

The process approach to the teaching of writing: Focus on process rather than product

ABSTRACT

Composition writing has always been an integral part of the English Language curriculum in primary, secondary and tertiary education in Malaysia, yet being the most difficult of the four skills in English as a Second Language; the teaching of writing has often been neglected. Process writing, as distinguished from 'Product Writing', is playing a large role in ESL classes. Writing is seen as a communicative act with an intended purpose and audience. The teacher and other learners help the writer find a topic and revise drafts of a written piece until it conveys the intended meaning. While working to make their meanings clear, learners are assumed to acquire competence using the style, syntax, grammar and surface features of the language. During the writing process, students engage in pre-writing, planning, drafting and post-writing activities. However, learners do not necessarily engage in these activities in that order because the writing process is recursive in nature. Language rules are taught in teacher-led- mini-lessons but always in the context of expressing the learners' own ideas. This paper reports on a study that explores how a process-oriented approach to writing influences a group of university ESL students.