

Harnessing Students' Self Efficacy and Journal Keeping in Teaching Writing across the Curriculum

Ayodele Christinah Ayo

Department of Arts & Language Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Abstract

Writing is an important skill to the development of individual and that of Education. It is a way of presenting one's thought, idea and experience to the world. The major purpose of writing is for communication. Students also write to keep records of all class activities in all the subjects across the curriculum. Writing is also a means of attesting to the knowledge acquired. As important as this skill is to individual development, many students find it difficult to think critically to generate idea for the content of what they want to write on. This is due to the writing instruction they have been exposed to. In view of this, this research explains how teachers can harness journal writing and self-efficacy in teaching writing. The study revealed that students need to be more logical, organised and coherence in writing. They also need to improve on their intelligence in order to gain competence in writing. This they can achieve through their determination and constant writing. The paper therefore, discussed on harnessing the students' self-efficacy and journal keeping in teaching writing across the curriculum.

Keywords:Self-efficacy; Journal keeping; Writing skill; Writing instruction; Writing proficiency.

1.Introduction

Language is a conglomeration of signs and symbols based on tacit agreement within a speech community for the purpose of expressing ideas, thought, fear and concern (Babalola 2013). Language is a means of communication. U. Watt (2013) explained that communication means the mechanical process in which persons respectively take up the responsibility of constructing, encoding message and transmitting same through a chosen channel to prospective receivers who equally have the responsibility of decoding same without losing components parts in order to achieve a given communication purpose. The essence of learning language is for the students to achieve competence and proficiency in the acquisition of language skills whereby the students will be able to use the language extensively. One of the skills of language is writing.

2.What is Writing?

Writing is one of the language skills use in communication. This is usually done by using symbols that represent letters. Writing is an act of putting an idea or thought down on a paper or board using certain symbols. Muodumogwu (2013) explained that, writing is a form of communication and the primary purpose is to transmit ideas, feelings or thought or send out information. It is the ability of the students to put their thought down in a print for others to read. Writing is a means of communication whereby sounds are used to form words and through words sentences and phrases are formed. Essay Master (2019) noted that, writing is an extension of one's speech. It is a means of putting one's idea across for others to read and

digest. A way of expressing one's mind, emotion, with the use of appropriate linguistic components. Oyinloye (2005) in his own view sees writing as an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer demonstrates and control some number of variables simultaneously and that it may include control of content of format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling. It is otherwise called productive skill.

Writing is a form of communication where one can air his view and express his mind to the audience. People write in order to communicate and put their idea, thought and agitations across for future references. It is very important for students to write in order to keep records, records of daily activities, record of class activities, records of assessment are all kept through writing. For students to pass information across to another person, it requires writing. It is very important for students to be competent in writing because all academic works requires writing. Good and co-ordinated writing enables an individual to pass across information and messages to the audience with perfect understanding.

3.Essence of Writing

Writing is a pivotal form of communication in all walks of life (Essay Master 2019) likewise Jonathan Isbill (2017) noted that within each writer there exists an artist's heart and the spirit to share that heart with the world. He further stressed that, writing is an intimate relationship that is formed between the writer and the reader. The main essence of writing is to open up, pour out one's agitation to an audience. To share one's experience, emotion to strengthen one's relationship. Amber (2017) specifically mentioned that in writing, we create something that will outlive us. Writing is a means whereby the extent of acquiring education can be measured, knowledge can also be measured. Writing involves the students to create plan. It also involves making effort to get the information drafted. It involves deep reading in order to revise what the writer has put down. It involves the usage of language and of course concise editing. Obateru (2018) explained that writing requires composing which suggest the capacity to analyse information received in narrative or descriptive form or transform new text as in expository or argumentative writing.

Writing involves various forms of epistles such as:

- Writing papers for publication.
- Writing reports of minutes generated from meetings.
- Writing and taking note of class teaching.
- Accompany memo while placing advertisement.
- Writing examinations.
- Writing out on an assigned topic in case of essay writing.

Scholars, students, professors and researchers in every discipline use academic writing to convey ideas, make argument and engage in Scholarly conversations. (Ollivia 2019). Likewise, Kennedy (2019) opined that writing is fundamental human activity, we write to fulfil many purposes to create, amuse, inform, stay in touch, explain, understand, persuade, remember, learn, report, influence or discover new insights.

Writing entails, given information, making request, entertaining, encouraging, setting disputes, resolving conflicts, writing policies, writing letters, responding to issues, making reports and so many other things that connect to life and the society.

In writing the writer needs to make use of cognition which will enable the writer to think deeply so as to bring out ideas.

4.Forms of Writing

There are four main forms of writing;

Expository

Narrative
 Descriptive
 Persuasive

EXPOSITORY: This deals with describing something. An explanation of something Andrew Sedillo (2020) explained that expository writing is writing that seeks to explain, illustrate or expose. The writer gives certain information to the audience about a concept. The writer specifically explains or narrates an event to the reader. Cathame traffic (2020) explained that, this type of writing exposes or sets forth, facts. The writer does not make use of his own opinion.

DESCRIPTION: In descriptive writing, the writer encourages the reader to visualize in details a character, events, places or all of these things at once. It makes use of pictorial elements such as imagery to describe what happen.

PERSUASIVE: Persuasive writing is the type of writing where the writer air his view and persuade the reader to be convinced in his opinion. Persuasive writing is a piece of writing in which the writer uses words to convince the readers that the writer's opinion is correct with regards to an issue (Definition. Net 2020).

NARRATIVE: Narrative is to give an account of event. Narrative writing is the type of writing that allow the writer take up the role of narrator. Richard Nordelquist (2019) define narrative as a piece of writing that tells a story and it is one of far classical rhetorical modes or ways that writers use to present information. The story can be personal experience, observed events or fiction. All these are to guide an individual in any form of writing. A writer will choose a type depending on what he or she want to accomplish.

These will guide the writer in choosing any type of writing he want to embark upon and the information he/she want to pass to the reader.

5.Feature of Writing

In writing, there are certain features that manifest in order to write a good write up. They are:- Focus, organization, support, grammatical, conventions and styles.

- **FOCUS:** This is where the writer set up the goal to be achieved. The main reason for embarking on writing, the message he intends to pass. Every paragraph and sentence of the paper should connect to the primary focus (Ollvia 2019)
- **ORGANIZATION:** Means the arrangement, coherency, logical arrangement. Making a sequential arrangement of parts. Making use of the introductory aspect, the body and conclusion.
- **SUPPORT:** Making use of the sub topics in line with the main topic which the writer uses to develop the write up. This will include the full details of related information to persuade the reader to be convinced.
- **STYLE:** This entails the sufficiency of usage of language, the fluency, voice, pitch and all the related linguistic elements, precise expressions.
- **CONVENTIONS:** It entails the correct constructions and usage of sentences. Consistencies in the usage of tenses and language mechanics.

One of the basic rudiments of writing is that, the writer must be able to integrate language Segment coherently in order to give accurate and vivid illustration. Also, students need to be guided on how to present writing logically. They need to be guided on how to be creative, thinking critically to generate idea from their thought. They need to imbibe co-hence and be organized in writing. They also need to develop the power of imaginative. Students need to build their confidence in writing. They need to be trained to be

legible while writing. They need to improve on their intelligence. They also need to gain competence in writing and also imbibe the culture of writing.

6.Competence and Proficiency in Writing Need Effective Teaching and Mentorship

Time4writing (2020) explained that teaching how to write effectively is one of the most important life-long skills educators' impact to the students. Explained further that when teaching, writing, educators must be sure to select, reserves and support materials that not only aid their teaching how to write but that will also be the most effective in helping their students learn to write.

Graham Stanley (2020) Itemized certain processes that can help in helping students develop as writers. They are:

- (1) Establish a positive atmosphere for writing, reading and learning e.g. making the environment to be friendly, respect for the students. Teachers to see herself as writer, routine and expectations.
- (2) Organise for writing, e.g the writing workshop, the writer's notebook, a meaningful approach to writing.
- (3) Arrange for meaningful to students' reasons to write. That is, students' choice and ownership, authentic writing and publishing.
- (4) Arrange for students to read, respond to and use a variety of materials written for a variety of purpose and audience that giving reading a role in the writing classroom, using reading materials to model writing providing diverse reading materials.
- (5) Write regularly across the curriculum and grade level.
- (6) Arrange for students to have constructive response to their writing and offer response to other writers.
- (7) Provide opportunities for students to collaborate as writers, thinkers, learners.
- (8) Conduct mini-lesson on writing.

Activities that can help in the teaching of writing include:

- Pre-writing: Teachers should have it in mind to teach the students how to generate ideas. This could be through brain straining, assisting and guiding the students to be creative. It is equally necessary for teachers to engage their students in free writing on whatever topic that cross their mind. It is also necessary to get them ready for the task of writing. This is the first stage.
- Drafting: The teacher should teach the students how to generate points for the content. It is a sort of rough plan to guide the writer to start developing all the ideas they have generated.
- Editing: This stage the teacher can lead the students to point out errors, draw their attention to these errors, jointly go through the draft of the write up in order to improve on its certain items can still be added or deleted and then read through again.
- Revision: This is concise and coherent arrangement of the edited work. Teachers are to guide the writers in reading through the content to proofread. Putting in mind on the content and the audience.
- Publishing: This can be in form of submission of the write up or exchange and show it to other students. Students can as well place it somewhere on the wall in the class. Teachers should encourage the students to tidy up and submit their work.

Teachers are encouraged to use various methods and approaches in teaching writing such as process and product approach.

- (i) Product Approach: It involves the presentation of the model text which is discussed and analysed (Klimova 2014). The learner can therefore imitate the model write in a similar way until near perfection.
- (ii) Process Approach: Involves the process of going through certain steps involved in writing.

Apart from this, the teacher can as well use collaborative method. Supiani (2017) opined that collaborative writing techniques is a good way to teach writing because it facilitates the students to work in pairs or groups. In creating the text. This is to enable the students to build confidence towards writing. Moudougwu (2013) opined that, writing instruction should focus on providing explicit instruction on a variety of skills that would help students to develop these competencies. Students can acquire the skills gradually according to the learning ability of the students. One of the methods a teacher can use to engage the Students is making use of journal writing.

Journal writing is the process of recording personal insights, reflections and questions on assigned or personal topics (Diedra Taylor 2020). Claudia Pesce wrote that journal writing is a great way to get students to write on a regular basis, plus keep track on their progress as far as writing skills are concerned. Writing is better organized on a piece of paper for later transferring to more convenient paper and this is called jotter or journal keeping. We keep journal to preserve information. Memories can fade away, but information written down can always be there for reference and can be retrieved. We keep journal to store our experiences. Keeping journal gets you in the habit of noticing the details of your daily life and it builds muscles that can be used for other kinds of writing (William Victor 2019).

Keeping journal is a way of training students to be fluent in writing. It enables students to generate ideas through constant practicing. Journal is a self-managed therapy. You can easily keep it to yourself. Keeping journal is one of the best tools to practice trusting your writing and to make sure you keep writing (Sheila Bender 2006). When students keep record of events, experiences, information, they can eventually develop all these to form a good essay. It guides the writers against writing block.

It enables the students to be creative in generating ideas for the content. At times, the writer may not have a particular topic in mind but it encourages free writing.

Journal can be kept using diary or electronic document such as the use of computer and hand phone. It serves as revision note for writers.

7.How Journals are Kept

Keeping journal is a sort of writing exercise. Practice makes perfection. The teacher can encourage the students to get a notebook. Such notebook will serve as journal. Inform the students to constantly write their experiences down or an interesting movie they watch. Topic can as well be given out for the students to write on. It can be on daily basis or alternative day.

The teacher should prepare the mind of the students since they do not have audience, they are only writing for themselves.

Journal writing does not involve grading. It is for self-improvement. In many instances, students often find it difficult to write because they believe that writing involves a great task. Teachers have not been integrating their students in writing and there has not been motivation for students to write. Many students are faced with frustration during writing and many are faced with writing block. Moudumogwu (2013) observed that teachers' writing instructional method do not expose their students to writing skill development and that writing is hardly taught in secondary schools which always result into failure. Oqab

(2018) equally observed that writing has always been seen as the most troublesome challenging area of language learning for all students. Therefore, teachers need to provide an inclusive learning in all circumstances. Teachers should engage their students to learn. He/she should give them every opportunity to practice writing and participate in learning. This will make the students to contribute to their learning outcome.

Students Self efficacy and Journal writing. It is the individual disposition to embark upon a task with the desire and determination to do it and do it satisfactorily. It is a self-motivation in which individual challenge himself to task that can pose as a threat to understanding which may even cause a setback in case of academics. Ukessays (2018) explained that students may create their own path of learning through engaging themselves in task, therefore set their goals for learning a specific subject. Self-efficacy relates to the level of confidence a person has to complete a specific task (Hodges, 2015). Teachers need to build strong passion and confidence on their students to embark on learning writing. Self-efficacy refers to an individual confidence in their ability to complete a task or achieve a goal. Elizabeth Hopper (2019). Once students have sufficient self-belief in their ability to write, their intent in writing may increase. They may display constant effort and great eagerness and resilience why they are working on writing task (Ukessays 2018).

Self-efficacy in all forms influence our thoughts, emotions, actions and motivation. It operates mainly through the cognitive and effective channels and plays a crucial role in shaping our perception of life experiences (Madhau Leena, 2019).

As teachers encourage the students, the willingness to write will increase, the confidence to write will increase, teaching need to achieve the draft writing of their students make several activities such as drawing their attention to a colleague that is able to write. Teachers should boost the aspiration of their students and discourage short comings. Teachers should create a conducive learning environment, assist in providing learning materials.

8. Conclusion

Writing has been discussed as a life skill which cut across all sphere of life. It as also been discussed that students' achievement across the curriculum depends on their proficiency in writing. Every student must imbibe the culture of writing. However, writing has been so difficult for students to embark upon and very frustrating because of the instructional strategies used by their teacher. Many times, writing is neglected and untaught. Hence the use of Journal writing and students' self-efficacy in order to motivate and encourage students, eliminate fear and anxiety that may lead to writing block.

References

- [1]Amber, W (2017). *why people write. Fiction or non-fiction, writing is done for many reasons.* Odyssey Green retrieved 16th Jan. 2020.
- [2]Andrew, Sedillo. (2020). what is expository writing? Definition & Examples in study. Com/academy/Lesson/what is expository.
- [3]Babalola, J. O. (2013). Linguistics ethnics in classroom communication; the bedrock of peaceful society in *journal of literacy and reading in Nigeria* 14 (1). 122-128.
- [4]Blanka, F. K. (2014). approaches to the teaching of writing skills in science direct procedia pp 148-151.
- [5]Charles, W. (2020). Best practices in teaching writing. Write – Mideller interactive-best practices retrieved 16th Jan 2020.

- [6]Catherine Traffic (2020). Learn the types of writing: Expository, descriptive, persuasive and narrative. Grammarly <https://grammarly.com> blog.
- [7]Definitions.net (2020). What does persuasive writing mean? <https://www.definitiond.net>.
- [8]Diedra & Taylor (2020) *Journal writing: Benefits, examples & prompts-video & Lesson Transcript*. <https://stoely.com/academy>.
- [9]Elizabeth, H (2019). Understanding self-efficacy in thought co. [thought co.com/self- efficacy](https://www.thoughtco.com/self-efficacy). 410970
- [10]Eithney K and Gerry S. Writing pedagogy in senior primary classes. Knowledge, skills and processes for writing. NCCA Education Research Centre. <https://www.ncca.ie>.
- [11]Essay masters (2019), five reasons why writing is important. [Essay masters.co.uk/five reasons-why-writing.blog](https://www.essaymasters.co.uk/five-reasons-why-writing.blog). essay writing grmeles
- [12]Graham Stanley (2020). Approaches to process writing. British council, Barcelona <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk>.
- [13]Jonathan Isbill (2017). Writing and seven reasons why students write and your writing co-operative.com. aching of writing skills. In *procedia. Social and behavioral sciences* 12:147-151. Dol 10.106.
- [14]Kelly Konya (2019) – How to write better: 4 Essay Tips/grammar.<https://www.grammarly.com>>blog.
- [15]Kennedy E. (2019). Writing pedagogy in the senior primary classes-NCCA www.google.com. UK essays- (2018). The concept of learning styles education. <https://www.ukessays.com>.essays
- [16]Klimova, B. (2014). Approaches to the teaching of writing skills. In *procedia. Social and behavioral sciences* 112:147-151. Dol 10.106
- [17]Madhu Leena, R. C. (2019) 4 ways to improve and increase self-Efficacy. In *positive Psychology.com* [https://positive Psychology.com](https://positivepsychology.com).
- [18]Moudumogu, C. A. (2013), writing skills Development Strategies and Junior Secondary Students' Achievement in Composition in Literacy and Reading in Nigeria 14(1) 107-117.
- [19]Ollivia Valdes (2019). An introduction to academic writing. Characteristics and courier mistakes to avoid. [Thought co.com/what is academic writing?](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-academic-writing)
- [20]Obateru (2018) Effects of Model, Multi-draft and Integrated Teaching Methods on the Learning Outcome of Senior Secondary Schools' Students in Essay Writing in Ekiti State.
- [21]Oqab J. (2018). Students attitudes towards EFL University writing: A case study at An-Njah. Natial University, Pelestine.
- [22]Richard, Nardquist (2019). Definition and examples of narrative in writing. [Thought co <https://www.thoughtco.com>](https://www.thoughtco.com)
- [23]Suplani S. (2017). Teaching writing skill through collaborative writing techniques: from theory to practice. *Journal of English Education and Linguistics Students*.
- [24]Time 4 writing (2020). Free writing Reserves/Time 4 writing [https://www.time 4writing.com](https://www.time4writing.com)>free.
- [25]Uwatt, H. E. (2013), communication skill: Effective Tools for Human Relations, Peace and Good Governance in Literacy and Reading in Nigeria 4(1) 1-8.
- [26]Uk essays (2018) The Concept of Learning Styles Education. <https://www.ukessays.com>
- [27]William Victor, S.L (2019) What is Journal and Why Keep One? In [writing now.creativewriting-now.com/what-is-a-journal](https://www.creativewriting-now.com/what-is-a-journal)
- [28]Sheila Bender (2006) Keeping a Writer's Journal. 21 Ideas to Keep you writing. In [writing world.com](https://www.writingworld.com)
- [29]Oyinloye, G.O (2005) Investigating the Effects of Methods with Linguistic Package on Students' Achievement and Attitude in Essay Writing. Ph.D thesis unpublished, Benin City, University of Benin.