



## **Review on the article "Writing and young learners"**

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### **Introduction**

Recently I have read the article by ELT Consultants Wendy Arnold and Rosie Anderson about "Writing and young learners" . They explore ideas around developing writing skills with young learners. We were so amazed reading their article and suggested that writing can be an engaging, interesting and inspiring activity for young learners. They clarified , that children are active learners and thinkers (Piaget 1965), learn through social interaction (Vygotsky 1978) and learn effectively through scaffolding by more able others (Maybin et al 1992), who can be adults or peers. Collaborative and well-planned writing tasks encourage the context for all of these characteristics to be fully exploited in the

young learner classroom. As they suggested that collaborative and well planned writing gives its good result and always motivates child to be so active among peers. But sometimes if we ask the child to write something he or she will be excited to do error or mistake, while she is writing somewhere by the order of their teacher. As Wendy Arnold proposed that nature of writing is a complex skill to develop and master, that focusing on both the end product and the steps to arrive there. Writing skills only develop when young learners are taught how to write and are given opportunities to practice these skills and strategies. As these consultants underpinned that we need to develop writing skills with young learners, because for young learners writing tends to be somewhat neglected in the classroom, but it is an essential part of language development. Good writing skills are based on good reading skills, you need to recognise words in order to write and use them comprehensibly. Many young learners will not have fully developed their own L1 writing skills, and these strategies may not necessarily transfer to writing in English. After watching and observing I paid much attention to the results of young learners. These are instructions given by the authors:

### **Analyses and results**

- Writing allows young learners to practise new vocabulary and structures.
- It allows for a high degree of personalisation and creativity.
- It provides young learners to take risks and try out new language, with more "thinking time."
- Writing skills equip young learners with a solid base for future development and learning.
- A focus on writing tasks in the classroom creates variety and caters for different learning styles
- Teachers can diagnose learners' strengths and areas to develop in terms of vocabulary, structure, spelling etc.
- Focusing on this area can instil the joy of writing from an early age.

### **Theories to consider**

Much of the theory behind L2 writing is based on research into the development of L1 writing skills. Two main approaches have emerged out of this research: writing as a process and as a product.

Writing as a process involves:

- Thought-showering or 'brainstorming' notes, ideas, words and phrases about a topic
- Categorising and ordering the ideas according to the task requirements
- Writing a first draft
- Revising the first draft by improving content and accuracy
- Implementing the improvements in the re-written text

### **Writing as a product**

The end goal is an authentic task e.g. writing to inform, to thank etc. Success is gauged by the accuracy of the content and accuracy of the text.

Accuracy focuses on:

- Grammar and vocabulary
- Spelling and punctuation
- Legibility and appropriate genre conventions

Content focuses on:

- Conveying information successfully to the reader
- Providing enough detailed information
- Logically ordering ideas
- Using appropriate register
- Originality of ideas

### **Considerations for classroom writing**

Here are some 'top tips' for encouraging more engaging writing tasks for young learners. Think about how you can employ these with your own young learner groups and try them out!

- Encourage collaboration between young learners and provide opportunities during thought-showering, making notes, planning, revising etc
- Provide visuals, or ask the learners to draw their own pictures to provide the content for the tasks
- Topics should be engaging for your young learners e.g. relatable and intrinsically motivating. Write about what they know e.g. games, friends, favourite activities etc.

- Look at writing tasks from a different perspective e.g. rather than writing about their daily routine, they could write about their pet's daily routine, their pet's favourite activities, food etc
- Let young learners choose their own characters to write about
- Set challenging but achievable tasks
- Have extension activities available for fast finishers
- Encourage pride in the presentation of their writing e.g. young learners can draw, annotate etc.
- Respond to written ideas, not just language
- Mark positively and give feedback on areas of content as well as language. Encourage learners to value writing.
- Give clear and simple criteria and encourage self/peer correction of written tasks. Using a range of smileys can encourage young learners to record how they feel about different writing tasks.
- After pair/group work, make time to share writing as a class e.g. read out good examples of writing (but don't name names!).
- Include presentation of learners' work. This depends on the task type, but work could be compiled into a short books, displayed in the classroom, school message boards etc. Young learners get a motivational 'boost' by seeing their written work 'on view.'

## **Conclusions**

Having read about the article we can admit that the teacher's responsibility to develop writing tasks for young learners that are enjoyable, full of practice, meaningful, purposeful, social and supported (Reid 1998). Challenging your learners and exploiting collaborative opportunities all combine to provide a learning environment where writing is both valued and enjoyed.

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