TEACHING AND ASSESSING LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (2)

For General Diploma Students (2nd route)

Compiled By

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Teaching and Assessing Linguistic Knowledge and Skills

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PREFACE

The field of English language teaching and assessment has undergone significant transformations in recent years, driven by advancements in research, pedagogy, and technology. The necessity for effective teaching and assessment of linguistic knowledge and skills has never been more pressing, particularly in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language. This textbook, *Teaching and Assessing Linguistic Knowledge and Skills*, is designed to provide general diploma students (2nd route) with a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental principles and best practices in English language teaching, assessment, and skill development.

The book is structured to equip future educators with both theoretical knowledge and practical applications. Chapter One lays the foundation by exploring key concepts in language assessment, test design, and alternative assessment methods, ensuring that students grasp the essential elements of fair and effective testing. The chapter also introduces the integration of technology in language assessment, emphasizing the role of teachers as reflective practitioners.

Chapter Two delves into the essential skills and strategies for developing effective reading abilities. In today's digital age, reading is no longer confined to print materials; online reading and digital literacy are indispensable. This chapter equips students with the skills necessary to navigate various types of reading tasks, including critical reading and data retrieval using the SEARCH framework.

Chapter Three focuses on vocabulary acquisition, a cornerstone of language proficiency. Given the linguistic challenges faced by Egyptian learners, this chapter presents effective techniques for acquiring, retaining, and applying vocabulary in diverse contexts. Understanding the importance of lexical development contributes significantly to students' overall language competence.

In Chapter Four, attention shifts to composition skills and academic writing. Writing is a fundamental component of communication, and developing structured, coherent, and well-articulated texts is crucial for academic and professional success. This chapter guides students through paragraph development, presentation of ideas, editing, and revising, while also addressing the unique conventions of academic writing.

The inclusion of WebQuest as an instructional strategy in Chapter Five highlights the role of inquiry-based learning in language teaching. The chapter provides insights into the structure and implementation of WebQuests, demonstrating their effectiveness in fostering student engagement and independent learning.

Recognizing that assessment is a continuous process, Chapter Six presents practical strategies for test preparation. Students will find guidance on understanding test formats, managing time effectively, utilizing study techniques, employing memory aids, and overcoming test anxiety. These strategies are essential for success in language learning and assessment.

To support students' comprehension of key terminologies, Chapter Seven provides a glossary of essential educational and language learning terms. This serves as a quick reference for concepts that are integral to both teaching and assessment practices.

As I present this textbook, my goal is to empower educators with the knowledge and skills required to teach and assess English effectively. I hope that this book serves as a valuable resource for general diploma students, guiding them towards becoming proficient and reflective language teachers who can inspire and support their learners.

Dr Mahmoud M. S. Abdallah (February, 2024)

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CHAPTER ONE

Assessment and English Language Testing

1.1 Introduction

There are many reasons for testing students in the English language; these include (see also Harmer, 2001; 2010):

1. Putting students at the appropriate level by finding out what they know and what they do not (i.e. **placement** test);
2. Identifying how students are getting on with the lessons, and to what extent they have assimilated previously-learned language content (i.e. **progress** test);
3. Seeing how well students have learned everything in a certain class/course (i.e. **achievement** tests), and this is the most common type of tests. It tests all four skills plus knowledge of grammar and vocab.;
4. Identifying the general language proficiency level that a learner has reached at any one time (i.e. **proficiency** tests). These are used by employers and universities as reliable measures of students' (applicants') language abilities.
5. Monitoring learners' progress and following-up with their learning.
6. Discovering learning difficulties and language learning needs.
7. Choosing competent language learners to perform specific tasks.
8. Measuring language skills, knowledge and competencies.

Tests are sometimes used, NOT only as 'one-off' events as in the above examples, but also for CONTINOUS ASSESSMENT purposes; in this case, a student's progress is measured as IT IS HAPPENING though the whole learning period, not just at the end (e.g. language portfolio and continuous recording).

1.2 Good Tests

Good tests should be:

1. **Valid** (i.e. designed to do the job they are supposed to do, or measure the specific aspects/components they are to measure);
2. **Reliable** (i.e. give the same or similar results if marked by many scorers or if administered on different occasions). A test should be designed to minimize the ***effect of individual marking styles***;
3. **Clean**, as much as possible, from the WASHBACK effect (i.e. teaching for the test). The **washback** (or back-wash) effect has a negative effect on teaching if the test fails to mirror our teaching; we may be tempted to make our teaching fit the test, rather than the other way round;
4. **Consistent** with the activities used in the classroom;
5. **Motivating** and **encouraging**; never design a FAILING test (i.e. don't make items too difficult for students to answer), and, on the other hand, never write very easy tests that only address low-achievers, for example.

1.3 Tests Types and Categories

Contrary to INDIRECT test items, DIRECT test items require students to use the language; students are asked to DO something (i.e. a **task**) instead of just demonstrating knowledge about language.

In READING, for example, students might be asked to put a set of pictures in order instead of choosing the right word, for example.

In LISTENING, we can test their global understanding of the text, or ask them to fill out a summary form or write their personal reflections.

In WRITING, instead of just put missing words in a sentence, we might ask them to write a LEAFLET or brochure based on information supplied in an accompanying text.

In SPEAKING, we might involve students in oral interviews or free discussions or ask them to DRAMATIZE (e.g. role-play) certain situations.

Direct tests might involve items that look like the kind of tasks that students have been practicing in their lessons. Direct test items are MORE DIFFICULT to mark than indirect ones. Markers tend to be very SUBJECTIVE while scoring a piece of writing, for example (Harmer, 2010).

INDIRECT or **OBJCTIVE** items of a language test are commonly used to measure knowledge and understanding of different language aspects (e.g. vocabulary and grammar). These items usually include:

- True-Or-False Items
- Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQ)
- Completion Items
- Matching Items
- Re-arrangement Items
- Word-Recognition Items
- Transformation Items
- Punctuation Items

Table 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Commonly Used Types of Achievement Test Items

Type of Item	Advantages	Disadvantages
True-False	Many items can be administered in a relatively short time. Moderately easy to write; easily scored.	Limited primarily to testing knowledge of information. Easy to guess correctly on many items, even if material has not been mastered.
Multiple-Choice	Can be used to assess broad range of content in a brief period. Skillfully written items can measure higher	Difficult and time consuming to write good items. Possible to assess higher order cognitive skills, but most items

	order cognitive skills. Can be scored quickly.	assess only knowledge. Some correct answers can be guesses.
Matching	Items can be written quickly. A broad range of content can be assessed. Scoring can be done efficiently.	Higher order cognitive skills are difficult to assess.
Short Answer or Completion	Many can be administered in a brief amount of time. Relatively efficient to score. Moderately easy to write.	Difficult to identify defensible criteria for correct answers. Limited to questions that can be answered or completed in very few words.
Essay	Can be used to measure higher order cognitive skills. Relatively easy to write questions. Difficult for respondent to get correct answer by guessing.	Time consuming to administer and score. Difficult to identify reliable criteria for scoring. Only a limited range of content can be sampled during any one testing period.

(CRLT, 2014, Available from: http://www.crlt.umich.edu/P8_0)

1.4 Resolving Bias & Subjectivity

Unlike **objective questions** (e.g. MCQ, matching, true-or-false?, etc.) that can be easily scored by examiners, **essay** questions are more difficult to score. The main problem of such type lies in 'subjectivity'. **Subjectivity** is represented in giving an overall score based on our GUT-INSTINCT reaction (i.e. what we generally feel about the text). To counter the danger of MARKER SUBJECTIVITY, there are **TWO** ways:

1. Involving other people (e.g. two or three markers/raters) in the process, and then taking the mean score;
2. Using MARKING SCALES or CRITERIA for a range of different items. This way, we might diminish the overall impressionistic marking process.

To make marking scales MORE OBJECTIVE, we can write careful **DESCRIPTIONS** of what the different scores for each category represent.

Table: Sample Marking Scale or Criteria

Score	*Poor (1)*	*Fair (2)*	*Good (3)*	*V.Good (4)*	*Excellent (5)*
Accuracy					
Relevance					
Organisation					
Fluency					
Clarity					

1.5 Test Design

Designing tests depends on some factors, such as:

(1) Type and purpose of the test;
(2) List of items to be tested;
(3) Frequency of occurrence of certain language items; and
(4) Language content and skills needed to develop.

An important tip: As a teacher you can make use of any course books or test generators while designing/writing a test, but you MUST take care of the issue of weight: weighting the marks to reflect the importance of a particular element, item or section.

Further, language teachers should consider some important points while designing language tests:

- Spend some time in choosing your items and questions types; draft your preliminary ideas, and then edit your initial draft until a satisfactory test has been written. This also involves preparing a specification grid.
- Avoid – as much as possible – vague, tricky and highly challenging questions.
- State test items/questions as much clearly as possible; arrange them in a coherent and logical sequence.
- Review the textbook content outline (e.g. for all studied units and lessons) to decide upon the areas and/or aspects that your test should cover.
- Keep the time duration always into consideration; allocate maximum time for each section, and try your best to allow sufficient time for your students to think about answers.
- Read model tests and questions (especially those that the MOE has formally suggested) for guidance.
- Consider students' varying achievement levels and different learning styles while designing the test.
- Consult senior and expert language teachers at your school, and try to edit – when necessary - your test based on their feedback and suggested amendments.
- Ensure that no section or question in the test gives clues or keys that examinees might use for answering another question.
- Prepare your test in more than one or two sessions; then, take a break (perhaps for a few days), and re-read your test to reflect more on it before administering it to students.
- Provide clear and simply stated instructions so that students would not need any guidance or interference by the teacher during the test time.
- Prepare marking schemes and model answers.

- Make use of students' ideas and suggested questions.

1.6 Alternative Assessment in TEFL

Sometimes **formal** testing strategies/techniques are not sufficient to capture the whole image. Therefore, English language teachers might need to use ***alternative*** ways, methods, strategies and/or techniques to assess/evaluate learners more fairly and properly and – above all – more realistically!

In general, alternative assessment refers to any goal-oriented form/technique that can be used while teaching during the English class that should **involve** learners in real performance (e.g. hands-on activities, oral production, dramatisation, physical movement, etc.)

Thus, using **multiple** (alternative) ways/techniques of language learners' assessment would be beneficial in many ways:

- Ensuring fairness, especially as far as learners' differences, talents and varying styles are concerned;
- Achieving meaningful and relevant learning (i.e. letting students think outside the box);
- Measuring a wide range of students' knowledge, understanding, competencies and skills;
- Enabling teachers and policy makers to take realistic, evidence-based decisions;
- Enabling teachers to improve teaching performance, and changing their strategies.
- Ensuring learners' active learning and performance;
- Making students apply theoretical linguistic knowledge in real situations (i.e. in context);
- Creating a friendly teaching/learning environment, by, for example, overcoming nervousness, apprehension and other negative feelings associated with test taking;

- Enabling **transfer** of skills from one arena or scope to another (i.e. **integrative** language learning);
- Improving academic self-efficacy and increasing learners' self-confidence;
- Developing both teachers' and learners' social, linguistic, cognitive, personal and professional skills;
- Fostering reflection and self-assessment;
- Strengthening both teachers' and students' communication skills and lifelong learning.

There are many alternative assessment strategies, methods and/or techniques that can be used by learners. These include:

- Portfolios and reflective diaries;
- Content area logs;
- Open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews;
- Dramatisation and role plays;
- Rubrics;
- Reading conferences;
- Online writing (i.e. through Blogs, Wikis, Facebook, etc,);
- Projects and hands-on activities;
- Journals;
- Inventories;
- Exhibitions;
- Formative and progressive essays;
- KWL charts;
- Active demonstrations;
- Re-telling and story-telling;
- Doing research (e.g. through online search engines);
- WebQuests;
- Outdoor and extracurricular activities;

1.7 Teaching and Assessing Linguistic Knowledge and Skills

This part provides a comprehensive overview of teaching and assessing linguistic knowledge and skills in second or foreign language education. It will address the multifaceted aspects of language including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Furthermore, the chapter will explore effective methodologies, assessment techniques, and the integration of these elements into a cohesive language learning curriculum.

1.7.1 The Components of Linguistic Knowledge

Effective language teaching necessitates a nuanced understanding of linguistic components. These include:

- Vocabulary: Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency, and learners need to develop both active and passive vocabulary knowledge.

- Grammar: Knowledge of grammar includes the understanding of how words combine to form phrases and sentences.

- Pronunciation: Pronunciation involves understanding and producing the sounds of a language, including stress, rhythm, and intonation.

- Discourse: Discourse involves understanding how language is used in context, including the rules of conversation and the structure of different types of texts.

A. Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is crucial for effective communication in a second language.

1. Types of Vocabulary

- Academic Vocabulary: High-frequency words common across academic fields are essential for students to succeed in academic courses.
- Technical Vocabulary: Words specific to a particular topic or field.
- Core Vocabulary: Essential for normal language use, these high-frequency words form the foundation of any language programme.

2. Vocabulary Acquisition

- Strategies for vocabulary acquisition: Effective strategies include classifying, using dictionaries, and practicing words in context.
- Extensive exposure: Repeated exposure to a large volume of words is crucial for achieving fluency.
- Explicit vocabulary study: Direct instruction and study of vocabulary are necessary to supplement exposure.

3. Teaching Vocabulary

Teachers should employ varied techniques to cater for different learning styles when teaching new vocabulary. This includes:

- Using visuals.
- Providing real-life examples.
- Encouraging active use of new words.

B. Grammar

Grammar provides the structural framework for language, enabling learners to form meaningful sentences.

1. Types of Grammar

- Prescriptive Grammar: Rules that dictate how language should be used.
- Descriptive Grammar: Describes how language is actually used.

- Pedagogical Grammar: Designed for language teaching, focusing on the most useful and accessible aspects of grammar for learners.

2. Teaching Grammar

- Deductive Approach: Presenting grammatical rules explicitly and then practicing them.
- Inductive Approach: Allowing learners to discover grammatical rules through exposure to language.
- Contextualised Instruction: Integrating grammar instruction with other language skills.

C. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is key to being understood and involves mastering the sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation of a language.

1. Components of Pronunciation

- Segmental Phonology: Individual sounds or phonemes of a language.
- Suprasegmental Phonology: Elements such as stress, rhythm, and intonation.

2. Teaching Pronunciation

- Strategies and Techniques: Include minimal pair drills, tongue twisters, and phonetic charts.
- Principles for Teaching: Focus on communicative effectiveness and prioritise features that significantly impact intelligibility.

1.7.2 Developing Language Skills

Language skills are typically divided into four main areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills can be taught in an integrated manner to enhance learning.

A. Listening

Listening comprehension is the ability to understand spoken language.

1. Teaching Listening

- Pre-listening activities: Preparing learners for listening by activating prior knowledge and introducing key vocabulary.
- While-listening activities: Tasks to complete during listening, such as note-taking or answering questions.
- Post-listening activities: Follow-up tasks that extend understanding and provide opportunities for discussion.
- Authentic materials: Using real-world listening materials to expose learners to natural speech.

B. Speaking

Speaking involves producing oral language to communicate effectively.

1. Teaching Speaking

- Fluency Activities: Focus on encouraging learners to speak without excessive concern for accuracy.
- Accuracy Activities: Focus on correct use of grammar and vocabulary.
- Interactive Communication: Activities that promote interaction and negotiation of meaning.
- Genres: Familiarizing learners with different spoken genres such as service encounters or casual conversation.

C. Reading

Reading involves understanding written language.

1. Models of Reading

- Bottom-up: Decoding text from individual letters and words.
- Top-down: Using background knowledge and context to predict meaning.
- Interactive: Combining both bottom-up and top-down processes.

2. Teaching Reading

- Pre-reading activities: Preparing learners by activating background knowledge and pre-teaching vocabulary.
- While-reading activities: Tasks such as skimming, scanning, and intensive reading.
- Post-reading activities: Activities that extend understanding and encourage critical thinking.

D. Writing

Writing involves producing written text to convey meaning.

1. Approaches to Teaching Writing

- Product Approach: Focuses on the final written product, with emphasis on accuracy and correct form.
- Process Approach: Focuses on the writing process, including planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

2. Teaching Writing

- Opportunities for Writing: Providing various writing tasks, from short paragraphs to longer essays.
- Feedback: Offering constructive feedback on both content and form.
- Modelling: Using texts as models for their own writing.

1.7.3 Assessment of Linguistic Knowledge and Skills

Assessment is a critical component of language teaching, providing feedback to both teachers and learners.

A. Types of Assessment

- Formative Assessment: Ongoing assessment used to monitor learning and provide feedback for improvement.
- Summative Assessment: Assessment at the end of a course to evaluate overall achievement.
- Placement Tests: Used to determine a learner's appropriate level.
- Achievement Tests: Measure what learners have learned during a course.
- Proficiency Tests: Assess overall language ability.

B. Assessing Vocabulary

- Techniques: Include multiple-choice tests, gap-fill exercises, and contextualised use of new words.
- Considerations: Focus on both breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge.

C. Assessing Grammar

- Techniques: Include sentence transformation, error correction, and controlled writing tasks.
- Focus: The ability to accurately apply grammatical rules in meaningful contexts.

D. Assessing Pronunciation

- Methods: Oral interviews, reading aloud, and recording learners' speech.

- Criteria: Intelligibility, accuracy, and appropriate use of stress and intonation.

E. Assessing Listening

- Tasks: Note-taking, answering comprehension questions, and summarizing spoken texts.

- Authenticity: Using authentic listening materials to reflect real-world listening demands.

F. Assessing Speaking

- Types of Spoken Tests: Interviews, presentations, and discussions.

- Assessment Criteria: Fluency, coherence, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and interactive communication.

G. Assessing Reading

- Methods: Multiple-choice questions, summarizing, and responding to written prompts.

- Considerations: Assessing both bottom-up and top-down reading skills.

H. Assessing Writing

- Tools: Assessment chart, assessment profile.

- Tasks: Essays, reports, and other written assignments.

- Criteria: Accuracy, organisation, vocabulary, and appropriateness for the intended audience.

1.7.4 Integrating Language Skills in the Curriculum

An integrated approach to language teaching combines different language skills to create a more holistic and effective learning experience.

Benefits of Integrated Skills Approach

- Enhanced Learning: Skills reinforce each other, leading to deeper understanding.

- Authenticity: Reflects real-world language use, where skills are rarely used in isolation.

- Motivation: Provides variety and engages learners more effectively.

Practical Strategies for Integration

Task-Based Learning: Designing tasks that require learners to use multiple skills.

Content-Based Instruction: Teaching language through subject matter content.

Project-Based Learning: Engaging learners in extended projects that integrate language skills.

Creating a Supportive Learning Environment

A supportive learning environment is essential for effective language teaching and learning.

Key Elements of a Supportive Environment

Positive Teacher-Student Relationships: Building rapport and trust with learners.

Learner Autonomy: Encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own learning.

Collaborative Activities: Promoting interaction and peer support.

Respect for Diversity: Recognising and valuing learners' different backgrounds and experiences.

Addressing Learner Needs

Needs Analysis: Identifying learners' specific language needs and goals.

Differentiation: Tailoring instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners in the classroom.

Feedback and Support: Providing regular feedback and support to help learners improve.

1.7.5 The Role of Technology in Language Teaching and Assessment

Technology offers numerous tools and resources for enhancing language teaching and assessment.

Technology for Teaching

- Online Resources: Using websites, apps, and other digital tools to provide authentic materials and interactive activities.
- Multimedia: Incorporating audio, video, and images to enhance engagement and understanding.
- Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL): Using software and online platforms to support language practice and feedback.

Technology for Assessment

- Online Testing: Using online platforms to administer and score tests.
- E-Portfolios: Allowing learners to collect and reflect on their work.
- Data Analysis: Using technology to analyse assessment data and inform instruction.

1.7.6 The Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner

Effective language teachers are reflective practitioners who continually evaluate their teaching and seek to improve their practice.

Strategies for Reflection

- Journaling: Writing regular reflections on teaching experiences.
- Peer Observation: Observing and providing feedback to colleagues.
- Action Research: Conducting small-scale research projects in the classroom.
- Professional Development: Participating in workshops, conferences, and other professional development activities.

Conclusion

Teaching and assessing linguistic knowledge and skills is a complex and multifaceted endeavour. It requires a deep understanding of language, effective teaching methodologies, and a commitment to creating a supportive and engaging learning environment. By integrating these elements, teachers can empower learners to achieve their language learning goals and become effective communicators.

CHAPTER TWO

Effective Reading Skills and Strategies

2.1 Overview of Reading Skills

Reading is an integral skill that goes beyond mere word recognition. It involves a complex array of sub-skills that enable us to extract meaning from text. Understanding the types of reading can help develop proficiency in this valuable skill.

Reading is a multifaceted skill that involves various techniques tailored to different purposes and content. Skimming is a strategic, rapid reading method for getting the gist of the material, often used for previewing or reviewing texts. Scanning, on the other hand, is a targeted reading approach, used to locate specific information within a text quickly. Intensive reading is a thorough, detailed reading style, focusing on understanding and analyzing every word and sentence, typically used for complex texts where comprehension of each part is crucial. Extensive reading involves reading longer texts for pleasure and general understanding, which can enhance language acquisition and fluency.

Types of Reading

Skimming is a rapid reading technique used to get a general overview of the material. You read the title, subtitles, and the first few sentences of each paragraph to get the gist of the content. It's like flying over the text at a high level.

Scanning is a reading technique for finding specific information quickly. For instance, scanning a text to find a particular name or date. It's a bit like using a metal detector on a beach to find a lost ring.

Intensive Reading involves careful reading of a small amount of text, with a focus on understanding the details. It's often used when studying a complex subject or learning a foreign language.

Extensive Reading is reading large amounts of text, usually for pleasure. The goal is to understand the overall meaning rather than focusing on the specific details.

2.2 Active Reading Techniques

Active reading transforms passive absorption of words into an engaging dialogue with the text. The SQ3R Method, encompassing Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review, is a systematic approach to understanding and retaining information. Surveying allows readers to preview the structure and main points of the text. Questioning turns titles, headings, and subheadings into queries that guide focused reading. The reading phase involves in-depth engagement with the text, followed by recitation to reinforce memory and understanding. Reviewing consolidates the material, ensuring long-term retention. Annotating and note-taking are instrumental practices that complement active reading, allowing readers to mark significant points and summarize concepts in their own words, thus reinforcing learning and comprehension.

Active reading involves engaging with the text to improve comprehension and retention. This can be achieved through the SQ3R method and annotating and note-taking.

SQ3R Method

SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review.

- *Survey*: Skim the text to get a general idea of the content. Look at headings, subheadings, and highlighted words.

- *Question*: Formulate questions based on your survey. These questions will guide your reading.

- *Read*: Read the text carefully with the aim of answering the questions you formulated.

- *Recite*: Summarize the text in your own words. This will help cement the information in your memory.

- *Review*: Review the material after a few hours or days to reinforce your memory.

Annotating and Note-Taking

Annotating involves highlighting, underlining, or making notes directly on the text. This helps to focus your attention and aids in remembering the material. Note-taking, on the other hand, is the practice of writing down information from the text in your own words.

2.3 Reading for Comprehension

Reading for comprehension involves understanding the text at a deeper level. Comprehension is the core of reading, necessitating the identification of main ideas and supporting details. This involves discerning the central thesis or argument of the text and the evidence or explanations that bolster it. Understanding text structures, such as cause and effect, comparison and contrast, or problem and solution, is vital for interpreting the author's message and intent. Recognizing these patterns aids in predicting content and organizing information logically in one's mind.

Identifying Main Ideas and Supporting Details

The main idea is the central point that the author is trying to convey. Supporting details provide evidence or examples to back up the main idea. Identifying these components can help you understand the text's message.

Understanding Text Structures

Texts can be organized in different ways: chronologically, by cause and effect, comparison and contrast, problem and solution, etc. Recognizing these structures can enhance your comprehension.

2.4 Online Reading

Although they share some common features and strategies, such as activating prior knowledge and synthesising information (Eagleton & Dobler, 2007: p36), print-based reading and Web-based reading are not the same. From a new literacies perspective, the skills and strategies associated with traditional, print-based reading are still necessary to read and learn online, but are not sufficient alone since the nature of online reading comprehension is different (Coiro & Dobler, 2007).

Online reading is a complicated process that requires knowledge about new things such as how search engines work and how information is organised within websites (Coiro, 2005: p30). Thus, those who master the skills and competencies necessary to read books are not necessarily competent online readers. Empirically, Coiro (2005: p30) noticed that some students already skilled at reading books were struggling with finding information online wasting much time without reaching their target. For example, they were lost on the Web moving from one webpage to another without locating the information they needed to complete their assignments, a conclusion also reached by my pilot study (Abdallah, 2011b).

By the same token, Leu et al (2007) conclude that video recordings for some adolescent readers while reading online suggest that readers who struggle with offline materials may not struggle with online materials to the same degree as long as they have the skills and/or strategies essential for online reading comprehension. They conclude that isomorphism does not exist between offline and online reading comprehension because if they were the same,

high-achieving offline readers would always be high-achieving online readers and vice versa.

Consequently, it is essential to understand the differences between online reading and offline or print-based reading which usually revolve around: (1) environment or medium; (2) nature; (3) types of the cognitive processes involved; (4) the complex nature of the texts readers interact with; (5) the additional new skills and/or strategies that online readers need in the Web environment.

The environment, medium, and ways of navigation of print and hypertext are completely different. While both environments typically provide supportive navigational features (e.g., a table of contents), the actual content of hypertext is hidden beneath multiple layers of information not viewable with traditional previewing procedures such as rapidly going through the pages of a printed book (Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Besides, the Web itself provides many features, such as hyperlinks, which facilitate the navigation process to the readers.

The construction of meaning as a cognitive process is another source of difference. Online readers have choices as they navigate through many websites and media, and therefore, they personally construct their own meaning and understanding out of this navigation process. Offline readers, on the other hand, read the texts already constructed for them. Thus, the construction of meaning during online reading comprehension is much more complex than it is the case with offline reading comprehension (Leu, et al, 2009).

Reading on the Web therefore adds layers of complexity to an already complex process (Kern, 2000: p223). This complexity is caused by the fact that comprehension on the Web requires the orchestrating of a number of additional cueing systems (e.g. operational, organisational, and multimedia cues) plus knowledge of informational text structures placing a heavier

cognitive load on learners (Eagleton & Dobler, 2007: p31). This is shown by studies of how textual differences influence comprehension, which indicate that both children and adults have more difficulty reading informational texts than reading narrative texts (e.g., Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). The difficulty posed by informational texts becomes more challenging when readers are to define a specific task, search for information, and select the resources themselves.

The nature of the text itself is different as online texts are more complicated than linear, printed texts. Online texts appear in types new to the readers, which Coiro (2003a/b) identifies as nonlinear, multiple-media, and interactive texts, to clarify the message transferred. Readers online are provided with options like clicking a hyperlink to access further details on a particular word or item. Now that online texts involve new forms and ways of arranging and structuring textual material introducing new challenges for readers, especially second and foreign language readers (Anderson, 2003: p4), higher levels of inferential reasoning and comprehension monitoring strategies are demanded.

There are many new skills and strategies needed within an online reading context. Leu et al. (2008: pp322-37) detail some of these skills and strategies as follows: (1) Online reading is usually initiated by a pre-reading question or query that guides the reading process, something not necessarily needed within a print-based reading context; (2) locating information online is another aspect of online reading comprehension that requires new skills (e.g., using a search engine, reviewing returned results, and quickly reading a webpage to locate links to required data). Locating information may create a bottleneck for the subsequent skills of online reading comprehension in the sense that those who possess those online skills necessary to locate information can continue to read and solve their problem, while those who do not possess them cannot; (3) During critical evaluation, a unique set of skills are required. Whereas critical evaluation is important when reading offline, it is perhaps more important while

reading the Web where anyone can publish anything. Therefore, it is vital to identify to what extent the online information is reliable. The unique nature of the Web, as a source of information that differs from traditional resources, has been thoroughly explored, mostly by librarians, who have highlighted the need for greater critical evaluation of Web-based resources (see Barker, 2004 and Kirk, 1996, for examples of evaluative schemes).

Reading online is a complicated process that is not simply defined around the encoding of online texts, or just the purpose, task, and context. Instead, as Leu, et al (2008: pp332-36) argue, online reading comprehension is also defined by a process of self-directed text construction that occurs as readers navigate on their own through an infinite informational space to construct their own versions of texts encountered online.

With the dominance of the Internet as a teaching/learning medium and the subsequent result that information gathering has become, perhaps, the most widely used application of the Web, it is surprising that there is still a lack of a research-based understanding of the strategies needed to successfully understand and read information online (Coiro, 2009; Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Some few studies were conducted to examine online reading (e.g., Coiro, 2007; Coiro & Dobler, 2007; Leu, 2007). New literacies required for dealing with information and material available online still need further investigation.

Many new reading sub-skills and strategies have emerged to express the new online processes. In this context, Leu (2002) suggests that developing more critical reading skills within networked ICT will be an important aspect of the new literacies to face the challenge ahead. Clarifying the nature of the challenge we have today, Eagleton and Dobler (2007) suggest that in order to be Web literate, we should meet the demands of the Web, which are associated with reading by acquiring new skills and strategies.

Skills of online reading comprehension:

2.2.1 Students should understand the features of online texts represented in the range of symbols, cueing systems, and multiple-media formats (e.g. icons and animated symbols).

2.2.2 Students should understand the nature of hypertext that entails new screen-based interactions between word, image and sound.

2.2.3 Students should look for and work out the overall meaning of an online message that has been formulated in a complicated digital context.

2.2.4 Students should focus on a particular question/problem/query to guide the online reading process.

2.2.5 Students should try to activate their prior knowledge and make use of their background information while dealing with new online texts.

2.2.6 Students should be able to read across an evolving range of online texts through skimming and scanning websites.

2.2.7 Students should be able to navigate through links and connected pages to construct meanings that meet goals and/or answer questions.

2.2.8 Students should be able to employ new reasoning and comprehension strategies to deal with nonlinear, interactive online texts.

2.2.9 Students should be able to read purposefully, selectively and pragmatically within an online environment to accomplish their objectives (e.g. by selecting relevant information).

2.2.10 Students should be able to make use of cues (e.g. captions, icons, hyperlinks, and interactive graphics) to identify relevant and important ideas.

2.5 Critical Reading

Critical reading goes a step further than comprehension. It involves assessing the credibility and value of the text. Critical reading goes beyond mere comprehension to involve a deeper analysis of the text. It requires evaluating the strength of arguments and the credibility of evidence presented. This level

of reading challenges readers to assess the validity of the information, considering the context and the author's purpose. Recognizing bias and perspective is also crucial; it involves understanding the author's stance and how it shapes the presentation of facts and opinions. By questioning the reliability and objectivity of the text, readers develop the ability to think critically and read discerningly.

Evaluating Arguments and Evidence

An argument is a claim supported by evidence. Evaluating arguments involves assessing the logic of the claim and the reliability of the evidence provided.

Recognizing Bias and Perspective

Every author has a perspective that can influence how information is presented. Recognizing bias involves identifying any partiality or prejudice in the text. Recognizing perspective involves understanding the author's viewpoint or stance on the issue.

***Critical literacy skills*:**

2.3.1 Students should understand some important facts about websites that relate to reliability (e.g. the fact that each website has its own agenda, perspective, and bias).

2.3.2 Students should be able to identify a website's form (e.g. blog, forum, or advertisement) and general purpose (e.g. entertainment, educational, or commercial) in order to evaluate the reliability of online sources.

2.3.3 Students should be able to identify the type of webpage content (e.g. a book, an article, a brochure, and an archive).

2.3.4 Students should be critical and reflective by going beyond the simple decoding and comprehension of the online text.

2.3.5 Students should be able to employ critical thinking skills and strategies while investigating web-based information to discover its accuracy, validity, reliability, and appropriateness to the task at hand.

2.3.6 Students should make use of their background knowledge to evaluate what they read online and to question the relevant social, political, and ideological elements.

2.3.7 Students should make critical, informed judgments about online information, which include: recognising bias, identifying the authors and their purposes, and distinguishing the commercial content from the academic one.

2.3.8 Students should be able to use clues on a webpage that help with evaluating it as an information source (e.g. clues in a URL or web address that help with determining a website location and type).

2.3.9 Students should be able to ask and answer evaluative questions such as: Is the information accurate? Is the author an authority on the subject? Is the information current and timely?

2.3.10 Students should be able to compare and contrast the reliability of the information they find by investigating multiple sources on the same topic.

2.6 SEARCH Framework for Locating Data Online

Henry (2006: p618) suggests a framework called SEARCH for the essential search skills needed for reading and locating information on the Web. ***SEARCH*** stands for six steps:

1. **S**et a purpose for searching;
2. **E**mploy effective search strategies;
3. **A**nalyse search engine results;
4. **R**ead critically and synthesize information;
5. **C**ite your sources;
6. **H**ow successful was your search? (Evaluating your search).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter aims to equip student teachers with the necessary skills to navigate diverse reading demands effectively. By mastering these strategies, they can enhance their understanding, critical thinking, and overall teaching proficiency in English language education. Through the application of these techniques, student teachers will be prepared to foster a similar depth of reading comprehension and analytical skills in their future classrooms.

In conclusion, effective reading strategies are essential for academic success. They help you understand, remember, and critically evaluate the information you read. By mastering these strategies, you can become a more efficient and effective reader.

CHAPTER THREE

Vocabulary Acquisition, Use and Development

3.1 Introduction

The journey of vocabulary acquisition begins with exposure. Students must immerse themselves in the language through varied and rich experiences, such as reading diverse texts, engaging in conversations, and listening to spoken language in different contexts. This exposure lays the groundwork for incidental learning, where students pick up new words without explicit instruction, a natural and powerful way to expand one's vocabulary.

Vocabulary acquisition and use is a fundamental aspect of language learning that involves far more than just memorizing lists of words. It is a dynamic process that enables students to unlock the full potential of language in communication, comprehension, and expression. This chapter delves into the multifaceted nature of vocabulary learning, exploring effective strategies for acquiring new words and integrating them into everyday use. Ultimately, the goal of this chapter is to equip students with the skills and strategies necessary for effective vocabulary acquisition and use, fostering a lifelong interest in words and their power to communicate complex ideas and emotions. By mastering vocabulary, students enhance their overall language proficiency, opening doors to deeper understanding and more meaningful interactions in English.

Rivers (1983: p125) argue that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second/foreign language use, and that vocabulary expansion becomes easier as one matures; the more one's vocabulary develops, the easier it is to add new words. Usually, the first few words in a new language are quite hard to acquire, but as the learner accumulates more words and get familiar with the target language, vocabulary acquisition becomes much easier than before.

There are many arguments as to the best way to ***grade*** or order vocabulary in a language syllabus. Some scholars suggest that vocabulary should be graded in terms of ***frequency*** (i.e. the most frequent words should precede the less frequent ones). Proponents of general purpose English, for example, argue that learners should be taught a 'common core' of high frequency items rather than items specific to a particular domain (Nunan, 1991). Others suggest that vocabulary should be graded in terms of ***difficulty*** (i.e. easy words should precede difficult ones). Some others divide vocabulary into ***active*** words and ***passive*** words suggesting that active words should be introduced first. Active words refer to those words that language learners need to ***understand***, learn, and master very well so as to ***use*** the target language properly, while passive words refer to those that learners need to only understand, with no obligation to use them. It should be noted that the same passive vocabulary can become active at a later stage of learning (see also: *http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/knowledge-wiki/passive-vocabulary*).

The nature of the English language as a language that has been subject to many influences from other languages makes the issue of teaching new vocabulary of a special concern. Although linguists have tried to facilitate the learning of English vocabulary by creating some rules and generalisations, the irregularities in spelling have made learning English words a problematic issue. Compared with Arabic, for example, English sounds much more irregular and complicated in terms of spelling, and therefore, Arab learners who study English as a foreign language usually struggle with learning new vocabulary.

3.2 Why is Learning New Vocabulary so Important within the Egyptian Context?

Learning new vocabulary is an important issue as far as teaching/learning English as a foreign language is concerned, especially within the Egyptian context. This importance, in my opinion, can be attributed to the nature of the English language itself and how the words are spelled. Unlike Arabic and many other Western languages, writing/spelling in English is a problematic issue. Tracing the history of the English language, it can be noted that English was the subject of many foreign influences (e.g., the Norman invasion, and subsequently the French language and the Latin language). These influences created discrepancies in English spelling and writing, which led sometimes to mismatch between the pronunciation of a word on the one hand, and the orthographical representation (i.e. the written shape of it as it appears on paper) on the other.

These irregularities in spelling made it difficult to devise comprehensive rough rules that can help foreign learners to predict how any new word should be written, without seeing it before. For example, suppose that a learner is required to write a word like 'right' without seeing it before…Just based on dictation. How on earth will s/he be able to write it? Will s/he (as an Arab learner) write it as: 'right', 'rite', 'write', 'rait', or 'rayet'? Similarly, if s/he has not seen the word 'photograph' before, will s/he write it as: 'photograph', 'fotograf', or 'photograf'? The same applies to a word like: 'feast' which, when only heard, holds many possible written forms (many of which are not English at all!) such as: 'feest', fiest', 'feist', 'fist', 'pheast'; also 'see', which can be otherwise written as: 'sea', 'cea', 'cee', 'si', 'sie'; 'tyre', which can also be written as 'tire' and 'tyer'. A famous example of a complicated word is 'psychology' which, if not seen before, can be written as: 'sychology', 'saikologi', 'psaicology', 'sikologie', 'saickology', etc. Another similar standard

example of this irregularity is the word 'psalm' (pronounced: /sa:m/), and which can be written as: 'sam', 'salm', or 'psam'…and so on and so forth!

The point I am making is that it is extremely hard for Arab learners in general and Egyptian ones in particular, to learn new English words without practising them. This calls for adequate ways that teachers should use to present new English words. Moreover, there is a need to explain to learners the spelling difficulties in these words by, for example, comparing these new words with previously learned ones. This way, learners can internally create linguistic patterns and/or conceptual frameworks that might help them to envisage certain rules. Gradually, they might be able to easily grasp some regularities and irregularities. Though there are some spelling rules in English, a great number of exceptions exist as well. For example, I learned in the past that when the letter 'g' is followed by any of the letters 'e', 'i', and 'y', it is pronounced /j/; otherwise, it is pronounced /g/. But what about words like 'give', 'gear', 'begin', 'anger', 'monger', and 'eager'? Why the 'g' in them is pronounced /g/, and not /j/?

3.3 Effective Ways/Techniques for Acquiring and Retaining Vocabulary

Try to learn how to develop effective ways for retaining new vocabulary such as creating semantic networks. ***A semantic network*** consists of words which share certain semantic features or components (e.g., being mass media components, being members of the family, being tools used in the classroom, being Internet-related stuff, etc.). A famous activity related to semantic networks is 'Find/Spot the odd one out!' in which a group of similar words belonging to the same category are given and which includes ONE word that is different in a sense. Learners are asked to identify this word and indicate the reason why it is different.

Also try to create and use a Word Journal. A ***word journal*** is a collection of learned words which learners can organise/classify under some main categories, such as: school, street, home, relatives, fruits, vegetables, games, people, etc. The idea was suggested in the 'Hello!' series for teaching English as a foreign language in Egypt: 'Hello! 3' for preparatory-one students in 1996 (Dallas & Gomm, 1998). This is closely relevant to the semantic network. Moreover, ***intentional learning*** plays a crucial role as well. This involves deliberate strategies such as creating personal word lists, using flashcards, and employing mnemonic devices to aid retention. The use of a vocabulary journal can be particularly effective, allowing students to record new words along with their meanings, synonyms, antonyms, and example sentences, thus deepening their understanding and ability to recall the words.

Students can learn related vocabulary through activities like reading articles, watching documentaries, and engaging in class discussions, thereby cementing these terms in a meaningful context.

Furthermore, the use of ***mnemonics*** and ***word-association games*** can make learning more enjoyable and memorable. For example, associating the word 'ubiquitous' with the image of smartphones, which are seen everywhere, can help students remember the meaning of this word more easily.

Peer teaching is another powerful tool in the EFL vocabulary learning process. By teaching new words to their peers, student teachers reinforce their own understanding and ability to use these words accurately. Role-playing and simulation exercises can also be beneficial, as they allow students to use new vocabulary in simulated real-life scenarios, thus improving their communicative competence.

Additionally, incorporating ***technology***, such as language learning apps and online resources, can provide interactive and engaging ways to learn new vocabulary. For example, using flashcard apps like Anki or Quizlet can help in spaced repetition, a technique proven to enhance long-term memorization of words.

Try to connect new vocabulary with ***real objects*** (realia). This is the direct technique that any teacher/learner, if appropriate and applicable, should think of as the first option. According to Edger Dale's Cone of Experience (see Dale, 1969), direct experience or doing/viewing the real thing is the most effective aid for remembering, learning, and comprehension.

Think about the ***outside environment*** (surroundings): This is another level of real objects that involves pointing to visible surroundings existing outside the classroom or school (e.g., playground, headmaster's office, tree, street, flag, factory, farm, people, car, bus, bus stop, etc.)

When you encounter a new complex word, think about its definition which you can easily access online. ***Definitions*** are the dictionary-like accounts that a learner can refer to in order to understand what a word means. I think that all or most of the words used in a definition should be familiar to learners. Otherwise, the technique will not be fruitful. A learner can consult an English-English dictionary or an encyclopaedia for accurate definitions; or s/he can simply check it online using Google definitions, a technique that personally has been so useful for me enabling one to access all the definitions available online. All what s/he should do is to go to www.google.com, and then write in the search bar 'define', followed immediately by a colon, and then the target word/term (e.g., define:cloning). I have just done it and got many definitions, the first of which is: Cloning: a general term for the research activity that creates a copy of some biological entity (a gene or organism or cell).

You might see examples that show how this new word is used in real contexts. ***Examples***, especially when concrete and realistic, help with clarifying the meaning of a new word. The more these examples are simple, short, direct, and relevant to learners' lives, the more influential they will be.

You might need to see ***context*** (in which the new word appears). This technique is quite close to 'examples', since examples are intended to contextualise the target word to make it meaningful. Learning new words in isolation is not effective as learners are likely to forget them. Experiencing the word in a proper, relevant context gives it more significance. Besides, contextual learning is effective since students learn best when they can associate new vocabulary with specific situations or topics. By learning words in context, students can better grasp nuances of meaning and usage, making it easier to remember and apply the vocabulary accurately. Role-playing, discussions, and thematic projects are excellent ways to reinforce this contextual approach.

You might see ***synonyms/antonyms***: A 'synonym' stands for the word/phrase which is equivalent in meaning, while an 'antonym' stands for the word/phrase which is opposite in meaning. What is particular about this technique is that it builds on the learner's knowledge base or his previously known vocabulary. Therefore, a web of connected words can be gradually formed and enhanced within the learner's mind. However, it is an essential requirement that you should be 100% that you have already studied the words you are building on and/or referring to. Otherwise, the technique will do harm rather than good. Examples include: convenient = suitable; sibling = a person's brother or sister; white ≠ black; sad ≠ happy. But, a teacher should always ensure accuracy by presenting the appropriate synonym/antonym to the target word. As I noticed, the English language, unlike the Arabic language,

does not entail clear-cut boundaries or what I can definitely call a 'sharp contrast' between words. For example, here in England, when I ask an English person: 'How are you?', s/he always replies: 'Not so bad, Mahmoud!' This answer is not roughly equal to: 'I'm fine', 'I'm happy', or 'I'm doing very well!'. Similarly, 'not so hard' is NOT the same as 'easy'; 'cheerful' or 'pleased' is not EXACTLY the same as 'happy'; 'bring' is not the same thing as 'fetch'; and 'sad' is NOT roughly the same as 'unhappy' or 'disappointed'.

You can think about looking at relevant pictures or images. ***Pictures*** would save time and effort for the teacher as they are already there. Nowadays, it is easy to locate any pictures online using the Google Image service (http://www.google.co.uk/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi). If a computer and/or Internet connection are not available in the classroom, you can use instead traditional paper-based pictures already there, for example, in books, magazines, wall charts, and newspaper. Sometimes pictures are very effective as they might show clearly some needed complicated and necessary details.

Finally***, Arabic translation*** is a good technique, but should not be the first one to use. This is a technique that is mostly resorted to when previous techniques fail or become inappropriate. Usually, Arabic translation is used to understand the meaning of abstract and complicated English words such as: policy, honesty, pragmatism, stressful, and meaningful. Sometimes, the meaning of a word becomes clearer and more precise when conveyed in the native language, especially for beginners. At advanced levels and when learners have mastered a great number of words and developed a sense of the English language, using English to present the meaning of such words might be much more appropriate and useful.

3.3 Vocabulary Use and Development

The active use of new vocabulary is essential for cementing knowledge. Students should be encouraged to incorporate newly learned words into their

speaking and writing as often as possible. This not only improves retention but also builds confidence in using the language. Peer collaboration and feedback can further enhance this process, as students learn from each other and develop a more nuanced understanding of word usage.

In addition to that, it is important to understand word formation, including roots, prefixes, and suffixes, which empowers you (as students) to decipher unfamiliar words and expand your vocabulary independently. The role of technology in vocabulary learning is important, especially in terms of how digital tools and resources can support and enrich the vocabulary acquisition process.

Assessment of vocabulary knowledge should be ongoing and formative, providing students with regular feedback on their progress and areas for improvement. This can be achieved through quizzes, presentations, and writing assignments that specifically target vocabulary usage.

Focusing on vocabulary usage, it is essential for you as EFL student teachers to understand that the mere acquisition of vocabulary is not enough; the ability to use these words effectively in communication is key. This involves a deep understanding of word connotations, collocations, and idiomatic expressions. For instance, learning the word 'austere' should go beyond its definition to include its usage in phrases like 'austere measures' or 'austere lifestyle,' which can be practiced through sentence formation exercises.

Active usage of vocabulary in writing and speaking activities is also crucial. You as students could engage in writing tasks that require the use of newly learned vocabulary in various contexts, such as composing emails, essays, or reports. Peer review of these writings can provide feedback on the appropriateness and accuracy of vocabulary usage.

Speaking activities, such as debates, presentations, and storytelling, can further reinforce vocabulary usage. These activities compel students to retrieve words from memory and use them spontaneously, which can significantly improve fluency and recall. For example, during a debate on technology, students would have to use relevant vocabulary like 'innovate,' 'cybersecurity,' and 'artificial intelligence' in context, thereby solidifying their understanding and ability to use these terms.

Role-playing is another effective strategy for practicing vocabulary usage. By simulating real-life scenarios, students can practice using specific vocabulary sets in appropriate contexts. For example, role-playing a job interview can help students practice business-related vocabulary in a setting where it would naturally occur.

Moreover, error correction exercises are vital. Teachers can create activities where students have to identify and correct vocabulary errors in written passages. This not only helps in understanding correct usage but also in recognizing common mistakes that can be avoided.

Additionally, the use of corpora and other language databases can provide students with examples of how words are used in real-life contexts. Analyzing language patterns and frequency of word usage in these databases can offer insights into how native speakers use certain words and phrases, which can be emulated by the learners.

Incorporating vocabulary self-assessment tools can also aid students in monitoring their progress in vocabulary usage. Tools like vocabulary journals, where students reflect on their learning and usage of words, can provide a personal and introspective approach to vocabulary development.

Lastly, consistent exposure to the target language through various mediums such as books, movies, podcasts, and conversations with native speakers can immensely boost a student's ability to use vocabulary naturally and fluently. For example, watching English movies not only exposes students to new vocabulary but also to the pronunciation and intonation used by native speakers, which is crucial for effective communication.

In summary, for EFL student teachers, the mastery of vocabulary usage is a multifaceted process that requires active engagement with the language in both written and spoken forms. Through a combination of contextual learning, practical application, and continuous exposure, students can develop the skills necessary to use English vocabulary effectively in their teaching and beyond.

CHAPTER FOUR

Developing Composition Skills and Academic Writing

4.1 Introduction

Generally, writing is a language skill, an everyday practice, a form of literacy, a communicative activity, and sometimes a means through which learners can be assessed, especially within the Egyptian context. As a method of communication, for example, writing can be used to establish and maintain contact with others, transmit information, express thoughts, feelings, and reactions, entertain, and persuade. As a personal or private activity, it can be a powerful tool for learning and remembering. It can be used to explore and refine ideas, organise thoughts, and record information. At school, learners are usually asked to use writing to display what they know, and thus, writing becomes the medium through which pupil learning is measured (Browne, 1999: p2).

Therefore, people write for different reasons and in a wide range of contexts. They normally write in order to:

- Get their message across;
- Convey important information and facts to others;
- Communicate their own intentions and purposes;
- Help and support others;
- Prove that they have mastered something;
- Put ideas on paper so that they are not lost;
- Plan for doing something by creating a schedule or timetable;
- Guide and direct others;
- Succeed in life and pass tests;
- Modify and re-draft something;
- Make money and earn living;
- Express themselves;

- Socialise and participate in different events;
- Organise ideas and say what one cannot communicate orally;
- Share ideas and experiences with others;
- State reflections and jot down personal diaries;
- Teach/Train others and provide them with feedback;
- Learn and internalise some linguistic aspects (e.g., vocabulary and grammar); and
- Simplify something.

According to Harmer (2007), composing or writing in a foreign language is always a demanding process where language learners need to employ many skills and strategies. As a productive skill, writing draws on other language skills such as listening and reading. That is why language teachers usually delay it until their students have done a great deal of listening and reading in the target language.

In its simplest form, writing may take the form of notation: copying in conventional graphic form something already written, or reproducing in written form something that has been read or heard. This act hardly involves anything more than the ability to use the writing system of the language. Writing in the language becomes more complicated when it involves writing meaningful segments of language which might be used in specific circumstances by native speakers. This is the type of writing involved in things like grammatical exercises, the construction of simple dialogues, and dictation. In its most highly developed form, writing refers to the conveying of information or the expression of original ideas in the target language. These distinctions among the types of writing activities reflect the major areas of learning involved in the writing process. Students must learn the graphic system and be able to spell according to the conventions of language. They must learn to control the structure according the canons of good writing. They must learn to select from among possible combinations of words and phrases those which will convey the meaning they have in mind (Rivers, 1981).

Furthermore, it is important to be aware of the differences between spoken and written language. When people speak, they normally seem more relaxed and less formal. They are likely to express themselves in a simple language which is full of hesitations, pauses, repetitions, etc. In this regard, Holliday (1985) and Nunan (1991) state some of the features that distinguish spoken from written texts:

- Spoken language sounds simpler than written language; Transcriptions of spoken language look less structured because they represent 'unedited' language. The lexical density of written texts (i.e. the number of lexical or content words per clause) makes writing seem more complex;
- Spoken forms are in a sense more basic than the written forms; in writing, we have normally altered the normal state of events;
- Compared with speech, writing is often de-contextualised; in communicating a message, writers are usually distant in time and place from the person(s) with whom they wish to communicate. Because of this lack of direct contact with the reader, they are unable to make use of feedback from others to adjust their message;
- People usually exert more effort during writing as they do their best to clarify their message. This absence of the physical and paralinguistic features that the speaker uses to support his/her utterance adds burdens to the writer.

'Academic writing' always refers to this ***serious***, ***scholarly*** type of writing that is intended for ***academic*** purposes. Simply put, academic writing is writing done by ***scholars*** for other scholars—and that includes you. As a college student, you are engaged in activities that scholars have been engaged in for centuries: you will read about, think about, argue about, and write about great ideas. Of course, being a scholar requires that you read,

think, argue, and write in certain ways. You will need to ***make*** and ***support*** your ***claims*** according to the expectations of the academic community.

4.2 Development of Ideas and Paragraphs

In composition, ***development*** refers to the process of **adding** informative and illustrative **details** to support the main idea in a paragraph or essay. Depending on the writing genre and type of composition, I think that there are many ways through which body paragraphs can develop the theme or main idea (i.e. topic sentence): (1) developing the theme through **examples**; (2) developing the theme through **description;** (3) developing the theme through **contrast**; (4) developing the idea through **comparison**; and (5) developing the essay through **narration**.

I think that the main idea here is that the ***topic*** sentence alone is ***not sufficient*** to provide a complete argument. The reader might need to see more details which would definitely explore the topic more to clarify it. This ***elaboration*** might take the form of examples, description, contrast, etc.

A-Paragraph development by examples

Sometimes a paragraph is ***developed by examples.*** The example paragraph is a kind of **list paragraph**, in which ***example sentences*** closely **support** the topic sentence. According to Rosa & Eschholz (2012), illustration is the use of ***examples*** to make ideas more concrete and to make generalizations more specific and detailed. **Examples** enable writers not just to tell but to show what they mean.

Examine the following paragraphs:

- **Example 1:**

Effective Writing: A Must in Universities

*The **ability to write** well organised, concise paragraphs is **essential** to a student's success in almost all university courses. In preparing scientific reports of laboratory experiments, a student must present his findings in a **logical order** and **clear language** in order to receive a favourable evaluation of his work. To write successful answers to essay questions on history or anthropology examinations, a student must arrange the relevant facts and opinions according to some accepted pattern of paragraph structure. And certainly when a student writes a book report for English, or a critique for political studies, or a term paper for sociology, style and organisation are often as important as content. Clearly skill in expository writing is crucial to successful achievement in most university subjects.*

The key words or ideas in the first two sentences of the paragraph are in **bold**.

- **Example 2 (a paragraph written by a student):**

My Morbid Imagination

*My family is convinced **that I inherited my imagination from Edgar Allan Poe**. For example, when I was in kindergarten, I dreamed that my sister killed people with a television antenna and disposed of their bodies in the woods across the street from my house. For three weeks after that dream I stayed with my grandparents until they finally convinced me that my sister was harmless. Not long afterward, my grandfather died, and that sparked new fears. I was so*

terrified that his ghost would visit me that I put two brooms across the doorway of my bedroom at night. Fortunately, my little trick worked. He never came back. More recently, I was terribly frightened after staying up late one night to watch The Ring. I lay awake until dawn clutching my cell phone, ready to dial 911 the moment that spooky little girl stepped out of my TV. Just thinking about it now gives me goose bumps.

Example 3 (a model essay developed by examples):

The Successful Interview

To be successful in a job interview (or for that matter in almost any interview situation), you should demonstrate certain personal and professional qualities. You need to create a good image in the limited time available, usually from 30 to 45 minutes. Furthermore, you must make a positive impression which the interviewer will remember while he interviews other applicants. At all times, you should present your most attractive qualities during an interview.

You should, for example, take care to appear well-groomed and modestly dressed, avoiding the extremes of too elaborate or too casual attire. On the positive side, clothes may be a good leveller, putting you on a par with other applicants and requiring the interviewer to consider more important qualifications. On the other hand, clothes which are too informal may convey the impression that you are not serious about the job or that you may be casual about your work as well as your dress. Clothes which are too elaborate, too colourful, or too expensive suggest that you do not understand what behaviour is appropriate for the job or that you are snobbish or frivolous. The right clothes worn at the right time, however, gain the respect of the interviewer and

his confidence in your judgement. It may not be true that 'clothes make the man,' but the first and often lasting impression of you is determined by the clothes you wear.

Besides care for personal appearance, you should pay close attention to your manner of speaking. Since speech is a reflection of personality, you should reflect confidence by speaking in a clear voice, loud enough to be heard without being aggressive or overpowering. Your speech should not call attention to itself, but it should reveal the individuality and ability of the speaker. Obviously, you must speak without grammatical or dialect differences for which you might be criticised or which might cause embarrassment to the employer. Although there are cultural differences with respect to the formality of the job interview, your speech must show you to be a friendly and pleasant person.

Speaking without a subject worth talking about will not impress anyone. You should be prepared to talk knowledgeably about the requirement of the position for which you are applying in relation to your own professional experiences and interests. Knowing something about the position enables you ask intelligent questions about the work and the requirements for the job. The interviewer can decide from the questions asked whether you are genuinely interested or knowledgeable. You can comment on your own training, experience, and other qualifications in relation to the specific tasks of the position. The interviewer can determine whether your background and potential seem to fit the position. The position for which you are applying is not only the safest topic for discussion, it is essential that you demonstrate your understanding of the requirements and your abilities in meeting these requirements.

Finally, to be really impressive, you must convey a sense of self-confidence and enthusiasm for work. As already indicated, you demonstrate self-confidence by your manner of speech and dress. You further show it by being prepared for the interview with information and questions about the position. In addition, the way you enter the room, sit, look at the interviewer, and fill out application forms and other papers may express self-confidence. The eagerness with which you discuss the job rather than the salary may reveal your enthusiasm for work. You may express it also through your questions and comments about working conditions and facilities. And, of course, your previous experiences and success will tell the interviewer about your enthusiasm for work. Both of these qualities – self-confidence and enthusiasm for work – are valued highly by all interviewers.

The appropriately dressed job applicant indicates his sound judgement. His manner of speaking suggests his friendliness and competence. His curiosity and information about the position he is seeking demonstrate his sincerity and potential in the job. He exhibits self-confidence through his knowledge, and he shows his enthusiasm for work. If you display these characteristics, with just a little luck, you will certainly succeed in the typical personnel interview.

Outline & Analysis

The Successful Interview

Important personal and professional qualities

A good image in a short time — **TP**

A lasting impression

Attractive qualities

Well-groomed and modestly dressed

Not too elaborate

Not too casual

Right clothes gain respect

EP1

Manner of speaking

Clear and loud enough

Without grammatical or dialect differences

Friendly and pleasant

EP2

Know something about the job

Requirements for the position

Experience and knowledge

EP3

Self-confidence and enthusiasm

Be prepared for the interview

Show your interest in the job

EP4

Dress

Speech

Sincerity **RP**

Self-confidence

(Succeeding in the interview)

Abbreviations: **TS** (Topic Sentence); **TP** (Topic Paragraph); **EP** (Example Paragraph); and **RP** (Restatement Paragraph).

B-Paragraph development by comparison

A comparison paragraph, as its name indicates, compares similar aspects or qualities of two subjects. Two different procedures are followed while writing down comparison paragraphs:

1. An example related to one subject (A) alternates with an example related to another subject (B);
2. All examples of subject A are listed together, followed by all examples of subject B.

In addition to the topic sentence (TP), the example sentence (E), and the restatement sentence (RS), additional sentence types may be used in writing comparison paragraphs:

1. A **topic introducer** (**TI**) might be used, followed by TS that states more specifically the basis of comparison;
2. **Transition sentences** (**Tr**) may be used to change from one point of view to another; from one set of ideas to another; or from one subject to another

- **Example 1: (1st procedure: alternating examples of A & B)**

From Paragraph to Essay

Despite their obvious differences in length, the paragraph and the essay are quite similar structurally. For example, the paragraph is introduced by either a topic sentence or a topic introducer followed by a topic sentence. In the essay, the first paragraph provides introductory material and establishes the topic focus. Next, the sentences in the body of a paragraph develop the topic sentence. Similarly, the body of an essay consist of a number of paragraphs that expand and support the ideas presented in the introductory paragraph. Finally, a terminator – whether a restatement, conclusion, or observation – ends the paragraph. The essay, too, has a device which brings the ideas to a logically and psychologically satisfying completion: the concluding paragraph. Although exceptions to these generalisations may be observed in modern creative writing, most well written expository paragraphs and essays are comparable in structure.

Now discuss this: **Does this paragraph include the necessary parts discussed – topic sentence, developers, and terminator? Identify them!**

- **Example 2: (2nd procedure: listing all examples of A followed by those of B**)

The Objective Test and the Essay Exam

In college and university courses, the objective test and the essay exam are two contrasting methods of evaluation commonly used to measure a student's grasp of subject matter. The objective test usually consists of a large number of unrelated questions that require the student to demonstrate mastery of details. It often leads to rote memorisation of isolated facts during the pre-test

period of study. Since the questions on the objective test are presented in true-false or multiple choice form, the student may be encouraged to guess answers for which he has no accurate knowledge. The essay exam, on the other hand, usually consists of a few broadly stated questions that require the student to organise his response in essay form. Such questions force the student to give proof of his ability to handle general concepts. This type of exam also relies on factual information, but there is far greater necessity for the student to demonstrate analytical and compositional skills. Mere guessing at answers is reduced to a minimum. Although the objective test and the essay exam have similar goals – the assessment of a student's academic achievement – the techniques (and very often the results) of the two types of examination differ significantly.

C-Paragraph development by contrast

Unlike the **comparison** paragraph, which compares **similar** aspects of two subjects, the **contrast** paragraph compares **dissimilar** aspects of two subjects. **Like** the **comparison paragraph**, however, the **two procedures** may be followed in writing the contrast paragraph. The first method **alternates** examples of **subject A** with examples of **subject B**; the contrasts may be in the **same** sentence, or they may be in **consecutive** sentences. The other method presents **all** subject A **examples *together***, then all subject B **examples *together***.

In writing **comparison** paragraphs, **transitional** words such as ***similarly, also, too, both*** are used. For contrast paragraphs, however, other transitional words and phrases are employed: ***unlike, on the other hand, in contrast***, etc.

- **Example**

Where to Study

One major decision which faces the American student ready to begin higher education is the choice of attending a large university or a small college. The large university provides a wide range of specialised departments, as well as numerous courses within such departments. The small college, however, generally provides a limited number of courses and specialisations but offers a better student-faculty ratio, thus permitting individualised attention to students. Because of its large, cosmopolitan student body (often exceeding 20,000) the university exposes its students to many different cultural, social, and extra-curricular programmes. On the other hand, the smaller, more homogeneous student body of the small college affords greater opportunities for direct involvement and individual participation in such activities. Finally, the university closely approximates the real world; it provides a relaxed, impersonal, and sometimes anonymous existence. In contrast, the intimate atmosphere of the small college allows the student four years of structured living in which s/he contemplates and prepares for the real world. In making his choice among educational institutions, the student must, therefore, consider many factors.

D-Paragraph development by narration and specific details

Sometimes, a paragraph is developed by narration; this means telling more - in the form of a story – to clarify and support the topic sentence. Past events and specific details sometimes elaborate on a specific idea to strengthen it. For example, a story might emphasise the idea that someone is careless or strange, like in the example below:

My friend Jones is not a very practical person*. Driving along a main way one dark night, he suddenly had a flat tyre. Even worse, he discovered that he did not have a spare wheel in his car trunk! Jones waved to passing cars and lorries, but none of them stopped. Half an hour later, he was almost in despair. At last, he waved to a car just like his own. To his surprise, the car actually stopped and a well-dressed young woman got out. Jones was terribly disappointed: How could a person like this possibly help him? The lady, however, offered him her own spare wheel, but Jones had to explain that he had never changed a wheel in his life! She set to work at once and fitted the wheel in a few minutes while Jones looked on in admiration.*

4.3 Good Presentation of Ideas

Having decided on what to say (or write), say it ***neatly*** (precisely or adequately), clearly, simply, coherently, and consistently. Presentation is very important as it makes reading faster and easier. It shows concern for the reader and it always pays to take the trouble.

A-Write neatly

Try to be as much legible as you can! Neatness is particularly important when filling in forms or writing job application letters. The way you write such documents will make a better impression on a prospective employer than a messy one. Also, neatness of presentation matters a great deal in examinations. Neatness is not a substitute of knowledge, but a messy presentation can lower the marks which the answers (e.g. written essays) receive.

B-Write clearly

Clarity is very important; so, keep sentences short and try your best to avoid complicated constructions with unnecessary subordinate clauses. It is far

better to cut long sentences into short ones by the use of punctuation. The following example taken from a Government publication illustrates the case of a very long sentence which could be written better:

"In turn, India is exporting increased quantities of non-traditional goods like engineering products, machinery, components, equipment, electronic goods, etc for which there is a growing demand among the non-aligned countries, and which India offers not only at a competitive price, but on comparatively easier financial terms and with facilities of after-sale service."

It would be much better to write it this way:

"India is exporting increased quantities of non-traditional goods like engineering products, machinery, components, equipment, electronic goods, etc. There is a growing demand for such goods among the non-aligned countries. India offers competitive prices, comparatively easier financial terms and facilities for after-sale service."

Thus, **one** long sentence has been cut into **THREE**, and made simpler and clearer.

C-Plan your paragraphs

Paragraphs are key aids to clarity:

- Paragraphs break the text into units, and this makes reading and understanding easier;
- There should be only one theme (topic) per paragraph. Therefore, paragraphs help the organisation of one's thoughts;

- Each paragraph has to contain a topic sentence; that is a sentence stating the theme of the paragraph. This sums up for the reader what the writer is trying to say;
- Each paragraph should end on a transition which introduces the next paragraph. This helps the reader to follow the reasoning structure.

Paragraphs can have many sentences, so long as the unity of the theme is preserved. There should be only one theme per paragraph. If the paragraph is a long one, it may be desirable to put the topic sentence at the beginning. However, there is no hard or fast rule; the topic sentence can go wherever it fits.

D-Avoid long and unnecessary words

It is a golden piece of advice to avoid long and unnecessary words. Long words interrupt the flow of thought and the reader may not understand them. Here are a few examples of long words, each followed by a short word which would be better to use: *abbreviated/short; necessitate/need; prevaricate/quibble; desiccate/dry-up; circumscribe/limit; multi-faceted/many-sided;* and *tendermindedness/tenderness*.

However, in some cases, the long word is better because it describes the meaning more accurately. Moreover, there are occasions when long words are called for, because they either add to the meaning or improve the rhythm of the sentence. For example: ***"The moon-landing was a significantly memorable achievement"*** is stronger than: ***"The moon-landing was a great feat to remember"***.

Unnecessary words are those words which add nothing to the meaning of the sentence. Sometimes, we – as English learners – add some empty or unnecessary words that would add nothing to the meaning of the sentence. Some of us, for example, would prefer to start writing, especially when introducing a topic, with specific phrases or starters, such as: 'As a matter of fact……', 'There is no doubt that …….', 'Generally speaking ……', and 'Needless to say…..'. Those starters can be removed or replaced by shorter ones (or just a single word) to convey the same meaning. Sometimes, we repeat ourselves by writing many synonyms (Don't panic! All of us – as Arabic speakers – did this!). For example, we might write down a sentence like this: *The Maths test was so* ***hard, difficult, complicated and tricky!*** Perhaps, just one of the above adjectives is sufficient to do the job.

E-Be coherent and consistent

To be ***coherent*** is to make sense, and to be easy to follow and understand. More specifically, it means:

- Putting the words of each sentence in the right place;
- Putting the sentences in the right order; and
- Avoiding ambiguity.

In other words, the basic unit for the written expression of thought is the **sentence**. To be complete and meaningful, the sentence must have at least ***one verb*** and ***one subject***; the subject, however, can be implied.

Naturally, as the sentences become more complicated, the **order of words** becomes more important. For example: *"I am wearing the dress my mother made for my birthday"* does not mean the same thing as *"I am wearing for my birthday the dress my mother made"*! The **difference** in meaning comes from

the place of 'for my birthday'. ***Keep together*** the words which belong together; failure to do so may yield some very odd results:

"He took out his gun, blew his nose, wiped it clean, put it in his pocket and wondered whether it would go off"!

The sentence was not meant to be funny; its author simply forgot to keep together the words which belonged together. It was **the gun** he wiped clean, not his nose; the sentence ought to run like this: ***"He blew his nose: took out his gun, wiped it clean, put it in his pocket and wondered whether it would go off."***

With sentences, as with words, it is very important to keep to the **logical order**. It is equally important to use short, simple sentences with ***one thought*** per sentence.

Avoid ambiguity: Ambiguity is not lack of coherence, but obscurity. ***Faulty construction*** can lead to misunderstanding or to nonsense. See this: ***"I will eat at my home which is in London on Sunday"***. As if home was not in London during the week. Had the words which ***belonged together*** been ***kept together***, there would have been no ambiguity! So, see this modified one: "***On Sunday, I will eat at my home which is in London"*** or ***"I will eat on Sunday at my home which is in London"***.

Nothing is more irritating than to find the same word spelt in different ways. If one spells 'Muslim' with a 'u' and an 'i', one must not switch to 'Moselm' with an 'o' and an 'e'. The same applies to Koran/Quran, and to English words like cheque/check, through/thru, and rhyme/rime.

F-Consider 'register' (suitable language & tone)

Writing well involves presenting your material in a **tone appropriate** to your audience and to the task in hand. You would use different styles of language for a business letter, a newspaper report, a letter to a friend or a short story. It is important to develop a **suitable tone**, or register, for your written work.

A university essay is a **formal document** and requires a **formal register**. Students often struggle to find a balance between formal, intellectual language and open, accessible English. Many reputable scholars struggle with this too, which is why some academic books are so hard to understand. However, even the most complicated ideas can be articulated clearly. Your marker will be delighted to see complex thought presented in plain English. They will also notice if you dress up weak thinking in flowery language. Pay attention to the register of your writing and remember who will read your work.

Pay attention to the way academic writers, for example, use language. If it seems too dense and formal then do not copy their style. However, if you find a book that is lucid, interesting and readable, try to work out what makes it so clear.

Avoid being too personal: Your name appears on the front of your essay, therefore your marker already knows that everything in the essay is your opinion. **Do not keep saying 'in my opinion'** or 'it seems to me that' etc. Have the courage of your convictions and state what you think. If you can back up your views with evidence from sources, there is no need to apologise or hesitate. You do not need to fear the first person, but don't overdo it. Present your work as a piece of cohesive

thought rather than as collection of your own responses. Avoid using phrases such as, 'I want to look at' – just get on with it.

Avoid being too clever: Some of the worst grammatical errors are caused by trying to write long, complex sentences. A short sentence is the most powerful way to make a cogent point. However, one short declarative after another quickly rings wooden. Similarly, do not use words that you *think* you understand. If in doubt, look them up instead of leaving them out.

Avoid slang: This does not just cover words and phrases. It also applies to informal expressions and sentence constructions. Do not say, 'Cicourel's analysis of juvenile delinquency blew me away. You know what I mean?' You can express the same idea by saying, 'Cicourel's analysis is vivid and engaging,' or, 'Cicourel's observational research demands a strong response from the reader.' Avoid using 'you' or 'us' for the reader of the text. 'One' sounds formal in everyday speech, but it is very useful in this setting.

Tenses: Use the past tense for anything that happened in the past. If you use the present tense to refer to an author's argument ('Bruce says x, y. Brewer argues that …') then stick with that consistently. The present tense may be the most appropriate for certain generalizations ('Social stratification exists in every known society.'), but make sure that they really do apply to the present day.

G-Watch your grammar

If you want to express interesting ideas, then a sound **grasp of grammar** is essential. Your understanding of grammar may be more developed than you realise. If you have studied a foreign language, you may have a very

sophisticated knowledge of how it works. Most speakers use grammar well without knowing all the terms for the techniques they are using. This is fine when it works, but it can help to stop and think about what you are doing. Markers tend to use technical, grammatical terms when pointing out problems in your work, which is not much use to you if you do not know what they are talking about.

This section will point out a few common problems, and offer definitions of some terms that may crop up in your markers' comments. If you have serious problems with the English grammar used in academic writing, you have to work hard to solve them. If your markers consistently complain about your ***syntax***, sentence structure, tenses, pronouns and the like, you probably need some help from specialised sources on syntax and grammar.

Syntax is the order of elements. English is an 'SVO' language, which means the normal order of elements is subject-verb-object. 'The man bit the dog,' is clear in its meaning, if weird. Problems can develop, however, when a writer starts to pile various modifying elements (subordinate clauses, temporal phrases, etc.) at the beginning of a sentence. Then it is possible to lose track of the subject, the verb, and the object (complement).

H-Watch your punctuation

Punctuation is very important; without it, words would follow each other in an endless stream and the meaning would be lost. The role of punctuation is to make meaning clear. I remember a funny famous example (perhaps it was a joke about what male students wrote, and what female students in the same classroom wrote) that shows the importance of punctuation:

A woman without her man is nothing! (without punctuation). If left as it is, the sentence would bear two contrasted interpretations:

1. A woman: without her, man is nothing.
2. A woman, without her man, is nothing.

A **full-stop** (.) is needed to end the sentence, when a complete meaning has been reached. However, **three** full-stops (…) placed one after the other mean that words have been left out in a quotation; *'Let me tell you … I hope you agree.'* Or to indicate that the sentence has been left unfinished deliberately, *'I could go on and on…'*

The **colon** is used to introduce the words which follow it. ***'My shopping list reads:*** 12 eggs, 1 lb butter, 2 lbs sugar…' To introduce direct speech or a quotation. ***Then he said: 'After all …'***

The **semi-colon** is very useful, especially because it is less final than a full-stop. It can be used between sentences which are complete in themselves, to indicate that there is a connection between their meaning: ***'I disliked her at first sight; she looked sloppy in her jeans and her kinky hair dyed green was unkempt'***. A full-stop after **'sight'** would cut off the trend of thought while the insertion of 'because' would weaken the meaning.

Because the **semi-colon** is less than a **full-stop**, but more than a **comma,** it is useful to break up long sentences which already have commas in them. Here is an example taken from Samuel Johnson:

'The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early had been kind; but it has been delayed until I am indifferent, and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it'.

If Samuel Johnson had used full-stops instead of semi-colons, he would have destroyed the dignity of this passage my making it jerky. Instead, by using semi-colons, he adds weight to each of his reasons.

The **comma** is a useful stop, especially when reading out loud; it gives you time to breathe. There are as many different ways of using commas as there are styles of writing. However, here are 9 different cases when commas must be used:

- **Before and after speech**: 'I must ask you to repeat these words,' said the priest, 'before I can pronounce you man and wife.'
- **When listing things,** qualities, ideas or clauses: 'Fear, love, hate, hunger and death are man's lot'. 'His dedication to office, his endless energy, his honesty and his generosity will long be remembered.'
- **To separate words of *the same* part of speech:** Look at these examples:
    1. 'He advanced slowly, steadily, silently.' (adverbs)
    2. 'He is tall, dark, fat yet handsome.' (adjectives)
    3. 'He lied, stole, killed and fled.' (verbs)
    4. 'in walked the sailor, the soldier, the pilot…' (nouns)
- **To separate** from the rest of the sentence **qualifying words** not essential to its meaning: 'Napoleon, the French Emperor, was defeated at Waterloo.'
- **To separate** from the rest of the sentence a **non-defining clause**: 'The battle of Waterloo, which you have read about, is one of the most important events in history.'
- **Between words repeated for *emphasis:*** 'It was much, much too hot.'

- **Instead of '*or*' and '*and':*** For example: 'Give me apples, pears and prunes.' (I want all three) – 'Give me apples, pears or prunes.' (I want only one of them)
- **Usually after and around '*however':*** 'However, you must forgive him.' – 'Let us look at the facts, however, lest we do him an injustice.'

Moreover, there are many ***other punctuation marks*** can be used for different purposes. These include:

- **Question marks (?)**
- **Inverted commas** (which are commonly used to single out words or letters, or to indicate that the words between them are a quotation, part of speech, title of a book, etc.)
- **Brackets** (which are sometimes used to introduce words which do not affect the meaning of the text; or to set out numbers or letters of the alphabet used to enumerate lists; e.g. (i), (ii), (a), (b), (c), etc.)
- **Hyphens** (which are mainly used to make ***compound words*** 'vice-president', 'son-in-law', and 'know-how'; to unite two or more words in order to make them into an adjective: '***never-to-be-forgotten*** event'; after certain Latin prefixes: 'anti-English', 'ex-Prime Minster', etc.
- **Dashes** (which are used to: (1) summarise a list already given; and (2) emphasise the end of a sentence.
- **Exclamation marks (!)**

4.4 Editing and Revising Paragraphs and Essays

It should be clear that getting your thoughts down on paper is not the final stage of writing a good paragraph or essay. There remains the rewriting of the first draft so as to shape your ideas into a carefully styled composition. Nowadays, computers and other electronic devices and software have made the editing and redrafting process even easier and more manageable. Ordinarily, editing involves changes at three points: between sentences, within sentences, and in individual words.

At the word level, spelling and capitalisation are checked, but more creatively, words are often changed. A different word may be substituted for the original word because it is easier to understand, is more colourful, gives a more precise meaning, or provides variety.

At the sentence level, phrases may be put in a different order, structures of modification revises, different verb structures selected, or the length of phrases or whole sentences may be altered.

Finally, for smoothness and balance, changes are made between sentences or paragraphs. Such changes, designed to clarify relationships between ideas, are often accomplished by punctuating more adequately, by introducing more effective transitional devices, or by restating or removing awkward phrases and sentences. Editing then – the self-conscious appraisal and revision of your own work – usually makes the difference between a merely acceptable and a truly superior piece of writing.

4.5 Academic Document Types

There are many types of academic documents, which do not look like such informal and/or personal documents like newspaper, magazines, and personal diaries. These include:

- ***Books***, in many types and varieties.
- ***Book reports***.
- ***Conference papers***.
- ***Dissertation***; usually between 6,000 and 20,000 words in length.
- ***Essay***; usually short, between 1,500 and 6,000 words in length.
- ***Explication***; usually a short factual note explaining some obscure part of a particular work; e.g. its terminology, dialect, allusions or coded references.
- ***Research Article***.
- ***Research Paper***; longer essay involving library research, 3000 to 6000 words in length.
- ***Technical report***.
- ***Thesis***; completed over a number of years, often in excess of 20,000 words in length.
- ***Translation***.

4.6 Features of Academic Writing

Academic writing in English is ***linear***, which means it has ***one central point or theme*** with every part contributing to the main line of argument, without digressions or repetitions. Its objective is to ***inform*** rather than entertain. As well as this it is in the ***standard*** written form of the language. There are eight

main features of academic writing that are often discussed. Academic writing is to some extent: complex, formal, objective, explicit, hedged, and responsible. It uses language precisely and accurately.

a) ***Complexity***

Written language is relatively ***more complex*** than spoken language. Written language has longer words, it is lexically more dense and it has a more varied vocabulary. It uses more noun-based phrases than verb-based phrases. Written texts are ***shorter*** and the language has more grammatical complexity, including more subordinate clauses and more passives.

b) ***Formality***

Academic writing is relatively ***formal***. In general this means that in an essay you should ***avoid colloquial*** words and expressions. In general this means in an essay that you should avoid:

1. colloquial words and expressions: "stuff", "a lot of", "thing", "sort of".
2. abbreviated forms: "can't", "doesn't", "shouldn't"
3. two word verbs: "put off", "bring up"
4. sub-headings, numbering and bullet-points in formal essays - but use them in reports.
5. asking questions.

c) ***Precision***

In academic writing, facts and figures are given precisely. In academic writing you need to be precise when you use information, dates or figures. Do not use "*a lot of people*" when you can say "*50 million people*".

d) ***Objectivity***

Written language is in general ***objective*** rather than personal. It therefore has fewer words that refer to the writer or the reader. This means that the ***main emphasis*** should be on the ***information*** that you want to give and the arguments you want to make, rather than you. For that reason, academic writing tends to ***use nouns*** (and adjectives), rather than verbs (and adverbs). This is related to the basic nature of academic study and academic writing, in particular. Nobody really wants to know what you "think" or "believe". They want to know what you have studied and learned and how this has led you to your various conclusions. The thoughts and beliefs should be based on your lectures, reading, discussion and research and it is important to make this clear.

-Compare these two paragraphs:

The question of what constitutes "language proficiency" and the nature of its cross-lingual dimensions is also at the core of many hotly debated issues in the areas of bilingual education and second language pedagogy and testing. Researchers have suggested ways of making second language teaching and testing more "communicative" (e.g., Canale and Swain, 1980; Oller, 1979b) on the grounds that a communicative approach better reflects the nature of language proficiency than one which emphasizes the acquisition of discrete language skills.

We don't really know what language proficiency is but many people have talked about it for a long time. Some researchers have tried to find ways for us to make teaching and testing more communicative because that is how language works. I think that language is something we use for communicating, not an object for us to study and we remember that when we teach and test it.

Which is the most objective?

-In general, avoid words like "I", "me", "myself".

A reader will normally assume that any idea not referenced is your own. It is therefore unnecessary to make this explicit.

> Don't write: "*In my opinion, this a very interesting study*."
>
> Write: "*This is a very interesting study*."

Avoid "***you***" to refer to the reader or people in general.

> Don't write: "*You can easily forget how different life was 50 years ago*."
>
> Write: "*It is easy to forget how difficult life was 50 years ago*."

e) ***Explicitness***

Academic writing is explicit in several ways:

1. It is explicit in its ***signposting*** of the organisation of the ideas in the text. As a writer of academic English, it is your responsibility to make it clear to your reader how various parts of the text are related. These connections can be made explicit by the use of different signalling words.

For example, if you want to tell your reader that your ***line of argument is going to change***, make it clear.

> *The Bristol 167 was to be Britain's great new advance on American types such as the Lockheed Constellation and Douglas DC-6, which did not have the range to fly the Atlantic non-stop. It was also to be the largest aircraft ever built in Britain. However, even by the end of the war, the design had run into serious difficulties.*

If you think that one sentence ***gives reasons*** for something in another sentence, make it explicit.

> *While an earlier generation of writers had noted this feature of the period, it was not until the recent work of Cairncross that the significance of this outflow was realized. Partly this was because the current account deficit appears much smaller in current (1980s) data than it was thought to be by contemporaries.*

If you think ***two ideas are almost the same***, say so.

> *Marx referred throughout his work to other systems than the capitalist system, especially those which he knew from the history of Europe to have preceded capitalism; systems such as feudalism, where the relation of production was characterized by the personal relation of the feudal lord and his serf and a relation of subordination which came from the lord's control of the land. Similarly, Marx was interested in slavery and in the classical Indian and Chinese social systems, or in those systems where the ties of local community are all important.*

If you intend your sentence to give extra information, make it clear.

> *He is born into a family, he marries into a family, and he becomes the husband and father of his own family. In addition, he has a definite place of origin and more relatives than he knows what to do with, and he receives a rudimentary education at the Canadian Mission School.*

If you are ***giving examples***, do it explicitly.

> *This has sometimes led to disputes between religious and secular clergy, between orders and bishops. For example, in the Northern context, the previous bishop of Down and Connor, Dr Philbin, refused for most of his*

period of leadership in Belfast to have Jesuits visiting or residing in his diocese.

2. It is explicit in its ***acknowledgment*** of the ***sources*** of the ideas in the text.

If you know the source of the ideas you are presenting, acknowledge it.

Do THIS in academic writing

McGreil (1977: 363-408) has shown that though Dubliners find the English more acceptable than the Northern Irish, Dubliners still seek a solution to the Northern problem within an all-Ireland state.

NOT

Although Dubliners find the English more acceptable than the Northern Irish, Dubliners still seek a solution to the Northern problem within an all-Ireland state.

NOT

Researchers have shown that though Dubliners find the English more acceptable than the Northern Irish, Dubliners still seek a solution to the Northern problem within an all-Ireland state.

e) ***Accuracy***

In academic writing you need to be ***accurate*** in your use of ***vocabulary***. Do not confuse, for example, "*phonetics*" and "*phonology*" or "*grammar*" with "*syntax*".

Choose the correct word, for example, "meeting", "assembly", "gathering" or "conference".

Or from: "money", "cash", "currency", "capital" or "funds".

4.7 The Process of Academic Writing: Writing an Academic Essay

Writing down an academic article/essay is a common practice which you, as a university student, always do at the undergraduate stage. As an English major, you are always required to produce your answers to essay questions in most English and literature courses (e.g. Novel, Drama, and Poetry) in the form of coherent ***academic*** essays that reflect your understanding. Regardless of the accuracy of any information/ideas you include in this essay, the way you plan, write, organize, and signpost what you are writing is ***extremely*** important. After all, the course instructor would expect you to produce an ***academic*** piece of writing.

Some students do not get high scores in these courses, not mainly because they are not well-informed in the subject or do not have much knowledge, but simply because they are not able to ***compose*** an academic essay! An academic essay, as the table below indicates, should be characterized by:

1. being centred around ***one*** main topic that should involve some ***minor topics***;
2. having: (1) ***an introduction*** (in which the learner/writer should introduce the topic at hand). This includes setting the scene and stating the main topic/thesis/claims that the writer wants to defend; (2) ***a body,*** which is composed of some paragraphs (usually three or more), that usually develop an idea with some details, examples, illustrations, etc. This involves arguing about something, and supporting the main argument logically and coherently; (3) ***a conclusion*** that usually summarises the main argument and gives a final note to the reader. This might include mentioning briefly the main ideas;

3. going through a ***provisional*** and ***developmental*** process of: mapping, brainstorming, planning, drafting, re-drafting, revising, editing, and writing a final draft;
4. requiring many skills, such as: (1) ***Composition & linguistic skills***: These include things like: how to utilize vocabulary and grammatical competence to produce accurate words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs; the ability to properly express oneself; the ability to develop an idea using supporting examples and details; the ability to create shifts and transitions between ideas/points; the ability to summarize a section by, for example, removing unnecessary details; the ability to use punctuation marks accurately and functionally; the ability to move certain sentences back and forward as required; (2) ***Research skills:*** These skills involve: how to choose and search for a topic; how to identify the appropriate resources and references needed for getting information about the topic (e.g. books, articles, websites, and research papers); (3) ***Organizational skills***: These relate to organizing ideas, taking notes, suggesting a time frame, and employing time and resources efficiently; (4) ***Reading skills***: These include things like reviewing academic and relevant resources and skimming and/or scanning some texts (both online and offline); (5) ***Computer and electronic skills***: These include the skills of employing computer and the Internet for composing the essay (e.g. using keyboard for composing the essay, copying and pasting texts, editing and saving the document, and sharing the document online with others).

The following procedure is useful when writing an extended essay or assignment: Available: http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm

	Task	**Skills Needed**	**Product**
1.	Read the question or brief and understand what you are required to do. Think about the subject, the purpose and the audience.	thinking academically	Subject.
2.	Think about what you know about the subject. Write it down in some way.	Brainstorming	Diagrams or notes.
3.	Go to the library and find relevant books or articles.	library/research skills	Reading list.
4.	Find the books on your reading list - if you have one - and study them.	reading skills: skimming and scanning	List of materials studied.
5.	Make notes on these books and articles. Record full details of the materials you use.	reading in detail selecting & note-taking paraphrasing/summarising	Notes.

	Task	**Skills Needed**	**Product**
6.	Organise your piece of work.	Planning Organisation	Plan.
7.	Type or write your first draft.	writing from notes synthesis writing paragraphs typing/word-processing	First draft.
8.	Discuss your first draft informally with friends, other members of your class and your lecturer if possible.	speaking skills listening skills discussion skills	List of revisions/changes.
9.	Revise your first draft, bearing in mind any comments that were made in your discussions. Go back to 2. if necessary Produce your second draft.	use of dictionaries & reference books writing introduction & conclusion quoting/writing a list of references	Second draft.
10.	Proofread your draft.	checking for spelling mistakes checking punctuation and grammar	Writing with changes marked.

	Task	Skills Needed	Product
		checking vocabulary use checking style checking organisation, references etc. checking for plagiarism	
11.	Produce a final typed version.	typing/word-processing writing title/contents page	Final piece of work.
12.	Check everything.	final check	Hand in.

CHAPTER FIVE

WebQuest Strategy

5.1 Introduction

The dominance of the Web in education and language learning has motivated many scholars, researchers and language learning to develop educational models that effectively employ the Web (and its facilities) to foster students' understanding, acquisition and learning. In other words, the increasing use of the Web as a main information resource has motivated researchers to create instructional models that employ the Web to improve students' learning and enquiry skills. A prominent Web-based model that was devised for helping teachers to incorporate Web-based resources into classroom practices is the WebQuest model.

The use of this model was empirically investigated in many studies (e.g., In science education, Gaskill et al, 2006 conducted two experiments in an American rural high-school setting to compare learning using WebQuests versus conventional instruction; Ikpeze and Boyd, 2007 used WebQuests for facilitating thoughtful literacy for 6 middle-class European American students in an elementary school in a small middle-income sub-urban neighbourhood in the US; and Mekheimer, 2005 who investigated the effect of using WebQuests on developing essay writing skills for EFL student teachers within the Egyptian context). They identified WebQuest as ideal for teaching students how to use the Web effectively and access resources to answer specific questions or solve problems. According to these studies, tasks based on the model helped students to improve their learning and motivation (Abdallah, 2011b).

WebQuest was developed in the early 1995's at San Diego State University by Bernie Dodge with Tom March. Dodge (1997) defines a WebQuest as "*an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners*

work with come from resources on the Internet". He also presented the concept of two types of WebQuests: short-term and long-term ones. The major differences between them are: the instructional goals and the duration of WebQuest.

An instructional goal of a short-term WebQuest is related to knowledge acquisition and integration, whereas an instructional goal of a long-term WebQuest is related to extending and refining knowledge. A short-term WebQuest is designed to be completed in 1-3 class periods, while a long-term one typically takes between 1-4 weeks in a classroom setting.

March (2003. 43) also defines a WebQuest as

> *a scaffolded learning structure that uses links to essential resources on the World Wide Web and an authentic task to motivate students' investigation of a central, open-ended question, development of individual expertise and participation in a final group process that attempts to transform newly acquired information into a more sophisticated understanding. The best WebQuests do this in a way that inspires students to see richer thematic relationships, facilitate a contribution to the real world of learning and reflect on their own metacognitive processes*".

Laborda (2009, 8) indicates that a WebQuest's design is based on a constructivist philosophy, and it promotes cooperative learning and scaffolding of instruction. It allows students to construct their knowledge of the language through exploring structured web resources on their own.

5.2 Importance and Reasons for Using WebQuest

Using WebQuest strategy is significantly important because it can help to create the distinguished teacher of the future. For students, it might help with: (1) improving student' motivation to learning; (2) developing thinking skills and problem solving; (3) encouraging cooperative learning; and (4) supporting their language learning.

There are many reasons for using WebQuest as a learning strategy since it: (1) creates effective learning; (2) is an attractive strategy of learning; (3) accommodates students' needs;(4) is an organized source;(5) saves time and effort;(6) saves time and effort; and (7) promotes problem solving skills.

According to Hockly (2008) there are some reasons for using WebQuest in the language classroom, they: (1) integrate between the internet and language classroom; (2) afford cooperative learning;(3) motivate learners; (4) encourage critical thinking skills;(5) can be used as a linguistic tool. While according to March (1998, 12), WebQuest (1) increases student 'motivation. Students face an authentic task and work with real resources; (2) develops students´ thinking skills; and (3) fosters cooperative learning.

In a nutshell, and according to Halat (2008), the following points represent the strengths of WebQuest: (1) being "an alternative teaching technique that enhances students' motivation in class; (2) serving as an alternative assessment tool of student's learning; gives teachers an idea of the students' knowledge acquisition degree of and implementation of the knowledge; (3) providing teachers with an opportunity to see and assess students' ability in using technology for learning; (4) enhancing teachers' creativity in thinking and writing, such as finding interesting and funny stories or scenarios and combining these with math or other subjects; (5) enhancing teachers' higher-order thinking skills, such as finding a topic-related websites and examining and selecting professional, well-prepared, and reliable websites; (6) requiring students to be active learners; and (7) allowing students to use the Internet as a vital tool (Abdelghafar, 2018).

There are many criteria and standards that would guide effective use of WebQuest; Dodge (2001) identifies five: (1) defining specific sites; (2) organizing or harmonizing your learners and resources; (3) Using medium;(4) Stimulating learners' abilities to think; and (5) Scaffolding high expectations.

5.3 WebQuest Structure

Many WebQuests developed by many teachers in different subject areas are available online (Young & Wilson, 2002). Thus, teachers may choose to incorporate ones developed by others, or develop their own as a way to get their students reasoning at higher levels. In spite of the many forms and variations a WebQuest might take, generally the structure of a WebQuest always encompasses (see Figure 1 below) five main sections (Dudeney, 2003; Smith & Barber, 2005):

1) *Introduction*. At this stage, the teacher should set the scene for his/her WebQuest by arousing learners' curiosity and motivation to do the task. S/he should also introduce the overall theme of the WebQuest that involves giving background information on the topic and, in language learning contexts, introducing key vocabulary and/or concepts that learners should understand in order to complete the task.
2) *Task*. This section explains clearly and precisely what the learners should do as they work their way through the WebQuest. The task should be highly motivating, interesting, and firmly anchored in a real-life situation. At this stage, students should know the required output (e.g., a presentation, a report, or a summary).
3) *Resources*. Usually these resources are Web-based and are normally given to learners in advance to use during the task.
4) *Process*. This is the stage where the teacher outlines what the learners will go through to accomplish the task, including the resources they will use, and guides them through a set of activities using some pre-defined Web-based resources. In a language-based WebQuest, the process stage may introduce (or recycle) lexical areas or grammatical points essential to the task. It will usually have one product or more that learners should eventually present.
5) *Conclusion*. This is the evaluation stage that can involve learners in self-evaluation, comparing and contrasting what they have produced with

other learners and giving feedback on what they feel they have learned or achieved. It should bring closure and encourage reflection (Abdallah, 2011b).

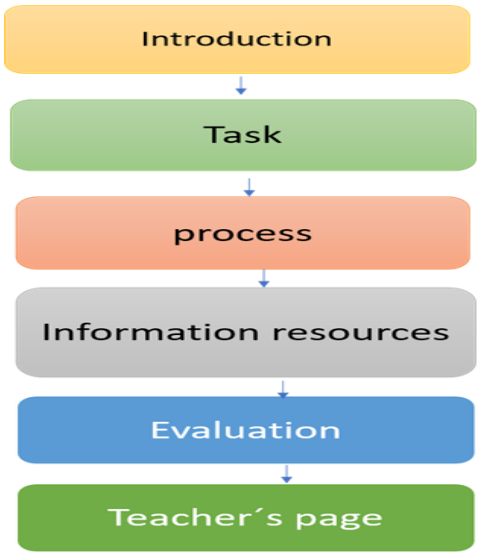

Figure 6.1: WebQuest Components

Table 6.1: Teacher's and learners' roles in WebQuest stages

Components	***Teacher's role***	***Learners' role***
Introduction	Designing and formulating the task based on curricular goals and students' prior knowledge. Reviewing and filtering Internet sources.	
Task	Presenting and explaining the task to students using students' prior knowledge	
Process	Providing procedural guidance and cognitive tools to complete the task	Collaboratively and/or cooperatively negotiating the processes to complete the task
Information resources	Placing reviewed and filtered Internet sources onto a webpage or in print form	Use procedural guidance and cognitive tools to synthesize information from

		reviewed and filtered Internet sources
Evaluation	Designs and uses a rubric to assess students' completed task	Collaboratively and/or cooperatively using a rubric to complete and self-assess task requirements
Conclusion	Reflects on completed task in reference to curricular goals, students' prior knowledge, and their newly constructed knowledge and plans for further activities	Presenting their completed tasks. Reflecting on the significance of the completed task in reference to curricular goals, their prior knowledge, and their newly constructed knowledge
Teacher's page	Designing WebQuests for other lessons.	Asking some questions or sending any comments

CHAPTER SIX

Test Preparation Strategies

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a quick guide to mastering test preparation strategies, tailored specifically for second-year EFL student teachers. By understanding test formats, employing effective study techniques, utilizing memory aids, and managing test anxiety, students can enhance their academic performance and approach tests with confidence.

6.2 Understanding Test Formats

Types of Tests include Multiple Choice, Essay, Short Answer. Understanding the format of a test is crucial to performing well. Different types of tests require different strategies and skills.

Multiple Choice Tests often assess your ability to recognize correct information among a set of options. They require a broad understanding of the course material and the ability to distinguish between closely related concepts or facts. Strategies for multiple-choice tests include:

- Reading the question carefully before looking at the answer choices.
- Eliminating obviously incorrect answers.
- Making an educated guess if you are unsure, as some exams do not penalize for incorrect answers.

Essay Tests measure your ability to organize and express your thoughts in a clear and concise manner. They often require a deep understanding of the course material and the ability to apply concepts to specific scenarios or questions. Writing is a very important skill that should be mastered properly by university students, especially pre-service language teachers (e.g. EFL student teachers). Strategies for essay tests include:

- Reading the prompt carefully to understand what is being asked.
- Planning your answer with a brief outline before you start writing.
- Ensuring that your essay has a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.

Short Answer Tests typically require concise responses to direct questions. They often test your understanding of key concepts, definitions, or processes. Strategies for short answer tests include:

- Focusing on key terms and concepts.
- Practicing with flashcards to enhance quick recall.
- Being concise and to the point in your answers.

6.3 Time Management During Tests

Time management is a critical skill during tests. It's important to allocate your time wisely to ensure that you have enough time to answer all questions. Time management during tests is a vital skill, which involves allocating appropriate amounts of time to different sections and questions, ensuring that you have enough time to answer all questions to the best of your ability. Start by quickly scanning the entire test to get a sense of its length and difficulty. Then, prioritize answering questions you are confident about before moving on to more challenging ones. Keep track of time and adjust your pace as needed to ensure you complete the test within the allotted time.

Before the Test:

- Review the entire test to gauge the number of questions and their formats.
- Allocate time based on the weight of each section or question.
- Prioritize sections or questions that carry the most points or seem easiest to you.

During the Test:

- Keep an eye on the clock but avoid constant checking, which can be distracting.
- Move on if you get stuck on a question and return to it later if time permits.
- Ensure you leave time at the end to review your answers.

6.4 Study Techniques for Test Preparation

6.4.1 Creating a study schedule

Creating a **study schedule** can help you manage your time and workload efficiently, breaking down your study material into manageable sections and assigning time slots to each. A well-structured study schedule can greatly enhance your test preparation. Start by identifying all the topics that will be covered in the test. Then, allocate specific time slots for studying each topic. Be sure to include breaks to avoid burnout and enhance retention. Regular review sessions should also be included in your schedule to reinforce what you have learned.

A well-organized study schedule can enhance your test preparation significantly. Here's how to create one:

1. ***Assess Your Current Schedule***: Identify the time slots available for studying each day.
2. ***Set Priorities***: Focus on subjects or topics that you find most challenging or that are heavily weighted in your tests.
3. ***Break Down Study Sessions***: Divide your study time into manageable chunks with regular breaks to maintain focus and prevent burnout.
4. ***Use a Planner***: Write down your study sessions in a planner or digital calendar to keep track of your progress and stay committed to your schedule.

6.4.2 Using study groups effectively

Study groups can be an effective way to prepare for tests. They provide opportunities for discussion, clarification of doubts, and learning from peers. However, to be effective, study groups should be well-organized and focused. Set clear objectives for each session and ensure that all members come prepared.

6.5 Memory Aids and Techniques

6.5.1 Mnemonics, mind maps, and flashcards

Memory aids can be very helpful in retaining information. **Mnemonics** are techniques for remembering information by associating them with easy-to-remember constructs. **Mind Maps** are visual diagrams that represent relationships between concepts, ideal for visual learners. **Flashcards** are a tried-and-true method for memorizing facts or definitions. They promote active recall, a cognitive process proven to be highly effective for memorization.

6.5.2 Visualization and association

Visualization and association are powerful techniques for memory enhancement. **Visualization** involves creating mental images of the information you are trying to remember. **Association** involves linking new information to something you already know. Both techniques can make abstract or complex information more concrete and easier to recall.

6.6 Dealing with Test Anxiety

6.6.1 Relaxation techniques

Test anxiety can negatively impact performance. Relaxation techniques can help manage this anxiety. Deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and mindfulness meditation are all effective methods for reducing anxiety and promoting relaxation.

6.6.2 Positive Visualization and Affirmations

Positive visualization involves picturing yourself succeeding in the test environment. This can boost confidence and reduce anxiety. Affirmations are

positive statements that you repeat to yourself to combat negative thoughts and feelings. Both techniques can help create a positive mindset for test-taking.

Remember, effective test preparation involves understanding the test format, using effective study techniques, employing memory aids, and managing test anxiety. With these strategies, you can approach your tests with confidence and perform to the best of your ability.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Glossary of Some Educational Language Learning Terms

-Augmented Reality (AR):

Its main concept revolves around enhancing the real world vision with additional digital objects. An augmented reality system mixes real world with fully virtual reality to improve learning opportunities (e.g. by, for example, enabling more interactions and simulations, mainly through image processing).

-Authentic materials:

Nunan (1999) defines authentic materials as spoken or written language data that has been produced in the course of genuine communication, and not specifically written for purposes of language teaching.

-Body language:

It refers to the use of facial expressions, body movements, etc. to communicate meaning from one person to another. In linguistics, this type of meaning is studied in PARALINGUISTICS.

-Comprehensible input:

It refers to spoken language that can be understood by the listener even though some structures and vocabulary may not be known. According to Krashen's theory of language acquisition, comprehensible input is a necessary condition for second language acquisition.

-Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL):

Berns and Erickson (2001: p2) view it as a 'conception of teaching and learning that helps teachers relate subject matter content to real world situations'.

-Classroom Management:

Classroom Management is a term used by teachers to describe the process of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behaviour by students.

-Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL):

According to Richards and Schmidt (2013), CALL refers to the use of a computer in the teaching or learning of a second or foreign language. CALL may take the form of :

a) a activities which parallel learning through other media but which use the facilities of the computer (e.g. using the computer to present a reading text);
b) activities which are extensions or adaptations of print-based or classroom based activities (e.g. computer programs that teach writing skills by helping the student develop a topic and THESIS STATEMENT and by checking a composition for vocabulary, grammar, and topic development); and
c) activities which are unique to CALL.

-Content-Based Instruction:

It is generally linked to the beginning of language immersion education in Canada in 1965. However, this type of instruction is an old practice. We know that schools and higher education in colonized countries were conducted in the language of the colonizing empires. With the rise of nationalism, local languages began to take place in education. Thus, English and other languages of the great empires were gradually divorced from content. Swain and Johnson (1997, p.1) said, "until the rise of nationalism, few languages other than those of the great empires ... were considered competent or worthy to carry the content of a formal curriculum' (1997, p.1).

CBI is not immersion in which subjects are taught entirely in the foreign language. It is a method of teaching foreign languages when language instruction is integrated with teaching the content areas. Therefore, the foreign language serves as the medium for teaching subject content from the regular classroom curriculum. CBI is specifically defined as "...the integration of particular content with language teaching aims....the concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills" (Brinton et al., 1989, p. 2). CBI approaches view the target language as the tool through which content is learned rather than as the immediate object of study. CBI aims at using a language, and hence is viewed as an approach to language instruction that integrates the presentation of topics or tasks from subject matter classes (e.g., math & social studies) within the context of teaching a second or foreign language" (Crandall & Tucker, 1990, p. 187).

-Direct Test:

A test that measures ability directly by requiring test takers to perform tasks designed to approximate an authentic target language use situation as closely as possible. An example of a direct test of writing includes a test that asks test takers to write an essay; an ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (OPI) is an example of a direct test of speaking, which is conducted face to face between an interviewer and an interviewee.

-E-learning:

E-learning refers to the use of electronic media and information and communication technologies (ICT) in education. E-learning is broadly inclusive of all forms of educational technology in learning and teaching. E-learning is inclusive of, and is broadly synonymous with multimedia learning, technology-enhanced learning (TEL), computer-based instruction (CBI), computer-based training (CBT), computer-assisted instruction or computer-aided instruction (CAI), internet-based training (IBT), web-based training (WBT), online education, virtual education, virtual learning environments (VLE) (which are

also called learning platforms), m-learning, and digital educational collaboration. These alternative names emphasize a particular aspect, component or delivery method.

-Experiential education:

Experiential education (or "learning by doing") is the process of actively engaging students in an authentic experience that will have benefits and consequences. Students make discoveries and experiment with knowledge themselves instead of hearing or reading about the experiences of others. Students also reflect on their experiences, thus developing new skills, new attitudes, and new theories or ways of thinking. Experiential education is related to the constructivist learning theory.

Experiential learning is the process of making meaning from direct experience. Simply put, it is learning from experience. As we are involved in direct contact with real experience in life, we usually learn. Aristotle once said, "For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them." Experiential learning is learning through reflection on doing, which is often contrasted with rote or didactic learning. Experiential learning is related to, but not synonymous with, experiential education, action learning, adventure learning, free choice learning, cooperative learning, and service learning.

Experiential learning focuses on the learning process for the individual (unlike experiential education, which focuses on the trans-active process between teacher and learner). An example of experiential learning is going to the zoo and learning through observation and interaction with the zoo environment, as opposed to reading about animals from a book. Thus, one makes discoveries and experiments with knowledge firsthand, instead of hearing or reading about others' experiences.

Experiential learning requires no teacher and relates solely to the meaning making process of the individual's direct experience. However, though the

gaining of knowledge is an inherent process that occurs naturally, for a genuine learning experience to occur, there must exist certain elements. According to David A. Kolb, an American educational theorist, knowledge is continuously gained through both personal and environmental experiences. He states that in order to gain genuine knowledge from an experience, certain abilities are required:

- the learner must be willing to be actively involved in the experience;
- the learner must be able to reflect on the experience;
- the learner must possess and use analytical skills to conceptualize the experience; and
- the learner must possess decision making and problem solving skills in order to use the new ideas gained from the experience.

Experiential learning can be a highly effective educational method. It engages the learner at a more personal level by addressing the needs and wants of the individual. Experiential learning requires qualities such as self-initiative and self-evaluation. For experiential learning to be truly effective, it should employ the whole learning wheel, from goal setting, to experimenting and observing, to reviewing, and finally action planning. This complete process allows one to learn new skills, new attitudes or even entirely new ways of thinking.

Most educators understand the important role experience plays in the learning process. While a fun learning environment, with plenty of laughter and respect for the learner's abilities, also fosters an effective experiential learning environment, it is important not to confuse experiential learning simply with having fun, laughing, and being respected. While those factors may improve the likelihood of experiential learning occurring, it can occur without them, for example, prison inmates may benefit from experiential learning in the absence of fun, laughter, or respect. Rather, what is vital in experiential learning is that

the individual is encouraged to directly involve themselves in the experience, and then to reflect on their experiences using analytic skills, in order to gain a better understanding of the new knowledge and retain the information for a longer time.

According to learning consultants, experiential learning is about creating an experience where learning can be facilitated, a requirement shared with any pedagogic theory. And while it is the learner's experience that is most important to the learning process, it is also important not to forget the wealth of experience a good facilitator also brings to the situation. However, while a "facilitator", traditionally called a "teacher", may improve the likelihood of experiential learning occurring, a "facilitator" is not essential to experiential learning. Rather, the mechanism of experiential learning is the learner's reflection on experiences using analytic skills. This can occur without the presence of a facilitator, meaning that experiential learning is not defined by the presence of a facilitator.

-Feedback:

It refers to any information that provides information on the result of behaviour. For example, in PHONETICS, feedback is both air- and bone-conducted. This is why we do not sound to ourselves as we sound to others and find tape-recordings of our own voices to be odd and often embarrassing.

In DISCOURSE ANALYSIS, feedback given while someone is speaking is sometimes called back channelling, for example comments such as uh, yeah, really, smiles, headshakes, and grunts that indicate success or failure in communication.

In teaching, feedback refers to comments or other information that learners receive concerning their success on learning tasks or tests, either from the teacher or other persons.

-Formative evaluation

Formative evaluation/assessment or diagnostic testing is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures employed by teachers during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment. It typically involves qualitative feedback (rather than scores) for both student and teacher that focuses on the details of content and performance. It is commonly contrasted with summative assessment, which seeks to monitor educational outcomes, often for purposes of external accountability.

-Fluency (fluent adj.):

The features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of PAUSING, rhythm, INTONATION, STRESS, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions. If speech disorders cause a breakdown in normal speech (e.g. as with APHASIA or stuttering), the resulting speech may be referred to as dysfluent, or as an example of dysfluency.

In second and foreign language teaching, fluency describes a level of proficiency in communication, which includes:

1. the ability to produce written and/or spoken language with ease;
2. the ability to speak with a good but not necessarily perfect command of intonation, vocabulary, and grammar;
3. the ability to communicate ideas effectively; and
4. the ability to produce continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or a breakdown of communication.

It is sometimes contrasted with accuracy, which refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to speak or write fluently.

-Functional Linguistics:

The term emerged to refer to the pragmatic use of English to accomplish a variety of realistic purposes. In other words, it refers to the usage of the English language required to perform a specific function or reach a certain social goal.

-General Secondary Education:

It refers to that type of secondary education, as an educational stage which precedes tertiary (higher) education.

-Indirect Test:

A test that measures ability indirectly by requiring test takers to perform tasks not reflective of an authentic target language use situation, from indirect test which an inference is drawn about the abilities underlying their performance on the test. An example of an indirect test of writing includes a test that asks test takers to locate errors in a composition; an example of an indirect test of pronunciation is a test where test takers are asked to select a word that has the same pronunciation as the one in the STEM.

-Language learning strategies:

Cohen (1998) defines *language learning strategies* as ''the conscious thoughts and behaviours used by learners with the explicit goal of improving their knowledge of a target language" (p. 68).

-Lifelong learning:

Lifelong learning is the "ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability. The term recognizes that learning is not confined to childhood or the classroom but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations. During the last fifty years, constant scientific and technological innovation and change has had a profound effect on learning

needs and styles. Learning can no longer be divided into a place and time to acquire knowledge (school) and a place and time to apply the knowledge acquired (the workplace). Instead, learning can be seen as something that takes place on an on-going basis from our daily interactions with others and with the world around us.

-Peer review

(It is also referred to as *peer feedback* & *peer editing*): It is (in the teaching of composition, particularly according to the PROCESS APPROACH) an activity in the revising stage of writing in which students receive FEEDBACK about their writing from other students – their peers. Typically students work in pairs or small groups, read each other's compositions and ask questions or give comments or suggestions.

-Peer teaching

(It is also referred to as *peer mediated instruction*): It refers to classroom teaching in which one student teaches another, particularly within a learner-centred approach to teaching. For example, when students have learnt something, they may teach it to other students, or test other students on it.

-Pragmatic writing:

It is perceived as an interactive process that involves accomplishing in writing a particular social function within a specific cultural context (e.g. transmitting information, applying for a job, and writing a letter/e-mail expressing a particular concern).

-Proficiency test:

A test that measures how much of a language someone has learned. The difference between a proficiency test and an **ACHIEVEMENT TEST** is that the latter is usually designed to measure how much a student has learned from a particular course or SYLLABUS. A proficiency test is not linked to a particular course of instruction, but measures the learner's general level of language

mastery. Although this may be a result of previous instruction and learning, these factors are not the focus of attention. Some proficiency tests have been standardized for worldwide use, such as the American TOEFL that is used to measure the English language proficiency of international students who wish to study in the USA.

-Progress test:

An ACHIEVEMENT TEST linked to a particular set of teaching materials or a particular course of instruction. Tests prepared by a teacher and given at the end of a chapter, course, or term are progress tests. Progress tests may be regarded as similar to achievement tests but narrower and much more specific in scope. They help the teacher to judge the degree of success of his or her teaching and to identify the weakness of the learners.

-Rating scale:

In testing, it is a technique for measuring language proficiency in which aspects of a person's language use are judged using scales that go from worst to best performance in a number of steps. For example, the components of FLUENCY in a foreign language could be rated on the following scales:

Naturalness of language: unnatural 1 2 3 4 5 natural

Style of expression: foreign 1 2 3 4 5 native-speaker like

Clarity of expression: unclear 1 2 3 4 5 clear

For each component skill, the listener rates the speaker on a scale of 1 to 5. Overall fluency can then be measured by taking account of the three scores for each speaker.

-Situated language learning:

In general, it approaches language learners as 'active constructors of knowledge who bring their own needs, strategies and styles to learning, and skills and knowledge are best acquired within realistic contexts and authentic settings, where students are engaged in experiential language learning tasks'.

Thus, it focuses on the role of the context and situation in language learning and knowledge construction.

-Social Media Language Learning (SMLL):

SMLL has appeared to express interactive relationships between social media channels and language learning processes. In this sense, language learners are able to extend English practice beyond classroom boundaries. Moreover, social media extends learning through offering new opportunities such as: (1) contact with outside experts; (2) purposeful interactions among students in different locations; (3) a means to enhance learners' participation; (4) a means for extending time; and (5) a facility for timely feedback from teachers and peers (Abdallah, 2018).

-Standard-based communicative language teaching:

It is a communicative language teaching approach/methodology that is based on some specified standards. It is the current approach employed in Egyptian secondary schools nowadays, which is based on the standards-based curricular reform; it aims to fulfil the standards set out in the Ministry of Education Standards Document.

-Synchronous learning:

An online communication tool, instructor-to-student or student-to-student, that occurs at the same time but not necessarily in the same place; similar to electronic "chat".

-Task:

Nunan (1999) defines a task as a piece of meaning-focused, communicative work, which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing and interacting in the target language so as to connect them to the real-world of language use.

-Task-Based Language Learning:

It is viewed as an approach to language learning according to which the tasks done by students become central to the learning process. It requires the teacher to organise classroom activities around those practical tasks that language users will engage in when they are 'out there' in the real world (Oura, 2001).

-Teaching strategies:

A combination of instructional methods, learning activities, and materials that actively engage students and appropriately reflect both learning goals and students' developmental needs.

-Virtual Learning Environment (VLE):

It is a standardized, computer-based environment that supports the delivery of web-based learning and facilitates on-line interaction between students and teachers. A VLE might consist of a variety of components designed both to assist in conventional classroom learning as well as support distance learners gaining remote access to course and assessment materials.

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