

Lecture- 12

CALL- Writing Skills

Module -31**TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES USED FOR DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS****Topic No: 49****What are Writing Skills? Computer tools and writing skills; Word processor and Writing; Revising and Editing; Emails and Writing Skills****What are Writing Skills?**

Good writing skills are essential for effective communication. The better you write, the more easily readers will understand you. Learning to write well takes time and practice.

It has been agreed that writing is a means of communication made possible through graphics symbols, arranged according to certain conventions to form words which in turn are arranged to form sentences. The sentences are logically and grammatically connected to form a piece of writing.

Writing like listening involves a writer (producer) and a reader (receiver). Writing involves interaction between the writer (encoder) and the reader (decoder). Communicative writing means the use of orthography in order to construct grammatically correct sentences which communicate a meaning to the reader

Orthography + lexis + grammar + meaning = communicative writing

Computer Tools and Writing Skills

Computers have a profound effect on all aspects of language learning and teaching and can be used in developing writing skills. In this unit we discuss the use of computer to develop writing skills. The unit consists of three sections, and in each section there are three sub-sections. The first section deals with the basics/ fundamentals of a computer such as main components, multimedia devices

(hardware) and Internet, web-resources (software). In the second section you have to deal with word processor and its various uses for developing writing skills such as composing,/drafting, writing, revising, editing, spelling check. The third unit deals with email communication and how it helps in developing communicative skills especially writing skills. Since this unit is mostly practical oriented, it will be useful if you have access to a computer with word processor.

Word Processor and Writing

Word processor is a common kind of software and Microsoft word is a word processing application designed to help you create professional-looking documents such as newsletters, reports, brochures and letters. Most computers are now sold with some version of word processing already installed and such programmes are widely used in the composition process. Before using any type of word-processing software, there are certain terminology that one needs to become familiar with in order to create documents. In Microsoft Word, some terminologies are used to articulate certain features of the software programme, its function/navigation methods, and common word-processing terms. Arrow keys, close, save, save as, border, click, double click and many more. Regarding writing skills editing is all important. By editing – deleting, moving, or adding characters, changing font styles, inserting bulleted items, and altering the color of text, can modify a document.

English writing is one of the most important forms of communication today, it is necessary to maintain it correct and professional. The students have to develop communicative skills especially writing skills effectively for those who wish to begin professional life and also for higher studies. As Riemer (2002) says, “Communication skills are essential for an engineer who aspires to carry out his/her professional practice in the global arena. Engineering communication skills basically constitute several core elements such as the fluency in the English language and the fundamentals of visual communication.”

MS Word offers some handy tools under its Tools menu which can be used for developing / improving writing skills. For example:

- Spelling and Grammar is one of the standard tools. A window appears after you click on this option showing the word or sentence in question on the top, and a list of possible suggestions at the bottom. If the suggestion is something you like, click Change. If not, click Ignore.
- You can use Thesaurus. If you do not know anything about a word in the text, then this feature can help you in finding out the right word/ words to use.

To use the Thesaurus, click on a word in your document and select the Language function option under Tools in the menu bar. A window will appear with alternative words (if Word has any to offer). Locate the word you want to use, highlight it, and then click Replace. So while using computer you need not go for a dictionary to find out the meaning or appropriate words. You can frequently correct spellings with computer-based spelling checkers. That can also help you in improving vocabulary powers as you have to come across many related words in the screen.

- Dictionaries are also made available for the student to use ‘interactively’. You can type in a word and computer responds with its meaning. Dictionary is used in language learning as a resource and you can use this resource for developing language skills especially writing skills.
- You can also learn synonyms and antonyms while using a computer. “ Supplying synonyms and antonyms can be dealt with very neatly by requiring learners to match items from lists of words”, says Ahmed et al (1985:108).

Revising and Editing

In words processor, you can save your document by giving a file name and you can open the same file, can revise the earlier text and edit the text in various ways. While editing the text, you have the opportunity to proofread, to add further explanation, to develop ideas, and to restructure the text. Also you can understand the weaknesses and the provision to overcome the difficulties and to apply knowledge of language. Thus a computer gives enough flexibility to utilizing the resources in learning and developing writing skills.

Emails and Writing

Electronic mail (E-mail) is being used to send and receive messages. You can send e-mail practically to any one with an email address, anywhere in the world.

What is E-mail?

In its simplest form, e-mail is an electronic message sent from one computer to another. Now a days, one can or receive personal and business-related messages with attachments like pictures or other documents. In this type of communication, one can communicate quickly and easily with millions of people around the world anytime 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Email is the most used tool in the Internet; 'it's easy to use, it's cheap, fast and reliable' (Dudeney:2000: 10). Learners especially distant learners can use E-mail and share files and thus they can collaborate together among themselves and their facilitators. As Belisle (1996) says: "Networking electronically can help learners create, analyze, and produce information and ideas more easily and effectively".

You can also communicate, send messages to native speakers and in the way of exchanging messages you can increase their social awareness and confidence. You will be familiar with a communication tool which is vital for your survival in the 21st century.

In short, Email helps you to:

- i. Communicate with other distant learners;
- ii. Communicate with tutors/ facilitators in your discipline;
- iii. Post a question to a bulletin board or mailing list;
- iv. Develop a collaborative project with another distant learners;
- v. Connect with keypals

As Brenda (2002) says: Because of its dynamic, interactive and ephemeral, it is like conversation: we can receive instant feedback to our message, and many messages can be exchanged in rapid-fire fashion, even in asynchronous email, if the parties both happened to be logged on.

Email and Writing Skills

Most of the email messages are simple text documents which can be sent over the Net. But it is difficult to remember the Email addresses and it is suggested that whenever you receive an email save the address by clicking the 'address' option/ button in the screen. It is also suggested to ignore the conventional norms of written language while sending email messages. Barbhuiya (2008) conducted a survey among the technical students (Polytechnic) and found that 93% students think that Email helps people to learn from each other and an equal number of students expressed positive attitude that communication by Email is a good way to improve their English. You can frequently communicate with other distant learners and with your facilitator by making dialogues what it calls 'dialoguing' through email. There are different kinds of dialoguing , for example, student to teacher, teacher to student and student to students. In distance education, there is no face-to-face interaction with the tutor/facilitator. But any distant learner can communicate with the facilitator or with other distant learners through email from any where any time independently. This will give you the opportunity of using language of your choice which can help you in exposing your writing skills. You can communicate with a native speaker, can send instant messages and in exchanging the dialogues, you can improve your language skills. Besides, you can your assignments, can get the feedback through email, that too within a short time. Mark Warschauer summarizes the main reasons for using e-mail: "First, e-mail provides students with an excellent opportunity for real, natural communication...Second, e-mail empowers students for independent learning...Finally, the use of e-mail enriches our experiences as teachers...[and allows us to share] new ideas, resources, and materials", (1995:2).

Regular and avid users usually enjoy writing in email. Even some users prefer writing and sending email as a way to express themselves. They take delight in words, sentence structure, message formatting, and the opportunity to craft exactly how they wish to express their thoughts and moods.

Communication skills are of vital importance in the world today. With an increasingly reliance on technology, teachers sometimes fear that students are losing the art of face-to-face and formal written communication. But instead of fearing technology's impact on student communication,

why can't teachers leverage technology to help students hone their written communication skills? Whether students are still struggling with basic to complex grammatical concepts, or they need help elaborating their thoughts in thoughtful, sensible written pieces, teachers can rest assured: there's an app for that! As a matter of fact, there are several apps for that.

Grammar & Spelling Skills

Building students' grammar and spelling skills is foundational for strong written communication.

The following apps are great tools for helping students master grammar and spelling.

Sentence Builder

Winner of the 2010 IEAR Language Arts App of the Year, Sentence Builder is an app geared toward elementary students. It uses a game-like interface to teach students to form grammatically correct simple, compound, and complex sentences. The app offers audio reinforcement, progress monitoring, and a "teen" module for older or struggling ELA students.

American Wordspeller

Spelling is a cornerstone of strong writing. But how can students locate a new word in the dictionary if they don't already know how to spell it? American Wordspeller is an app that can solve this problem by helping students to "find a word by the way it sounds!" Students can type the first two to three letters that they think the word starts with, and American Wordspeller will use a predictive function based on the letters' sounds to generate a list of suggested words and help the student identify the word he or she is looking for! This app builds agency and confidence in proper spelling.

The Interactive Grammar of English

Written by a team of linguists from the University College of London, the grammar in this app is based on the most current research and reflects real situations and real sentences, not just the repetition of archaic rules. The app is progressive, spanning concepts from basic level understanding to complex, collegiate-level pieces of writing.

No Red Ink

Technically, No Red Ink is an interactive website, but it is so functional and easy to navigate, that it has earned its place on a list alongside self-contained apps! No Red Ink is a personalized

approach to drilling grammar skills. The site uses the students' self-reported interests to build sentences that pretest, practice, and evaluate students' grammar knowledge and acquired learning. Teachers can set the topic for a class, monitor student progress, and peruse the data provided by the site reflecting students' achievement. It's an easy and effective grammar skill tool.

Writing Challenge App

The Writing Challenge App allows students to enjoy writing in the guide of a fun, interactive game. The app provides a prompt to get student writing started...then, every minute, the app supplies another prompt to add new ideas, words, characters, sentences, places or actions to the plot. Students who have a hard time getting started with creative writing assignments will enjoy the fast-paced, game-like setup of this app. And in the end, they'll have been inspired to write an entire story!

Writing Prompts

This app generates fiction, and nonfiction writing prompts, helping students master the skill of the short write. The app uses current events, scene elements, words, pictures, colors, and even random tidbits from fiction works to inspire students to write both short and long pieces. The 600 creative writing prompts are available both on- and offline to encourage student writing wherever they may be.

Story Builder

Story Builder is an app from the same company that produces Sentence Builder. Story Builder was Huffington Post's 2011 winner of Best Reading App. The app is designed to help students improve paragraph formation, integration of idea, inference, and abstract thinking and expression. The app's use of audio clips promotes access to writing skills, even for students with special needs. The app offers a talk-to-text function, which allows students to narrate their thoughts and see them transformed into paragraphs; this is an essential scaffold for struggling writers.

Write About This

Write About This is an app that addresses all genres of writing throughout elementary school, engaging students and making them feel excited about writing! Educators report that even struggling writers are engaged and motivated by the game-like feel of this writing app; by the end of its integration, many couldn't get their students to turn it off! This app is worth investigating for teachers of reluctant writers.

Storyrobe

Storyrobe allows writers to write, share their work, and receive feedback from others. This is a great way to integrate student editing and revision as well as teaching how to incorporate positive feedback to writers. With this app, you can easily save and upload your story to social media platforms as well!

Google Docs

For traditional essay writing in classrooms, there is no better app than Google Docs! Google Docs has all the traditional functionality of Microsoft Word but allows for collaboration between students and for easy-to-give and easy-to-receive feedback from teachers through the commenting and suggesting functions. When paired with Google Classroom, Google Docs makes the assigning, collecting, and grading of essays a breeze for teachers and students.

It's time to harness technology's strengths, instead of dwelling on their weaknesses. While written communication can, at times, be undercut by social media, teachers can also use it to motivate students to write more and write better. By tapping into these writing apps, teachers can get their students invested in improving their writing skills!

Module -32**TECHNOLOGY TOOLS USED FOR DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS****Topic No: 50****13 Edtech Tools Every Teacher and Student Should Know About; 7 Ways To Use Technology To Improve Your Writing Skill****13 Edtech Tools Every Teacher and Student Should Know About**

Today the importance of educational technology goes beyond the use of instructional aids because of the ubiquity and usefulness of technology in everyday life. Now more than ever, there is a need for learners to be proficient at using technology in order to adapt to this rapidly digitizing world.

Students have to learn how to properly use technology at an early age for it to be eloquent in its language. Educators and the school are in prime position to teach young learners this. Teachers must also learn to fully integrate technology in their pedagogy and use it not just as visual aids but also as tools to engage learners.

From interactive whiteboards to educational applications, here are 13 edtech tools that every teacher and student to aid and enhance teaching and learning.

1. Interactive Whiteboard

The interactive whiteboard (IWB) was invented by Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) around 1990 as a tool to be used in the office for round-table discussions and small group meetings. Now the IWB has found its way in many modern classrooms as a powerful tool for enriching lessons and engaging learners.

More than just a glorified projector, IWBs work as standalone computers or as large connectable touch pads to control other computers. They can be used to display images, play multimedia files, make interactive presentations, and manipulate elements on the screen.

Using an IWB, teachers can involve students in the teaching-learning process. For example, in a lesson on how to tell time, an IWB can be used as a clock that students can adjust and manipulate to gain an experienced-based understanding of how time is measured. Students then cease to be passive receptors of knowledge and instead become active collaborators who take charge of their own learning.

2. Smart Typewriter

The smart typewriter was developed as a tool for authors, writers, journalists, and other professionals to increase their daily productivity and word count. With its straightforward design and focused functionality, the tool eliminates some distractions that may hamper your writing progress, especially those offered by the internet.

Nonprofessionals, particularly students, can benefit from the use of smart typewriters. More than any age group, the young demographic is more vulnerable to the distractions provided by the internet because many aspects of their lives—entertainment and social life—are centered on it. Students tend to lose focus easily and procrastinate when working school activities because other, more entertaining things are just a few clicks away.

Using a portable smart typewriter can address this problem. The tool was made for one function, and that's writing. It can connect to the internet, but there's no browser, and the screen is grayscale.

This typewriter only connects to Wi-Fi to save files in a cloud drive. Files are saved to the smart typewriter's internal memory when there's no Wi-Fi and automatically backed up in a cloud drive when it connects again.

Students can take the device wherever they go and write their homework outdoors since the smart typewriter is equipped with a long battery life and electronic paper screen.

3. AutoDraw

Create customized illustrations, icons, and visuals with a few drags of your mouse with AutoDraw. This application uses artificial intelligence to guess what you're trying to draw and complete your illustration for you. You can save and download your work as a PNG file.

Teachers can use the app to create visual representations and guides to illustrate concepts, engage learners, and aid learning. Students can also use this tool to practice their creativity and imagination and create visuals to enhance presentations.

4. Book Creator

Use Book Creator to make, publish, and share your own book, complete with texts, images, audios, and videos. With this application, teachers and students can create interactive stories, instructional manuals, research journals, and multimedia-assisted reports.

5. Creaza

Here's a tool that teachers and students can use to create presentations that actively engage learners. Creaza allows users to make mind maps, diagrams, and cartoons, as well as add images, audios, and videos in their presentation.

6. Edmodo

Edmodo has “the largest global teacher network.” It's a place akin to a digital classroom, where teachers, students, and even parents get to be involved in education. In Edmodo, users can find thousands of teacher resources—from articles to videos vetted by other teachers—and share their own with rest of the world.

Teachers can set up groups with students and their parents and share valuable educational resources, assign homework, schedule quizzes, and report learning progress. Edmodo is an amazing tool to involve all important parties in a child's learning and education.

7. FlipGrid

This tool is platform where teachers, students, and users discuss different topics through a short video. You create a “Grid” (a group or classroom) where you pose topics and questions and start the dialogue.

FlipGrid videos can be created using many devices, including iPhones, Android phones, tablets, laptops, and computers. It also has different filters and layouts that users can use to make creative videos. FlipGrid connects teachers and learners and changes how they teach, learn, and interact.

8. Formative

Formative is a great tool for individualized and real-time feedbacking between teacher and student. Teachers can create “formatives” (e.g., lessons, exercises, and assessments) and share them with students.

They can add questions and activities to engage students and assess their learning. Teachers can jump in and provide real-time help when a student is having a hard time answering a question or doing an activity.

Formative also provides a visual tool to track student progress, so it's easy for teachers to see those who are struggling and doing well and facilitate immediate feedback.

9. Illuminations

Created by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), Illuminations is a place where teachers can find lesson plans, classroom activities, and other resources that will enhance the teaching-learning process, all in line with common core standards.

Teachers can find brain teasers, games, interactive exercises, and mobile-friendly downloads to make learning math easier and more enjoyable.

10. Newseumed

Newseumed makes available numerous learning tools, including articles, videos, and activities, to broaden their knowledge about history, current events, and relevant issues. And they're all free.

Teachers, especially those teaching history and social studies, will find many valuable lesson plans, activities, topics, tips, and hacks to enrich their teaching practice and student learning.

11. ProWritingAid

Writing reports, book reviews, and projects are common place in school. ProWritingAid is a tool that helps students upgrade the quality of their writing assignments. The app is a “grammar guru, style editor, and writing mentor in one package.”

ProWritingAid is also useful for all professionals to improve their drafts and overall writing skills.

12. Quizalize

Quizalize offers a fun and collaborative way to assess learning. This app allows teachers to create quizzes for students to test their subject knowledge. Teachers can also add images and equations to make more varied questions, put explanations, categorize questions under subtopics, and set a time limit for quizzes.

Quizalize also has a tool for teachers to keep track of students' results so they can provide immediate feedback.

Students can answer the quizzes individually or form teams and compete against one another. The app has over 20,000 premade quizzes that users can answer for practice or for fun.

13 Write About

Write About offers ways for learners to practice their writing skills by providing prompts and activities. Students can write about given topics, practice free and creative writing, start a journal, and make write-ups.

Teachers can assign customized writing assignments, with model answers and recorded audio instructions. Write About allows teachers to check and edit their students' write-ups and provide individualized feedback to improve their students' writing.

7 Ways To Use Technology To Improve Your Writing Skill

Writing in the 21st Century is much more improved than it has been in the past. As the world develops, the old ways of doing things are abandoned whilst new methods are adopted. There are too many technological innovations happening which continue to make tackling complex issues easier. The world of technology has transformed the writing profession. Various technological methods are incorporated into the writing process as described below.

1. Feedback Mechanism Via Automated Systems

Too many students are being admitted into various learning institutions globally. As the number skyrockets, tutors find it hard to grade the students individually, awarding marks and giving comments. This process is made easier by the use of high-tech products which assist the students by providing the required help. The programs fix errors and give suggestions on the right way of solving the existing problems. These programs are still evolving and will go an extra mile in relieving the workload of the learning fraternity.

2. Technological Collaboration

New technological practices make it easier for a group of people to collaborate on various writing projects. For instance, Google Drive enables a group of researchers to share materials and assist one another in solving a pertinent challenge. Moreover, tutors across the globe participate in existing writing projects since the programs provide an avenue to do so. Other programs are in existence which offer an opportunity for collaboration through web-based services.

3. Blog Writing

Blog writing is always geared towards a wider cross-section of the society. This is an achievement as far as the learning process in various institutions is concerned. The lecturers can assign the students an activity of coming up with a blog that addresses a particular issue or problem within

the society. The students can in turn perform a more collaborative writing process that yields Web-ready writing. Technological tools used in the writing process are bound to assist younger generations in the future as the world transforms itself towards a digital era.

4. Writing Via Tablets

Schools around the globe are using tablets as a standard tool. This is directly affecting the writing process, and these gadgets are offering an easy time for the students in terms of writing and sharing of materials. The gadgets contain sophisticated programs that assist the students in advancing their grammar, translate the writing process into more practical use, and develop technical sharing processes. Furthermore, these tools are assisting the students in harnessing their research skills. The students that are more proficient in using tablets are more likely to pass their research tests than those who aren't.

5. Publishing And Training

As the world becomes more transformational, paperwork gets eliminated. There is a proliferation of writers who are cropping up to address various issues in the world. The writing process in this case is performed via blogs, academic writing, article writing, ebooks, and transcription. All of this work is being patented and published online via the use of technological tools. Moreover, a lot of training regarding academic articles, e-books, and transcribing is being conducted online through diverse programs developed globally.

6. Supplementary Materials

The world is connected via the Internet. Programs such as Google, Yahoo, and more are being used everywhere to supplement lessons offered through seminars, workshops and classrooms. The persons offering these services get additional materials easily by visiting a search engine which yields extra materials to advance the writing process.

7. Meeting Threshold

There are various ways to approach a particular writing process. For instance, how an academician approaches his or her work is quite different from how a blogger, academic writer, or a journalist does their work. Their processes require exercising professional traits and tricks in order to meet the threshold required in their specific writing process. These writers often do more research via technological tools to obtain information on the various aspects of writing. Some of the tactics incorporated into writing include referencing, quotes, paraphrasing, and citations.

SOURCES:

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