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DEVELOPING FUTURE ENGLISH TEACHERS' WRITING SKILLS USING CHECKLISTS

The article examines new approaches to teaching writing and ways of developing future English teachers' writing skills using rubrics and rubric checklists. Writing is determined as a complex skill, which includes metacognitive skills, production and knowledge resources. Product-oriented, process-oriented and genre approaches to teaching writing have been specified. The curriculum requirements for the fourth year of study at pedagogical universities have been analysed and writing skills of the fourth year students have been outlined, writing skills and genres have been determined. The correlation between the students' writing skills and Common European Framework of Reference levels of language proficiency has been made and C1 level has been determined as a target level for fourth year students. The procedure of familiarising students with Cambridge Advanced English examination rubric scale for writing tasks and introduction of a checklist have been described. The process of developing future English teachers' writing skills using checklists has been analysed. The advantages and disadvantages of checklists as self- and peer assessment tools have been enumerated. It has been concluded that using rubrics and checklists helps students to become more active learners and improve their performance, understand the link between learning objectives and desired outcome by articulating required elements of a successful assignment; assist in the problem solving process as students attempt to determine what factors are important, reduce uncertainty and ambiguity. Based on positive feedback from students and improved writing skills of students a general conclusion has been made about the effectiveness of checklists for developing future English teachers' writing skills.

***Keywords**: writing skills, self-assessment, peer assessment, checklist, rubric.*

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РОЗВИТОК УМІНЬ ПИСЬМА МАЙБУТНІХ УЧИТЕЛІВ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ З ВИКОРИСТАННЯМ КОНТРОЛЬНИХ ЛИСТІВ

Інтеграція вищої освіти України у європейський освітній простір вимагає від закладів вищої освіти удосконалення методів і засобів формування комунікативної компетентності майбутніх учителів іноземних мов. Компетентність у письмі є невід'ємною складовою іншомовної комунікативної компетентності. Невідповідність рівня сформованості компетентності у письмі випускників педагогічних університетів і потреба у впровадженні сучасних засобів навчання зумовила актуальність цієї статті. Мета статті – аналіз шляхів розвитку вмінь письма майбутніх учителів англійської мови з використанням контрольних листів. Проаналізовано трактування поняття "письмо" у сучасній методиці навчання іноземних мов і культур. Відзначено, що письмо є складним видом мовленнєвої діяльності, який передбачає розвиток метакогнітивних умінь, навичок і вмінь продукування, а також наявність необхідних для створення письмового повідомлення знань. Показано, що основними підходами до навчання письма на сучасному етапі є предметний, процесуальний і жанровий. Конкретизовано

вміння, необхідні студентам четвертого курсу англійського відділення факультету іноземних мов для оволодіння компетентністю у письмі, визначено жанри письма. Встановлено відповідність визначених умінь письма дескрипторам Загальноєвропейських рекомендацій з мовної освіти. Розглянуто нові підходи до навчання і оцінювання іншомовного письма. Визначено, що рубрикою вважають документ, який містить критерії оцінювання письмового повідомлення та рівні досягнення цих критеріїв за шкалою від "відмінно" до "незадовільно". Рубрики допомагають забезпечити об'єктивність і прозорість оцінювання, посилити відповідальність студентів за результати навчання і якість виконання ними завдань з письма. Обгрунтовано доцільність використання рубрик у поєднанні з контрольними листами. Рубрики і контрольні листи визначено ефективними засобами для самооцінювання і взаємооцінювання письмових повідомлень студентами. Запропоновано рубрику оцінювання письмового повідомлення на основі шкали міжнародного екзамену Cambridge Advanced English і контрольний лист, створений із використанням основних критеріїв оцінювання письмового повідомлення цієї шкали. Проаналізовано переваги та недоліки використання рубрик і контрольних листів для створення і оцінювання письмового повідомлення. Описано послідовність роботи студентів з рубриками і контрольними листами. На основі результатів навчання і позитивних відгуків студентів про використання контрольних листів зроблено висновок про ефективність цього засобу навчання для формування вмінь письма майбутніх учителів англійської мови. Перспективу подальшого дослідження вбачаємо у використанні контрольних листів для розвитку і оцінювання вмінь говоріння майбутніх учителів англійської мови.

***Ключові слова**: уміння письма, самооцінювання, взаємооцінювання, контрольний лист, рубрика.*

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РАЗВИТИЕ УМЕНИЙ ПИСЬМА БУДУЩИХ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА С ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕМ КОНТРОЛЬНЫХ ЛИСТОВ

Рассмотрены новые подходы к обучению и оцениванию иноязычного письма и пути развития умений письма будущих учителей английского языка с использованием контрольных листов. Проанализировано объяснение понятия "письмо" в современной методике обучения иностранных языков и культур. Отмечено, что письмо является сложным видом речевой деятельности, который предусматривает развитие метакогнитивных умений, навыков и умений продуцирования, а также наличие необходимых для создания письменного сообщения знаний. Показано, что основными подходами к обучению письму на современном этапе являются предметный, процессуальный и жанровый. Конкретизированы умения, необходимые студентам для овладения компетентностью в письме, определены жанры письма. Установлено соответствие определенных умений письма дескрипторам Общеевропейских рекомендаций по языковому образованию. Предложена рубрика оценивания письменного сообщения на основании шкалы международного экзамена Cambridge Advanced English и контрольный лист, созданный с использованием основных критериев оценивания письменного сообщения по этой шкале. Проанализированы преимущества и недостатки использования рубрик и контрольных листов для создания и оценивания письменного сообщения. Описана последовательность работы студентов с рубрикой и контрольным листом. На основе анализа результатов обучения и позитивных отзывов студентов об использовании контрольных листов сделан вывод об эффективности этого средства обучения в развитии умений письма будущих учителей английского языка.

***Ключевые слова**: умения письма, самооценивание, взаимооценивание, контрольный лист, рубрика.*

Ukrainian higher education is undergoing change related to its integration into European higher education area. English as a foreign language specialists are directly involved in implementing the change. There is a constant demand for foreign languages departments' graduates whose communicative competence enables them to solve complex professional tasks both in Ukraine and abroad. Well-developed writing skills help educators to express themselves clearly and to communicate effectively in this increasingly complex and ever-changing world. Hence attention of Ukrainian (O. Tarnopolsky, O. Kozhushko, S. Rudakova etc.) and foreign (B. Kroll, R. Jordan, U. Connor etc.) researchers to teaching writing at university level. Despite existing extensive research of the problem, some aspects need to be studied further.

The purpose of the article is to analyse ways of developing future English teachers' writing skills using rubrics and checklists.

In contemporary research writing is described as a (new) technology, a set of socially contextualised practices highly variable both in form and purpose [2; 8; 10, p. 33]. In comparison with speech it is more permanent, planned, distant, orthographic, complex, formal, lexically dense. Cognitive dimension of writing process extends to the knowledge factor and to the processing factor.

According to A. Green's model of language production writing is a complex skill which includes metacognitive skills (goal setting, mental set, communication strategies, review and remediation), production (conceptualization, planning and organisation, vocabulary /grammatical /orthographic encoding, output, monitoring and repair), knowledge resources (knowledge of topic, sociolinguistic and pragmatical rules, discourse, grammar, vocabulary, orthography) [8, p. 79].

Writing is a personal act in which writers take ideas or prompts and transform them into "self-initiated" topics [9, p. 70]. The writer draws on background knowledge and complex mental processes in developing new insights. To write well, students need to incorporate the purpose of prompt into their own unique approach to writing.

There are three main types of writing and therefore three major approaches to teaching writing: product-oriented, process-oriented and genre approach. In product writing, students are required to create a product – a written text. In process writing, students are involved in the construction of narratives on topics in which they have a personal interest. Students share their writing with peers, who comment on the piece and ask questions or offer comments and encouragement. In genre writing, students can use a variety of genres or types of writing (e.g. essays, stories, letters, manuals and research papers) to accomplish writing tasks [13, p. 138].

Writing competence is a unique phenomenon with its own complex structure, which includes knowledge, skills and abilities. In writing of an essay, for example, students relate on at least four types of knowledge: content knowledge; procedural knowledge of how to organize the content; knowledge of discourse structure, syntactic forms and conventions of writing; procedural knowledge for integrating all the other types of knowledge [13, p. 136–137]. According to the curriculum requirements, fourth year students should be able to express themselves freely using different lexical units, grammatical structures and stylistic means; to write research papers, academic essays, comments and annotations (up to 300 words); to participate in professional communication on Internet forums; to express complex ideas and thoughts in writing; to write coherently using different connectors, references, examples and citations; to adjust the style of writing to context and readers' needs. This skills correlate with the CEFR Global Scale descriptors for C1 level (Proficient User), which are as follows: can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning; can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions; can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes; can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. [3, p. 5].

An important point to remember is that student writing ability may vary considerably depending on the purpose. Therefore, it is necessary to assess different types of writing by the same student in order to obtain information about student performance and progress in writing.

Traditionally, summative assessment in tertiary institutions determined the level of achievement and established what has been learned. This type of assessment was compatible with product-oriented approach to teaching writing and extensively used in those settings where the number of hours for in-class instruction was low. Foreign language educators are increasingly incorporating formative assessment practices at universities to enable students' active learning based on their assessment experiences, and to engage them in the assessment culture in a more collaborative role with academic staff, which is of paramount importance for future teachers of foreign languages [4, p. 37; 5, p. 347; 6, p. 345].

The changing context of higher education in Ukraine has resulted in a call for university faculty to make their assessment practices more transparent for students. This means making students aware of the purposes of the assessment and the assessment criteria. One way of doing this is through the use of rubrics or scales.

A rubric is commonly defined as a "document that articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria or what counts and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor" [7, p. 423; 10, p. 31–32; 14, p. 435]. The rubric has over the years been growing in popularity as

an important assessment tool, more specifically, in the promotion of learning by providing transparency in assessments and in making assessment practices authentic. Rubrics can help students become more active learners and improve their performance, understand the link between learning objective and desired outcome by articulating required elements of a successful assignment; rubrics assist in the problem solving process as students attempt to determine what factors are important. Finally, rubrics reduce uncertainty and ambiguity.

Despite the numerous benefits of using the rubric it is not without criticism. One concern that researchers have is whether making the criteria explicit for students could actually stifle students' creativity. They are also questioning whether rubrics reflect what they know about the complexities of the writing and responding process and express concern that rubrics prematurely narrowed and cemented their vision of good writing, depriving their students of personal, real, and authentic feedback [16, p. 2–9].

One defining characteristic of independent learners is their ability "to self-assess" and this can be facilitated by means of a rubric. This point is supported by researchers who suggest that the rubric and the checklist can both work well towards guiding self-assessment. For example, A. Jonsson found that using the rubric for self-assessment purposes could assist students in better understanding the criteria which may lead to reinforcement of their self-assessment practices [11, p. 850].

According to T. Sundeen [15, p. 78] when a rubric is used to improve writing, the different elements listed in the rubric should be taught to students prior to them receiving the rubric. Thereafter, in discussing the rubric the teacher goes through each listed criterion in order to reinforce what was learnt and to discuss the expectations of the task. Instruction provided in this way will afford students the opportunity to address any questions or misconceptions they may have about the writing task. When students understand the requirements of the task and the expectations of the teacher they are likely to be more engaged in learning.

The textbook used by the fourth year Foreign Languages Department students of Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University – "Upstream Proficiency" by Virginia Evans and Jenny Dooley includes different types of texts for writing at advanced level. Writing section is a part of each unit of Student's Book and Workbook and students complete and submit a major writing assignment at the end of each unit: letters to the press/authorities, descriptive and narrative articles, reviews (reviewing films, festivals, books, restaurants and products). Explaining assessment criteria for writing tasks in each module we introduced an assessment rubric that formed part of students' continuous assessment schedule.

Students' papers were assessed using a rubric scale which was developed by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES) with close reference to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Marks were awarded from 0 to 5 on each of the following scales: content, communicative achievement, organization, language. Table 1 represents the rubric used for assessment of writing tasks at C1 level.

Having introduced a rubric scale we decided to introduce a new tool – a checklist to be used as scaffolding tools by students. A checklist is similar to the rubric in that it lists the 'criteria or what counts' but it does not describe the 'levels of quality from excellent to poor' which is a defining characteristic of a rubric. In acknowledging this limitation of a checklist the designed checklists were to be used in conjunction to re-inforce the rubric.

In this paper the rubric and the checklist are used as separate but complementary tools. However, the focus is on the rubric checklist. The checklist complements the rubric; each criteria, listed in the rubric, is present in the checklist; it allows for both self- and peer assessment.

Table 1

Rubric for assessment of writing at C1 level

C1	Content	Communicative achievement	Organization	Language
1	2	3	4	5
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task with sufficient	Text is well-organised, coherent whole, using a variety of cohesive	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis,

		flexibility to communicate complex ideas in an effective way, holding the target reader's attention with ease, fulfilling all communicative purposes.	devices and organizational patterns with flexibility.	effectively and precisely. Uses a wide range of simple and complex grammatical forms with full control, flexibility and sophistication. Errors, if present, are related to less common words and structures, or occur as slips.
4	Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.			
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well-organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication..
2	Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.			
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions and the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well organized and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses arrange of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	Performance below band 1		

At the beginning of the semester the concept and purpose of a rubric was discussed with students. Each criterion was discussed at length with examples provided for each to aid in understanding. The meaning of the criteria has been summarized in the following questions:

- content: Have you included all the essential information in your text?

- communicative achievement: What style of text do you need to produce?
- organisation: Have you organized your ideas in a logical way?
- language: Have you used a range of language correctly?

We also explained the concept of the checklist, in particular, that it is based on the rubric and that each criteria that was listed on the rubric has been further broken down; and it is a tool that could be used by students to assess themselves and their peers.

The first rubric checklist for each written assignment was prepared by the teacher and handed out to students. We briefly went over it once again stressing the checklist as an important and useful self-assessment tool that should be used in conjunction with the rubric. At this stage we also showed students how to use the rubric checklist to assess themselves and they were encouraged to do so throughout the writing process.Table 2 shows film review checklist.

Table 2

Film review checklist

Content
My review content is relevant to the task.
The reader is fully informed.
I have included information about the film (Title, release year, director's name)
I have described the film in some detail without retelling it completely.
I have recommended / not recommended the film to the reader.
Communicative Achievement
I used conventions of a review to hold the reader's attention.
I communicated straightforward (and complex) ideas.
I have chosen appropriate register (neutral / fairly informal / fairly formal).
I gave the reader a clear idea of what I thought of the film.
Organisation
The text is well-organised and coherent.
My review is appropriately divided into paragraphs.
I wrote an introduction.
I finished with a conclusion.
I used appropriate linking words and phrases and cohesive devices.
Language
I used a wide variety of verb tenses correctly.
I used comparative structures to compare this movie with others I've seen.
I used appropriate structures for giving opinion and recommending.
I used vocabulary associated with entertainment, feelings, impressions and reactions where appropriate.
I checked my review for errors.

12 students participated in this research. The participants were fourth year university students. Their ages ranged from 19 to 20 years. 11 of them were female students and 1 – male student. All of them learned English as a foreign language.

During the semester students had 10 hours of English per week. As part of the continuous assessment students wrote 2 letters, a report and a film/book/festival review, and this is when the rubric and the rubric checklist were used.

Students had to work closely with the rubric and this helped to further enhance its understanding as illustrated in the following quotes "The checklist helped me to understand the rubric better", "The checklist stressed important poins", "I understood how I should use the rubric and the checklist together". Almost all students reported that they made use of the checklists and found them clear and easy to use. Majority of them spoke about using them during their writing as a 'scaffold' because it "shows me what to do" and "what to stress" or "shows how to make sure that all is written well". Another student wrote "I used the rubric checklist to help me check the structure of my review. The points in the checklist helped me to check and confirm if I had the necessary requirements which would enable me to have a well-written review".

Overall, students' assignments were better presented and structured compared to previous drafts. A vast improvement was also noted in the second and third assignments when the checklists were used.

In summary, the use of rubrics and checklists for self-assessment and peer feedback aims at helping learners become more critical of their own texts. As they listen to their peers' views on what they have written and have the opportunity to reshape their writing, they are exercising the ability to detach themselves from their texts and read it with the target reader's eyes. Besides, under the initial guidance of the checklists, they become familiar with the writing criteria, which are central to the communicative power of their texts and gain more confidence in order to become more autonomous revisers of their own texts. The prospects of further research may be analysis of other forms of formative assessment aimed at developing students' writing skills.

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