesting and authentic writing topics, tasks and projects. | ☐ |
| Have a good teacher and effective teaching methodology. | ☐ |

Appendix 3: Questionnaire Two : University-Level Teachers

The following questionnaire aims at revealing your own assessment of first-year English Language students' proficiency and writing ability. It also aims at examining current writing pedagogies (classroom practices and methodological principles) with the purpose of implementing relevant writing instruction and strategy training.

You are therefore kindly requested to put a tick in the appropriate box or boxes and to make comments whenever necessary.

Teaching Experience : Number of Years

Post-Graduate (field of) Specialisation :

Modules in Charge :

Sex : Male ☐ Female ☐

I. Assessment of First-Year Learners' Entrant Skills

1. Taking into consideration the majority of first-year learners, how do you assess their language proficiency ?

Excellent ☐

Good ☐

Average ☐

Weak ☐

2. According to you, which language skill (s) is/are most developed in the new Baccalaureate holders ?

Listening comprehension ☐

Oral expression ☐

Reading Comprehension ☐

Written Expression ☐

3. What types of difficulty have you first encountered with the new entrants ?

Linguistic (low language proficiency) ☐

Motivational (demotivated learners) ☐

Attitudinal (negative attitudes towards English language and culture) ☐

Contextual (large mixed-ability groups) ☐

Material (lack of teaching material) ☐

Others. ☐

4. In general, what is your opinion of the new entrants' writing performance ?

Excellent ☐

Good ☐

Average ☐

Weak ☐

5. What are the main weaknesses that you have observed in the new entrants' writing performance ?

Limited vocabulary (lexical choice) ☐

Limited syntactic ability (few sentence types) ☐

Inaccurate sentence construction (word order and patterns) ☐

Poor writing mechanics (capitalisation, punctuation, spelling) ☐

Untidy handwriting (unclear and messy) ☐

Incoherent paragraph development (absence of an idea-unit) ☐

Incoherent text development (absence of a message-unit) ☐

Inappropriate Organisation (rhetorical choice) ☐

6. What types of learning and cognitive strategies have you observed in the new entrants' writing performance ?

Asking for further information and clarification	☐
Co-operating with peers	☐
Asking the teacher for help	☐
Using reference books (dictionaries)	☐
Writing simple outlines	☐
Taking notes	☐

7. What types of writing-composing strategies have you observed in the new entrants' writing performance ?

Translation (translating from Arabic or French into English)	☐
Coining (creating new or borrowing words from French)	☐
Repetition (repeat the same word or expression over and over again)	☐
Coordination (using conjunctions to write very long sentences To express one idea)	☐
Processing (using outlines, notes and drafting)	☐
Composing (writing, rewriting and editing using rough Papers)	☐

II. Writing Experience, Instruction and Assumption

8. How long have you been teaching the writing skill ?..... years

9. Have you received any specific training in teaching writing ?

☐

Yes

☐

No

10. In your opinion, what are the main reasons that make writing an important skill at the university level ?

Reinforcement of language proficiency	☐
Aid to learning and thinking	☐

Support of the other language skills
Primary requirement for academic success

☐
☐

11. What are the different types of text that you teach in the classroom ?

Essays (academic texts)

☐

Stories (narratives)

☐

Reports (giving accounts)

☐

Letters (formal, informal, business)

☐

Surveys (small projects on social issues)

☐

Brochures and Broadsheets (guides)

☐

12. What are the different written tasks that you employ in the writing class ?

Syntactic expansion (simple, compound, complex)

☐

Lexical expansion (word formation)

☐

Paragraph organisation (topic sentence, main statements, support sentences)

☐

Text transformation (transforming a text from one type to another)

☐

Text Coherence (arranging scrambled sentences)

☐

Information transfer (from visual to written)

☐

Summary writing (writing summaries of reading passages)

☐

Textual identification (identifying textual patterns in texts)

☐

Textual reconstruction (reconstructing a text by Using an identified discourse pattern)

☐

13. Do you collaborate on writing tasks with your own students ?

Yes	
-----	--

No	
----	--

If yes, please specify the type of collaboration.

Encourage them to generate ideas through brainstorming and discussion ☐

Ask them to prepare simple outlines ☐

Suggest your own opinion ☐

Encourage them to ask you for help with language Difficulties ☐

Provide constant and rapid feedback through useful and clear comments ☐

Write your own sentences or sample text on the Board ☐

Provide conferencing to poor learners ☐

14. Do your students regularly collaborate with each other ?

Yes	
-----	--

No	
----	--

15. Do you ask your students to correct and mark their own or each other's work by giving them a marking grid ?

Yes	
-----	--

No	
----	--

III. Teacher's Writing-Strategy Awareness

16. Do you teach explicit writing strategies to help your students overcome their difficulties ?

☐	Yes
--------------------------	-----

☐	No
--------------------------	----

If yes, what types of strategy ?

Meta-cognitive (advance preparation) ☐

Cognitive (composing process) ☐

Textual (explicit metalanguage awareness) ☐

Personal (co-operation and involvement) ☐

17. Do you introduce explicit textual metalanguage to talk about text structure patterns ?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please indicates which ones.

Cohesive patterns (syntactic relationships among sentences) ☐
 Lexical cohesion (semantic relationships among words and sentences) ☐

Metadiscourse signals (logical connectors between ideas) ☐

Contextual features (reader and purpose) ☐

Register (lexical choice) ☐

Style (formal/informal ; personal/impersonal ; tentative/imposing) ☐

Rhetoric (organisational modes) ☐

Coherence patterns (overall text structure) ☐

18. In your opinion, which of the following strategy types are most useful for and applicable to our teaching situation ? ☐

Meta-cognitive (previewing the main ideas, rehearsing the language to be used, selecting key words, sentences and facts, checking written production and evaluating the end product) ☐

Cognitive (using reference material, grouping information and processing the text) ☐

Affective (questioning for clarification, co-operating with classmates) ☐

Discourse (using known vocabulary, word formation, sentence combination and expansion, building up awareness of writing as a conventional discourse through text analysis and reconstruction, collecting models of authentic text types) ☐

IX. Writing-Strategy Evaluation

19. What types of text-examination procedures do you regularly use for evaluating your learners' writing performance.

Expository text.(explaining and clarifying a topic) ☐

Narrative text (narrating a sequence of events) ☐

Descriptive text (describing an object, person or process) ☐

Summary (summarising a reading passage) ☐

Textual transformation (transforming a text from one type
To another (e.g., from a conversation to a report) ☐

Grammatical transformation (transforming a text from one
grammatical aspect to another (e.g., from active to passive)

Stylistic transformation (from one style to another)

Coherence and organisation (organising notes into a well-structured
Text —topic sentence, main statements, support sentences ;
introduction, development and conclusion)

20. Do you rely only on formative (formal end-of -term) evaluation to test
your learners' writing performance ?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, please indicate which evaluative procedures you regularly use.

Weekly homework ☐

Classroom composition ☐

Journal writing ☐

Classroom newspaper ☐

Group project ☐

Others ☐

21. Which errors do you consider most serious ?

Mechanics

Lexical choice and variety

Grammatical accuracy

Syntactic variety

Clear meaning

Paragraph organisation

Text organisation

Neat handwriting

Clear communicative message

Strategic awareness

22. How often do you assess your students' strategic behaviour when writing ?

Always

Sometimes

Never

Thank you very much for your help !

Appendix 4: Secondary-School Level Teachers of English Questionnaire

You are kindly requested to complete the following questionnaire by putting a tick in the appropriate box or boxes, or to make comments for the given questions whenever required.

General Questions

Secondary School :

Sex : Male ☐ Female ☐

Teaching Experience (Number of Years) :

I. Educational Objectives of Secondary-School Level English Language Learning

1. According to you, does English Language Learning (ELL) at the secondary-school level prepare learners to cope with university studies at the language-proficiency level ?

Yes ☐No ☐

If YES :

To some extent. ☐To a great extent. ☐

2. According to you, does ELL prepare learners cognitively by developing their thinking abilities : to reason, to analyse and to synthesise ?

Yes ☐No ☐

If YES :

To some extent ☐To a great extent ☐

3. According to you, does ELL prepare learners affectively by fostering their motivational and attitudinal tendencies : clear motivation, positive attitude and apparent interest ?

Yes ☐No ☐

If YES :

To some extent ☐To a great extent ☐

II. Pedagogical Objectives

4. Which skill appears to you to hold the greatest importance for secondary-school learners ?

Listening

☐

Speaking

☐

Reading

☐

Writing

☐

5. Which skill appears to you to pose serious difficulties to learners ?

Listening

☐

Speaking

☐

Reading

☐

Writing

☐

6. How much time is allotted to the teaching of each skill in the weekly session ?

Listeningh/mn

Speakingh/mn

Readingh/mn

Writingh/mn

7. Compared with the other curriculum subjects, do you consider the teaching time to be adequate ?

Yes	☐
-----	--------------------------

No	☐
----	--------------------------

8. According to you, which language skill (s) seems/seem to be most developed at the secondary-school level ?

Listening ☐

Speaking ☐

Reading ☐

Writing ☐

Can you give some reasons ?

.....
.....
.....

9. Which of the following language objective (s) does the official syllabus aim at achieving ?

Language proficiency (solid linguistic foundation) ☐

Oral communication ability (fluency) ☐

Written communication ability (writing efficiency) ☐

Reading comprehension ☐

10. Which of the following learning objective (s) does the official syllabus aim at achieving ?

Develop personal learning strategies : ask relevant questions for clarification, make notes, use reference books and cooperate with classmates ☐

Become active learners : think about and assess the transmitted knowledge ☐

Become autonomous learners : use self-access material, evaluate and check one's own learning and performance ☐

Build up a repertoire of useful strategies in each skill : process information, develop a metalanguage and language awareness ☐

11. In your opinion, how often are the syllabus objectives effectively attained by the majority of teachers and learners ?

Always	☐
Often	☐
Sometimes	☐
Rarely	☐
Never	☐

III. Writing Instruction Methodology

12. With regard to the majority of 3 AS pupils, how well is their writing performance (the ability to create an effective text in English) ?

Good	☐
Average	☐
Poor	☐

13. How long is the teaching session ?

15 mns	☐
30 mns	☐
1 Hour	☐
More than one hour	☐

14. What do the writing tasks focus on ?

Grammatical accuracy : tenses, agreement, word order	☐
Writing mechanics : capitalisation, punctuation, spelling	☐
Sentence construction : simple, compound, complex	☐
Sentence expansion : reduced and extended clauses	☐
Lexical work : word formation, lexical cohesion	☐
Paragraph construction : topic, main, support sentences	☐

Text and content organisation : logical development
of ideas (coherence) ☐

15. What are the different types of text that learners are taught to write ?

Expository essays

☐

Narratives (stories)

☐

Reports (accounts)

☐

Letters (business, formal, friendly)

☐

Articles

☐

Surveys (group projects)

☐

Brochures

☐

16. What types of difficulty do your pupils regularly encounter when completing written tasks ?

Grammatical inaccuracy

☐

Limited vocabulary

☐

Poor writing mechanics

☐

Incoherent organisation of a paragraph as an idea unit

☐

Incoherent organisation of a text as a message conveyor

☐

Lack of relevant and meaningful content

☐

17. According to you, what are the main reasons behind the pupils' writing weaknesses ?

The complexity of the writing skill itself

☐

Insufficient teaching time for classroom practice

☐

Irrelevant textbook writing activities

☐

Inadequate methodology

☐

Pupils' own demotivation and negative attitudes

☐

Others.

☐

III. Writing Strategy Instruction

18. In addition to basic writing sub-skills, do you introduce strategies that may help your pupils overcome some of their writing difficulties ?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, can you give some examples ?

.....
.....
.....

19. Which of the following strategies have you observed in your pupils' writing performance ?

Use of translation

☐

Use of repetition (repeating a word or expression over and over again to express the same idea)

☐

Use of cooperation

☐

Use of processing (planning, rewriting, editing)

☐

Use of references

☐

20. Do you collaborate on writing tasks with your pupils ?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, what kind of collaboration ?

Encourage them to generate ideas through discussion

☐

Ask them to prepare a working outline

☐

Provide them with authentic and interesting additional texts

☐

Give them rapid and useful feedback

☐

Write your own sentences or text on the board

☐

IV. Evaluation

21. What types of evaluation procedures are used at the secondary-school level ?

Formative : formal end-of-term examination

☐

Evaluative : classroom composition and homework

☐**V. Suggestions**

22. Relying on your classroom experience, what suggestions would you make to help improve learners' writing performance ?

Appendix 5: Frequency of Answers in SSLTs Questionnaire

Rubrics (Questions)	Respondents' Answers	Type	AF	RF
1.Language-Proficiency	Most reported Yes to a certain extent.	Yes	08	80
		No	02	20
2.Cognitive Preparation	Most reported Yes to a certain extent.	Yes	07	70
		No	03	30
3.Affective Preparation	Most reported Yes to a certain extent.	Yes	07	70
		No	03	30
4.Skill Preparation	Most considered Reading as the most important (followed by speaking and writing).	R.	07	70
		Wr.	04	40
		Sp.	01	10
		Lis.	00	00
5.Difficult Skill (s)	The majority selected Writing.	W.	09	90
		R.	00	00
		S.	02	20
		L.	01	10
6.Teaching Time	Sufficient		00	00
	Insufficient		10	100
7.Official-Syllabus Objectives'Priorities (reading, writing, speaking, grammar)	All respondents mentioned Reading as the first objective to be achieved.	R.	10	100
		W.	03	30
		S.	04	40
		G)	01	10
8.Official-Syllabus Learning Objectives (personal learning strategies LS, composing strategies CS ,become active autonomous learners AA)	Most reported the development of personal learning strategies to be the primary objective of the syllabus.	LS	07	70
		CS	04	40
		A/A	01	10
9.Frequency of Syllabus-Objective Achievement	Always		00	00
	Often		05	50
	Sometimes		03	30
	Rarely		02	20
	Never		00	00
10. Assessment of 3 AS Writing Performance	Good		00	00
	Average		01	10
			09	90

11. Objectives of the Writing Tasks	Poor		09	90
	Grammar		06	60
	Mechanics		09	90
	Sentence Construction		04	40
	Lexical Work		08	80
	Paragraphing		08	80
	Organisation of Ideas		07	70
12. Teaching of Text Types (Writing Performance)	Expository Essays		08	80
	Narrative Compositions		00	00
	Reports		07	70
	Letters		02	20
	Articles		00	00
	Surveys		00	00
	Projects		00	100
13. Main Causes of the Difficulties	The Complex nature of writing		07	70
	Insufficient teaching time		05	50
	Irrelevant textbook activities		04	40
	Inadequate methodology		10	100
	Pupils' Own Demotivation			
		Yes	07	70
		No	03	30
14. Strategy Instruction collaboration	Most reported Yes.		05	50
	Most indicated : Translation		03	30
	Repetition		03	30
	Cooperation		04	40
	Dictionary Use		02	20
	Drafting			
		Yes	08	80
16. Teacher's Classroom teaching Strategies (writing)	Most reported contributing to task accomplishment in class :	NO	02	20
			08	80
	Encourage pupils to generate ideas ;		03	30
	Help them develop a plan ;		08	80
	Provide additional material ;		03	30
	Write own examples on the board ;		05	50

17. Evaluation Procedures	Encourage revision.		
		08	80%
	Formal End-of-Term Examination	10	100
18. Focus of Evaluation	Classroom/Homework	08	80
	Continuous Evaluation (evaluative)		
19. Suggestions		04	40
	Language proficiency	06	60
	Writing Efficiency		
	Teachers made the following suggestions :	02	20
	Supplying adequate textbook (appropriate to the learners' actual level)	04	40
	Allocate more time for English teaching	03	30
	Give more importance to grammar teaching and vocabulary building	01	10
	Clarify the programme (make the curriculum goals and syllabus objectives clear and achievable)	01	10
	Raise the coefficient of English as a subject	02	20
	Devote specific lessons for strategy instruction (in addition to the usual ones)	02	20
	Have a variety of activities		

Appendix 6: Frequency of answers in ULTQ

Question Categories and Type/ Frequency of Answers	AF	RF
1. Assessment of the majority of entrants' language proficiency :		
Excellent	00	00%
Good	00	00%
Average	00	00
Inadequate	05	83%
Weak	01	16%
2. Identification of the most developed entrant language skill :		
Reading Comprehension	04	67%
Oral Expression	02	33%
Written Expression	01	17
Listening Comprehension	00	00
3. Type of the most frequent difficulty (ies) encountered by teachers in their first lessons with the new entrants :		
Linguistic (low language level)	05	83
Affective (low motivation)	02	33
Learning (ineffective strategies)	04	67
Contextual (mixed-ability)	01	17
Communicative (inability to communicate clearly)	04	67
4. Assessment of the entrants' writing performance :		
Excellent	00	00
Good	00	00
Average	02	33
Inadequate	03	50
Weak	01	17
5. Apparent weaknesses in the entrants' writing performance		
Limited vocabulary	06	100
Limited syntactic ability	05	83
Inaccurate sentence construction	05	83
Poor mechanics	05	83
Untidy handwriting	02	33
Incoherent paragraphing	04	67
Incoherent organisation	03	50
Irrelevant/uninteresting content	04	67

6. Observed global learning strategies in classroom activities :		
Collaboration	03	50
Enquiry	03	50
Referencing	04	67
Note-taking/Note-making	01	17
7. Observed local composing strategies used in written tasks :		
Planning	02	33
Drafting	02	33
Translation	06	100
Coining	04	67
Repetition (ideas, clauses, sts)	05	83
Simplification (syntactic/semantic)	03	50
Transfer (syntactic/rhetorical)	05	83
8. Importance of writing at the university level (main reasons)		
Reinforcement of language proficiency	05	83
Aid to learning and thinking	03	50
Support and monitor the other skills	02	33
Primary requirement in formal examinations	06	100
9. Types of writing performances (classroom and homework):		
personal narrative accounts (autobiography)	06	100
Expository descriptive essays	04	67
Letters	02	33
Articles	01	17
Short reports	02	33
Surveys (facts and figures)	01	17
Promoting computer-literacy skills (student- authored web-page)	01	17
10.Types of writing tasks practised in the classroom :		
Text summary	06	100
Information transfer	02	33
Imitative (following a model)	04	67
Controlled (altering specific structures)	04	67
	05	83

Guided (using prompts)	02	33
Self-writing (note-taking, personal reflection)	05	83
Display writing (short answer exercises)	03	50
Text- type transformation (from conversation to a report)	01	17
Discourse-pattern identification (use of flow tables)	03	50
Syntactic transformation (from active to passive)		
11. Classroom Teaching strategies :	06	100
Help students to generate ideas through pre-writing activities (brainstorming, referencing)	03	50
Suggest own opinions and write examples on the board.	02	33
Encourage co-operation through group work	02	33
Use pictures, maps, graphs, objects as prompts	03	50
Provide rapid feedback on students' performance	02	33
Bring authentic newspapers, magazines, and documents to encourage data-collection	01	17
Use the computer laboratory for drafting	03	50
Encourage peer correction by providing a clear correction grid	02	33
Move around the class to provide guidance and enhance active learning		
12. Introduction of explicit metalanguage and metadiscourse	06	100
Syntactic Cohesion (use of reference, substitution, ellipsis)	03	50
Lexical cohesion (use of modification, collocation,...)	03	50
Expansion (use of syntactic modification)	02	33
Metadiscourse (use of formal sentence starters)	02	33
Formality (pay attention to the reader)	04	67
Rhetorical Organisation (choice of appropriate mode)	01	17
Coherence patterns (explicit discussion of specific patterns according to the topic)		
1. Text-Type Examination Procedures	04	67
Short expository essay (100/200 words)	02	33

Short narrative account	05	83
Reading-Passage summary	01	17
Text-type transformation	01	17
Syntactic transformation		
(active/passive/direct/indirect)	00	00
Stylistic transformation (formal/informal)	01	17
Rhetorical organisation (provision of notes to be organised)		
14Evaluation Procedures	06	100
Formal end-of-term evaluation (institutional)	06	100
Summative classroom/homework evaluation		
15. Type of summative evaluation	01	17
Weekly homework	06	100
Classroom composition	01	17
Group project	03	50
Book report		
16. Assessment of strategy use and discourse awareness	01	17
Always	04	67
Sometimes	01	17
Never		
17. Opinion on the most serious errors in students' writing :	06	100
Mechanics	04	67
lexical choice and variety	05	83
grammatical accuracy	04	67
clear expression of meaning	04	67
Logical paragraph structure	03	50
Logical text structure	01	17
Clear purpose and readership	01	17
Neat handwriting		

Appendix 7: .Multi-Level Curriculum (Instruction and Emphasis): In order to meet the varied needs of the writing class there is an urgent need to seriously consider the option of a multi-level curriculum for the writing class divided into four levels, each with different emphases.

LEVEL 1	Emphasis : Development through writing tasks and group projects.
1. Knowledge and production of punctuation, capitalisation, subject-verb agreement, use of pronouns, correct spelling ; write simple sentences using the acquired grammar structures based on answers to questions ; 2. Significant work in sentence combining, especially in the understanding of independent and dependent clauses ; 3. introduction to pre-writing through class-discussion ; 4. understanding of the rudiments of the conceptual paragraph (one main idea) ; 5. understanding of descriptive and narrative writing in structured and free situations ; 1. initial practice in revision 7. reading and writing to reinforce comprehension questions.	
LEVEL 2	Emphasis : cohesion and coherence—the paragraph
1. Growing accuracy in mechanics, grammatical and sentence structures 2. Focused work on the topic sentence and use of specific details 3. Work on pre-writing strategies (brainstorming, tree diagrams, topic webs) 4. Understanding and production of conventional modes of development 5. A basic understanding of the concept of writing for an audience 6. Introduction to peer editing, individual and group revision 7. Further practice in phrases and clauses combination 8. Reading and writing connection	
LEVEL 3	Emphasis : The essay—development of information for specific audiences
1. Continued growth in mechanics, grammatical and sentence structures and connectors ; remedial work ; 2. Understanding of the link between paragraph and essay development and the expansion of paragraphs to essays ; 3. Understanding of function and production of topic sentences and thesis statements, introduction and conclusion techniques, detail and development ; 4. Extended use of pre-writing strategies, group work, and peer work 5. Focus on monitoring and revision strategies (edit to check for main ideas, coherent development, appropriate arrangement of ideas, practice group editing, peer editing, and self-editing) ; 6. Focus on the expectations of readers ; 7. Developing knowledge of reading-writing connection for investigating, and reporting genuine information 8. Term Project	
LEVEL 4	Emphasis : Academic Writing
1. growth in use of sentence structures, coherence devices, and pre-writing and revising techniques ; 2. Analysis of academic writing assignments, analysis of essay types to fulfill assignments in literature,	

civilisation, psychology, and linguistics ;

3. Continued work on organisation and coherent development of essays ;

4. Focus on reading-writing for effective and informative writing in arguing, criticising, persuading, and exploring ; introduce students to the selection and presentation of relevant evidence through reading various sources of information ;

5. Understanding of effective library research in individual term projects ;

6. Focus on persuasive and critical writing (research writing) ;

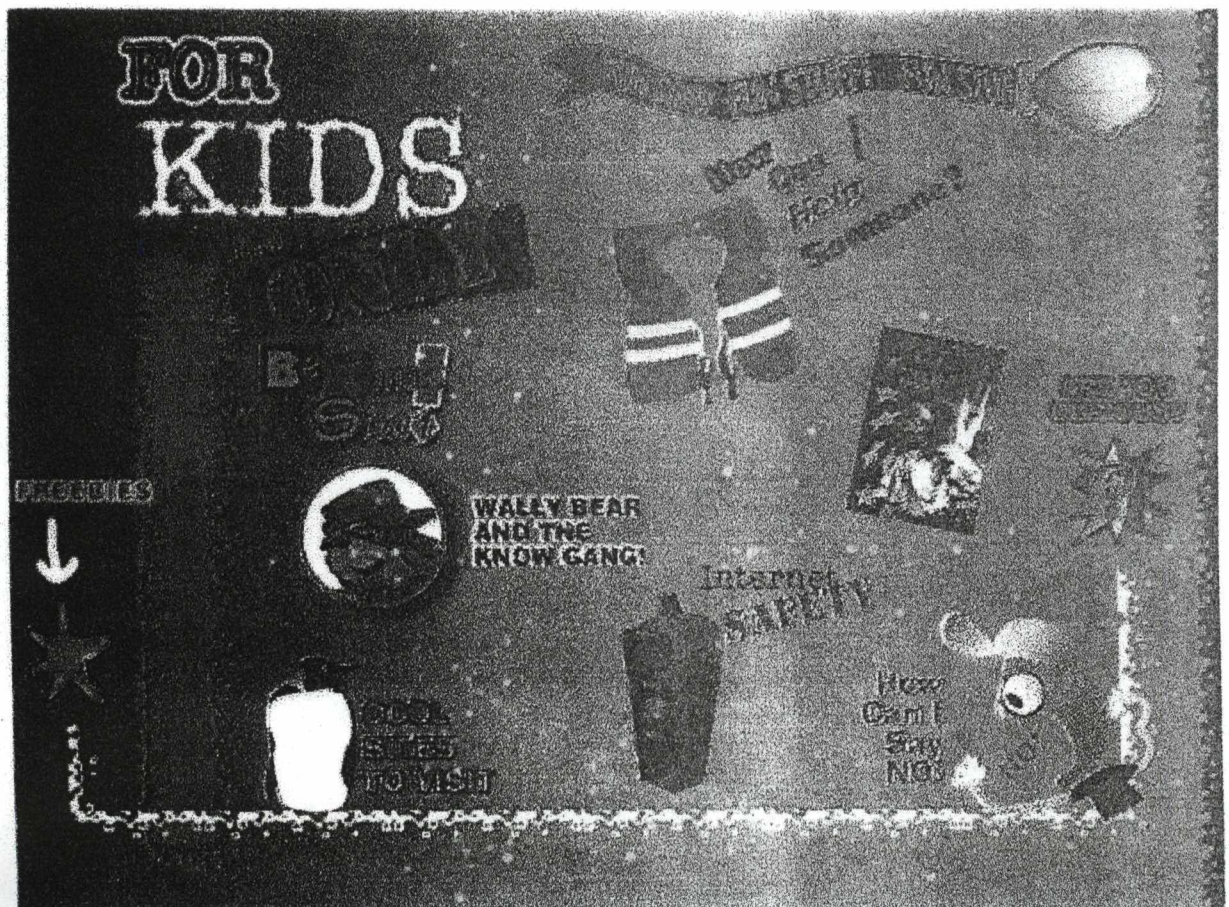
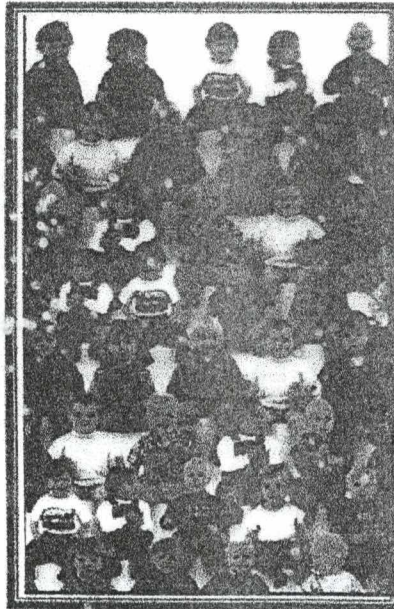
7. Introduce students to multi-paragraph essay that combine 3 or 4 paragraphs ;

8. Project : research paper on a particular topic (social, linguistic, scientific, etc.).

Appendix 8: Unaltered Samples of Students' Developmental Works

The education System :

England – Algeria



The education systems in England and Algeria

Introduction

Every day, in our different activities, we see and meet a lot of persons with different personalities and capacities. This results in reality, directly from the education that these persons have received since their childhood.

The education is a human right, source of our immense hope of transformation, liberty, democracy and lasting human development rest on this right.

The stake in practice of the education's right is beneficial for the whole of the world. Certainly, there is not a simple answer for the violation of this right, but the challenge to raise holds in a sentence: in the third half of the 21st century, the education for all must be placed at the first rank of our priorities.

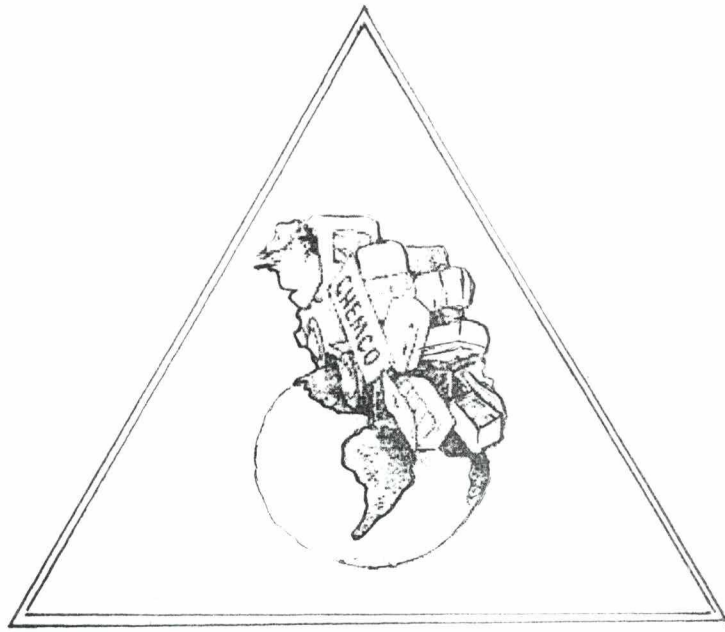
For a more deepened study of this subject, we will compare the education systems in England and Algeria.

England

In England, the education system is under the tutelage of "The Department of Education" in conjunction with the local authorities and committees of the educational establishment administration.

"The Central Ministry" decides of the orientation of educational policies as the conformity of the national program, modes of the exams during the obligatory education period, questions of research and development and the minimum level of knowledge to reach.

There are two kinds of schools in England: state and private ones. The former are free and receive their budgetary envelope mostly from the state whereas the latter are fee paying. They don't receive subsidies and are financed therefore by endowments as well as by expenses of education paid by pupils. Only rich persons can send their children to these schools because there are very expensive.



WARNING!

- As every 21st April, we celebrate, the Earth's Day, and as every year, It's time to draw up the "shredle" of what we ~~done~~ for our planet. It's time too, to ~~concluste~~^{conclude} about our previous actions, and taking resolutions to serve better, and save our small planet.

In fact, the earth is small, fragile and in danger if we do not act immediately.

- In recent years, the science of ecology has classified the workings of the biosphere - as the complex interrelationships among humans, animals, plant the physical environment, and affirmed that the biological system is disturbed. That is why, our contribution is, more than any time before, necessary.

Our current thinking has to favour the protection of entire ecological regions by the creation of biosphere reserves, but before all, to make people conscious about the real danger, and responsible of their daily acts, to save the environment. In fact, more than a political case, it's a common anxiety of what would be our near future.

The question that everyone is thinking about is: How is our planet?

And the answer is, not so good as we think.

Governments and scientists alike have agreed that the problem is real and serious, and all are agreed of the emergency to act.

Amongst the fact that the global climate is changing, and by this way disturbing the ecological system, Greenpeace, is campaigning for government to face up their responsibilities and urgently address the several environmental crises. Thus, some measures might be taken and applied!

What Greenpeace calls the Carbon Hypocrisy is the fact that, government of developed countries - who previously signed on Sep. 16, 1987 at Montreal the accord to reduce the use of the CFCs - continue to spend lot of money to support the development of coal, gas, and oil companies recognize that oil alone causes dangerous climate change. Therefore, we reach the safe limit of 1 degree C.

To avoid dangerous planet's climate or what is called the greenhouse-gases' effects, the emission of CO₂ ought to be reduced immediately and the adoption of new energy direction, based on renewable clean energy such as wind or solar power is the most appropriate.

Another effect of the climate change, is the destroy of the ozone layer by the CFCs, and at the logic consequence of the mass production of CO₂.

In fact, still now, the world consumes 34-40% of the ozone layer's depleting substances. Consequently, the environment is being toxicated: the air, the water, animals and fishes as well as humans are affected and all are the victims of humans' carelessness.

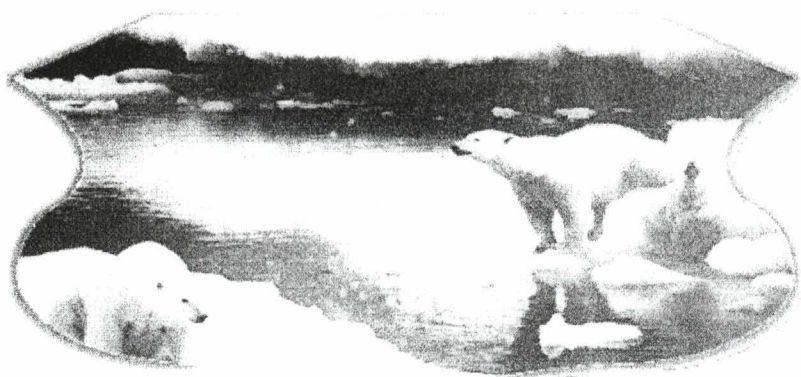
Ultimately and alarmingly, the earth is in real danger and we must act before it's too late.

The earth, as a young planet, demands care, needs protection and more than all love.

Working hand in hand to save our

Planet Earth.

The earth's cry



The polar-bears are afraid, we are too.

I say : **STOP** TO POLLUTION

