Module 8

Supporting writing

Introduction

Learning to write is a progression of skills. This progression usually starts before children go to school as they become aware of print in their surroundings and begin "pre-writing", for example by making marks representing "words" or tracing their names. The *English Language Learning Progressions (Introduction* pp 33-37) explains how writing skills in an additional language develop for different learners. The pattern can be different for students who have not learnt to write in first language. The *ELIP Resource* gives details of how to support students from Foundation to later stages in their writing development. Writing should be developed at the same time as reading and oral language.

Some English language learners find writing tasks very hard. They may have some ideas but:

- their writing skills may not be well developed
- they may not understand what is needed and may not have seen any models
- they know they make lots of grammar errors so they feel embarrassed
- they don't want to try because they haven't had success before.

Therefore, they need lots of opportunities for practice, lots of scaffolding and lots of encouragement to write.

At early stages, learners need to gradually develop the skills to:

- hold and use a pencil
- understand that sounds can be turned into letters and groups of letters
- form shapes and letters
- write on the line
- write left to right on the page
- write individual words
- copy, then write, sentences
- complete a gap sentence by writing one word in the gap
- complete sentences using sentence stem beginnings and / or writing frames.

After they have mastered foundation writing skills they will gradually need to acquire the skills to:

- write learned simple sentences independently
- generate longer sentences
- write paragraphs
- sequence and organise long texts and write for different purposes
- write for making notes (summarising)
- meet the writing requirements for curriculum topics and for assessments (e.g. NCEA in secondary school).

Types of text

All students need to prepare for writing by gathering vocabulary and ideas. In order to write well, students need to have talked about, thought about and processed the topic/subject area.

They need to understand the purpose and the audience for their writing. They need to know what type or genre of text to write.

The genre or type of text is important. Different genres require different elements or sections, and language features. In this handbook only genres for use in curriculum areas will be shown, but these can be both oral and written. Many texts used in the classroom contain different genres within the same text. You need to read a text carefully to see what genres it contains. The first Module 8 task is to identify some different types of texts or genres.

Read through the table on page 67 to check your understanding of different types of genres used in classroom learning.

Genres (text types): Purposes and Forms

* Check examples in *ELIP*

Genre	Purposes	Oral Forms (examples)	Written Forms (examples)
Recount	Retells past events (often merges with narrative)	'Morning talk' or talk about an experience	Diary writing: – in the weekend…' – a trip: Last week we visited…
Procedure	Supplies details of how something is done and the order in which the process happens	Directions to a school office, to a visitor, instructions for a game, or art process	Recipe: How to make pizza Game instructions: – how to play snakes and ladders – how to do a lino cut (see ELIP)
Description	Tells what something specific is like	News time: -My new kitten is …' Oral language games: – Describe a mystery object in a bag – Describe a pet – Describe a mineral	Classified ads: e.g. Car for Sale Descriptions of places, people, things (both real and not real)
Report	Tells what a group of things is like	Class talk -The bears at the zoo were… – TV documentary	Factual books: A book about different types of animals Pamphlets: All about heart attacks
Argument	Provides reasons for a decision or judgment	I should be allowed to use the computer because…	Letter to the editor: Why our school needs a crossing
Explanation	How something works or the reasons why something is the way it is	– how the library borrowing system works – why an object sinks or floats	Car manuals How a recycling plant works Why people fight wars
Discussion	Provides both sides of an argument	Class discussion Debates	Newspaper article – The pros and cons of drinking coffee
Argument or persuasive text	Presents a viewpoint on an issue	Why we must save the whales	Government paper – Unemployed youth – Environmental interest group paper – Why we should worry about the greenhouse effect
Narrative	To amuse and entertain: to tell a story, with some problem or situation which is resolved in the story	Class discussion Narration of stories Sharing Retelling of a story that has been read in class	Myths and legends Fables Fairy tales Family stories Creative writing

Supporting student writing

Teacher aides/bilingual tutors can help students develop writing skills by using first language (or English) to:

- scaffold the writing process (see *ELLP*, p 9)
- draw on student's prior knowledge
- make use of graphic organisers (which could be in first language) – see this Module
- discuss visual prompts to support writing (such as picture sequences, see Module 5)
- show and discuss models of writing – different types of genres and texts - talk about model in L1 – (see *ELIP* for what to talk about)
- explain how to use writing frames
- discuss differences between spoken and written English
- write in first language at the planning stage
- teach students to use editing skills.

Editing means checking what you have written. An Editing Chart on the wall can be useful to tell students exactly what to check (see Resource 8D for a model).

Spelling

A spelling programme should be provided alongside the teaching of vocabulary, reading, and writing. Learners need systematic support to master standard spelling because spelling is an important requirement for effective written communication.

An effective speller:

- can spell a large number of words, including words with irregular spelling patterns and words that the learner doesn't know the meaning of
- can spell new words, using their knowledge of other words and word families
- uses their visual memory, to write words and say them aloud to help them learn spellings
- may sound out words with exaggerated pronunciation (syllable by syllable) as a strategy for working out spelling e.g. go – ing.

Learners who have difficulty spelling often don't have a good grasp of the sounds of the new language. They may lack letter–sound knowledge, have difficulty paying attention to detail, and/or have poor visual sequencing memory. Learners who have trouble spelling are likely to stick to a core vocabulary, avoid using common but hard-to-spell words, and use more repetition, resulting in less effective writing.

English has many words originally borrowed from other languages, and is a particularly difficult language to learn to spell. The spellings of many words must, therefore, be learned by rote. There are some spelling rules that are quite regular, however, and these should be taught to learners.

At the most basic level, learners should be encouraged to learn words using the *Look, Say, Spell, Cover, Write, Check* method. This is one way to help learners to grasp the forms of words and improve their phonemic awareness and visual memory. Learners need to practise learning words in different ways to increase their vocabulary and improve their spelling.

Graphic organisers (use before writing, before reading and after reading)

A graphic organiser is a way of organising ideas and helps students think through content and understand it. There are many different types of graphic organisers, which can be used for different purposes at different points in the learning process. A mind map is one type of graphic organiser.

Mind maps can be used:
- at the beginning of a new topic when the students are thinking about what they know already
- during a topic to record and organise information as it is introduced or learnt
- to help organise information in preparation for a written task or research project
- to revise and study before an exam
- during an exam to help recall main ideas and check that main points have been covered.

Using graphic organisers enables learners to decide the topic, the key ideas, the sub-topics and the information that best fits into each topic and sub-topic. Bilingual teacher aides need to work with the teachers to make sure that the right kind of graphic organiser is used for a particular purpose. ESOL online has a link to many different types of graphic organisers, with explanations of what each type is best used for.

http://www.tki.org.nz/r/esol/esolonline/classroom/teach_strats/graphic_organisers_e.php

Graphic organisers can be used:
- to record prior knowledge about a topic or section of text
- to think and talk through ideas
- to check learning at the end of the topic.

Writing frames (discuss before writing and use during writing)

Writing frames are structures which help students produce texts which fit a particular purpose and use the right sort of organisation and language structures for different types of genres. There are many different types of writing frames. Writing frames can be very simple for early stage learners, or quite complex for later stage learners.

Often the only instruction given to students before they write is "write about" or "write a story about", especially for younger learners. However, in order to be able to "write to learn", it's important for learners to understand the differences between types of texts and to have seen models before they write.

A writing frame will not on its own be enough to support learners in their writing. They will also need a vocabulary bank and some ideas about the topic before they write.

David Wray is an educationalist from England who has created a number of writing frames on the web. They are free to download from
http://www.warwick.ac.uk/staff/D.J.Wray/Ideas/frames.html

The *ELIP* can also be used to develop writing frames.

Writing frames are helpful as a support for students as they move from being dependent to independent learners. To be used effectively writing frames need to:
- offer enough support to help the learner attempt a new or difficult task, but not so much that the writing is reduced to filling in boxes, which will provide no scope for the learner to improve – the writing frame must require the learner to produce independent continuous text, at the appropriate level

- be used as part of the planning and drafting stages, helping learners gather their thoughts and organise what they want to write
- be properly structured to suit the type of text and style of writing being practised - a frame for a description will be different from one for some instructions
- be designed and used progressively, providing less scaffolding for harder tasks as learners gain in experience and skill
- be used alongside reading texts that model the type of writing being practised.

Used in this way, writing frames can help learners to extend their range of writing genres, learn the requirements of more formal registers, and improve the fluency of their writing so the whole text make sense – all of which makes them more able to do different writing tasks independently.

You can make professional judgments in consultation with the teachers to decide when students can write without using a frame.

Dictation

Dictation tasks, when planned well, are a good example of how to integrate listening, speaking, reading and writing. Traditional dictation meant just writing down word for word what was read out, and has been used in English and foreign language teaching for a long time.

However, there are many different **interactive** ways of using dictation for learning which are fun and useful. One of these is Running Dictation.

Running Dictation

Purpose: to remember words and phrases and dictate them to your partner.

Instructions

1. Break students into teams of 3-4, or pairs for small classes.
2. Put one sentence on a piece of paper for each team, and stick it onto a board at the front of the room.
3. One leader from each team goes to the board and tries to remember their sentence.
4. The leader returns to their team and dictates the sentence while team members write it down.
5. First team to finish correctly gets a point.
6. Change words/sentences and switch leaders.

Variations

- Use pictures for children who can't spell and have them draw the picture instead of writing the words.
- Use multiple sentences for more advanced students.
- Place sentences around the room and have each team member do one each.
- Teams have to put the sentences into the right order before handing in the paper.

Notes

Make each team's paper different so students don't simply listen to other teams. Leaders are not allowed to take their paper, write down anything, or yell across the room. They are allowed to return to the board to look at their paper as many times as they like. Use words from class to reinforce learned vocabulary and grammar structures.

Note-taking and summarising

Another sort of writing is note-taking and summarising, which students need to start in later primary years (from about Year 4 onwards) and continue through to the end of secondary school. Note-taking is a special skill, which students need to be taught. Successful note-takers know the difference between main ideas and details, and which are the most important main ideas for their purpose.

Module tasks

There are several different tasks in this module, and they should be spread out over some time. Plan to discuss each task with a coordinating teacher or another teacher aide and plan some time to do each task. Think carefully about how you could change the level of each task for learners at different stages of English language development.

Module 8 Task 1　　Sorting genres (text types)

Purpose: to sort different types of text on the same topic to see how different language structures and vocabulary create different genres.

Working with young learners
Young learners can do this task, but with much simpler and clearly different texts, and use some visual support (pictures) from the text to help them.

Individual and workshop task
Cut up the texts in Resource 8A (*Eggs* /Text types) and sort into different types of texts, then put the sections into order for each genre. To sort them into the right type, you need to look at what the text is about, then decide what type of text it is. (Refer to genre chart p65)

Module 8 Task 2　　Before and After 4x3 Grid
　　　　　　　　　　　　– Ideas about student writing

Resource 8B is a model of a 4x3 Grid to help you think about what you know at the start of this module about supporting writing. **You'll use it again at the end to check how your ideas have changed.**

Purpose: A 4x3 Grid is a note-making structure which can be used before a writing or reading task to gather ideas, then after reading or writing to review whether the main ideas have been included in the text.

Individual task
Complete the grid, based on what you do at the moment.

Workshop task
Complete the grid and share it with a partner.

Module 8 Task 3   Combining a 4x3 Grid and a Writing Frame

Purpose: to practise using a grid for note taking and to guide writing using a writing frame.

Working with young learners

Young learners can be helped to organise their ideas using grids, but these will need to be adapted. You could put one idea in each square to begin, as a model.

Individual task

Read the model text from *ELIP* Stage 2 20(c) Writing – Information report *New Zealand* and read through the text structure and language features (20b). Complete the 4x3 Grid before starting to write. When working with students, you could fill in the first line as an example for the other two boxes.

Students can use these notes to write an information report about their own country, using the information report Writing Frame if necessary.

Workshop task

Read the information report from *ELIP* Stage 2 20(c) writing. Choose a country all the group know something about and fill in the grid with a partner.

Module 8 Task 4   Teaching note-taking and summarising

Purpose: to understand how to find main ideas and details for making notes**.**

Different types of graphic organisers can help with note taking.

See ESOL online
http://www.tki.org.nz/r/esol/esolonline/classroom/teach_strats/graphic_organisers_e.php

Individual task and workshop task

For early stage learners (Foundation and Stage 1), you can make cards of main ideas and details (separately) sometimes in easier language than the text uses. Students can sort the cards into main ideas and details, then put them in order and match the main ideas with the details. You can read the text again, and get students to make notes without the cards. Use an *ELIP* text to create a note-making task.

Note-making task

- For class, make several copies of the text *Sustainable and Renewable Energy ELIP* Stage 3, 3(d).
- Number the paragraphs, then cut them up.
- Each person gets a paragraph to summarise – they could use a highlighter to show main ideas.
- Meet with partner of same number to each make a summary of their paragraph.
- Compare summaries.
- Swap notes with another group/pair to make sense of the notes and write a new paragraph from the notes.
- Put the whole text together again, in the right order and review the new text as a whole group.
- Check to make sure that the main ideas from the original are all included.

If you are working with only one or two students, you can cut the paragraphs up into smaller chunks, then get the students to sort them into the right order, then make notes on the main ideas. Take the original text away, and students rewrite a new text from their notes.

Good practice

Good practice means making sure that whenever you are helping students to develop as writers you have checked that they:

- understand the task and know what a successful piece of writing will look like (from explanations and models and shared assessment criteria)
- have had time to prepare for writing (by talking through or reading about the topic)
- have the resources (information and vocabulary) to complete the task.

Checklist for teachers and bilingual teacher aides for supporting writing

1. Do we know what to do to support learners at different levels?
2. Do we know what level each of the learners is at (for writing)?
3. Have we explained the purpose of this task to the learners, in first language if possible?
4. Are we using the right writing frames for different students?
5. Are we checking what is required for writing in this particular subject or curriculum area?
6. Have the learners had time to prepare for writing, with vocabulary, models and visuals?
7. Has the student got everything that is needed to complete the task?
8. Have we provided an editing checklist for this task?
9. Have we given time for students to edit their work and checked that the whole text makes sense, as well as checking grammar and spelling?

Resources

ELIP and *ELLP* have models of writing at different levels in different genres, and explanations of different ways to support writers. You can also use the *ELIP* reading texts as more models of writing in different curriculum areas.

You can find out more about how to help students learn to summarise in *Effective Literacy Practice Years 5-8*, pp 149-150 and in *Effective Literacy Strategies in Years 9-13* Chapters 5 and 6.

ESOL online has examples of checklists for writing in different genres.
http://www.tki.og.nz/r/esol/esolonline/classroom/teach_strats/checklists/e.php

Next steps

1. Go back to the 4x3 Grid (Resource 8A) on Ideas about student writing. Add any ideas that you have gained after completing this module, then change any information that you first wrote that you would no longer do.

2. Take time to decide with a coordinating teacher:
   - what writing programme your learners are going to follow so that it is linked to what they are learning in their other class time
   - how they can be helped in the mainstream when they are not in an ESOL programme
   - what models you are going to use with the learners
   - what writing strategies you will help them to use.

Module 9 is about supporting learning to learn.

Preparation: Read the *Independent Learning* section in the *ELLP* booklet for the students you work with (1-4,5-8, 9-13). Read Section 3, pp 18-20 of the *Refugee Handbook for Schools* which has several different examples of "learning to learn" strategies. Check with your students which strategies they know and use.

There are three different types of texts mixed up here. Copy off the texts page. The grid has been started for you. To complete the grid, cut along each line on p 75, then sort all the sections of text into three text types and put them into the grid in the correct column in the right order.

How did you know what belonged together, and what are some of the language differences between the different types of texts?

Genre (Text type) **Explanation**	Narrative	Information report
Experiment: to show what happens when gas expands and contracts.		
	The egg, with its silvery sheen, was lying in the pines where Arthur often went for an evening walk.	
		Two weeks later an adult worker emerges.

When the match went out, the hot air cooled and contracted causing less pressure, so that the greater air pressure outside pushed the egg into the bottle.	By the end of the week, the larva is fully grown.	Careful Arthur was going to walk right past it, without even touching it, but the fizzing excitement inside him changed his mind.	This means that before the egg was placed over the neck there was hot air in the bottle.
The egg was so big he had to put both arms round it to carry it home.	Then they switch the diet to a mixture of pollen and honey.	It was found that the egg was sucked into the bottle.	Arthur and the egg.
Something would hatch from this wonderful egg and he would be the first to know what that something was.	Honeybees	These hatch into larvae.	The worker then puts a lid on the cell so that the larva can pupate.
Even when he was a grown up man of considerable years, he was still being so careful that he had never had an adventure.	A lighted match was inserted into a glass bottle and a hard-boiled egg with the shell off was placed over the neck of the bottle.	Arthur felt a sudden unfamiliar fizz of excitement at the sight of it.	Then came the day that he found the enormous egg.
This experiment demonstrated that hot air expands on heating and contracts on cooling.	For the first few days the workers feed the larvae on a special substance from their mouths, called royal jelly.	Arthur Littlejohn had been taught to be a very careful person.	The queen bee lays her eggs in the small cells towards the bottom of the comb.

What are three differences between writing at beginning and advanced stages?	**What are three ways that I use now to support learners writing at different levels?**	**What are three different types of things students might need to write in different curriculum areas?**	**What are three ways I could help students to prepare for writing?**
1.	**1.**	**1.**	**1.**
2.	**2.**	**2.**	**2.**
3.	**3.**	**3.**	**3.**

Module 8   Preparing for writing – Combining 4x3 Grid and a Writing Frame   Resource 8C

Information report

My country (Stage 2 learners) *ELIP* **Stage 2, 20(c)**

Students should have:

- seen a model of the type of text they need to produce
- completed the grid before they begin to write the report.

Sometimes it can be helpful for them to complete the grid in first language. (Remember these grids are also useful for helping students to make notes about something they have read, or talked about.)

You could make a more simple frame for Stage 1 learners.

Foundation learners (and young learners) could be given the facts on pieces of paper and put them into the correct column and read them through with a teacher aide or partner.

4x3 Grid   My country

3 facts about the geography of my country	3 facts about language and customs in my country	3 birds and animals found in my country and one word to describe each one	3 important places or landmarks in my country and a fact about each place

Writing frame   Information report   My country

Text structure	
General statement – names country and gives information about a main idea (geography)	(Name of country) _____ is a land which _____ _____. The land is _____ and _____. The climate is _____.
Description Language and customs	The main language (or languages) in my country is (are)_____ _____. One important holiday day (or special time or festival) in my country is _____. In this festival people _____. One food that people in my country eat often is _____ _____.
Birds and animals	There are many birds and animals such as _____, _____and _____. The _____ lives in _____ and eats_____. The _____ is very_____ and eats_____. _____ are found _____ and are very_____.
Landmarks (important places)	Some famous landmarks are _____, _____ and _____. _____ is _____(where) and people like to visit because _____. _____ is important because_____ _____. Many people also go to _____ because _____.

Module 8 Editing checklist Resource 8D

These points should be changed for each task, so they are specific to the task and suit the age and level of the students. For young learners, use *ELLP* 1-4 p 63, and discuss other checklists with coordinating teachers.

At the text level I have checked that I have	At the sentence level I have checked that I have	At the word level I have
• written the right type of text for the task and kept to the topic	• used a main verb in every sentence	• chosen the right words for the task (subject words, general words)
• written the right type of text for the audience	• used a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end of each sentence	• checked word endings
• organised the information in the right order for this type of text	• used other punctuation where I need to (e.g. speech marks, commas)	• checked spelling
• used paragraphs for longer texts	• written the words in the right order	• checked grammar (e.g. singular and plural)
• written enough information to fit the success criteria	• used different ways of making sentences	• written on the lines of the page
• linked the ideas in the text with liking words	• used linking words to connect parts of a sentence	• used tenses correctly for the task