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## СТРАТЕГИИ СОЗДАНИЯ БЛАГОПРИЯТНОЙ СРЕДЫ ДЛЯ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ПИСЬМУ СТУДЕНТОВ НЕЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИХ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

В статье рассматриваются основные стратегии создания продуктивной образовательной среды на занятиях, в рамках которых изучается навык письма. Автор предлагает комплексные стратегии для улучшения навыков письма студентов с помощью создания поддерживающей атмосферы, интеграции технологий и использования интерактивных письменных заданий. Статья основана на многолетнем опыте автора по обучению студентов нелингвистических специальностей.

*Ключевые слова:* методы обучения; письменные задания; интеграция технологий; навык письма; обучение письму.

## STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING A WRITING-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT FOR NON-LINGUISTIC STUDENTS

The article discusses the essential strategies for creating a productive atmosphere within classrooms, where writing is taught and practiced. It suggests some comprehensive strategies to improve students' writing proficiency through supportive atmosphere, integration of technology and interactive writing activities. The article is based on author's experience of teaching non-linguistic student over years.

*Key words:* teaching strategies; writing activities; technology integration; writing proficiency; teaching writing.

In the realm of education, mastering a foreign language became an integral part of any school or university program. Yet, in the case of providing English classes for non-linguistic students there might be not only a lack of language but also motivational issues. In order to increase students' motivation and subsequently affect their writing performance. The key focus here lies in the concept of motivation to learn a foreign language, which would be English in the context of this article. While linguistic students are more likely to be driven by their interests and passions about language learning or its necessity in professional development, non-linguistic students experience various doubts, especially towards productive skills (writing and speaking). They might not see any benefits of learning it or find the whole process extremely complicated or uninteresting [1, p. 161]. To start addressing this motivational issue, one of the first strategies would be cultivating writing-friendly environment in class as it takes time to foster writing confidence and proficiency.

Firstly, it is worth mentioning that the notion of writing-friendly environment would differ depending on students' language level, their age and major. This article discusses strategies that can be mostly integrated into university programs of learning foreign languages. It is necessary to note as some of the suggestions require certain level of digital literacy and learner's autonomy.

Secondly, writing-friendly environment can be achieved only by combining strategies and implementing those which meet your students' needs and wants. Gradual introduction of new techniques and tools might ease students' and teacher's adaptation to them, making the process more comfortable and preventing potential rejection.

As it was aforementioned, writing remains one of the most challenging skills to master in terms of learning foreign language. Students have to incorporate knowledge of lexis, grammar structures and style to communicate in written way [2, p. 57]. Applying all these skills may cause reasonable troubles to non-linguistic students. That is why it is essential to introduce supporting atmosphere before, while and after writing practice. Creating and nurturing such writing-friendly environment consists of a few components, and I would like to outline the following: supportive classroom atmosphere, integration of technology, interactive activities and development of writing habit.

The first vital point is providing ongoing and explicit support to create writing-friendly environment. Basically, it means that writing activities should be organized in a way it demonstrates encouragement and acceptance. Making sure students understand that there is a room for practice, where mistakes are allowed, even welcomed as a part of learning process. The primary point here is to inform your students that their mistakes highlight areas of development and should not be utilized as a basis for offending or insulting one another.

One of the ways to do it is scaffolding at all stages of writing practice. Initially a teacher could explain purpose of the writing genre that is studied and

outline practical application of it. For instance, to teach writing formal emails there should be a remark of their ubiquitous use in various work environments from schools to startups and international business companies. That will encourage your students to at least consider the necessity of learning it. This stage also contains pre-teaching typical grammatical structures and lexical clichés in order to ease students understanding of writing genre in question.

Next component of writing-friendly environment is implementation of interactive activities. Interactive learning can be defined as methods of purposeful student's engagement with material aided by students interacting with other participant of learning process (teacher or peers) [3, p. 1]. Typically, writing encompasses interaction with the materials (writing topic or context) and the addressee (target audience of particular piece of writing). Yet, being considerate to students' needs and willful to maintain supportive atmosphere some writing tasks could be adapted into more interactive ones. One of the most illustrative examples is writing a formal letter: students can be assigned with certain roles and write their emails/letters from that perspective. Moreover, asking them to reply to peer's email will not only teach them how to correspond formally but also provide another practice opportunity, as respond to formal email, by nature, has the same format as formal email itself.

Such interaction may be introduced on the lower level, for instance, responding to written questionnaire or collaborative writing. In this case students have less language pressure due to the fact that they can consult with each other, support both in terms of language and/or writing confidence. Allowing students to engage in creative writing in cooperation with each other may give them a chance to practice writing without strict limitations. By limitations I mean formats like essays or reports and various registers. Meanwhile, creative writing may also be integrated in such activity as collaborative vocabulary story. It aims at practicing or assessing target vocabulary and simultaneously provides students with writing opportunity, which is not a main focus of the assignment. From this perspective, writing is not as overwhelming as it could be when being a lesson objective as long as students have both each other's assistance and no pressure to perform at their best. Adapting conventional writing activities into interactive ones could potentially help develop writing proficiency by increases writing instances and practice hours.

Another strategy is relatively connected with aforementioned one. To increase efficiency of interactive writing activities some of technological advancements may come to assistance. Various learning apps and digital platforms have become an integral part of modern education, so they can easily contribute to improving effectiveness of writing practice. For instance, using such collaborative writing platform as Padlet or Google Docs helps to carry written communication out in practice. While students are engaged into writing, for example, a blog entry and commenting on each other's posts, a teacher have a chance to monitor all of their

works at once, providing constructive and timely feedback (where necessary) or just praising students. Such feedback is an integral part of developing writing proficiency as it helps to address mistakes instantly in comparison to delayed feedback on longer works [4, p. 240] Another tool or app that is likely to work with low level students (A1 or A2 levels according to CEFR) is integrating language learning apps into the program. Such app as Duolingo contains activities that require in-app writing, giving more practice with instant app feedback and a chance to fix mistakes.

The last strategy that I would like to suggest is so-called developing a writing habit. For non-linguistic students who face challenges in English classroom writing may be impeded by lack of confidence or even some form of anxiety, especially while completing graded tasks. To prevent such an issue students should work on developing writing habit, which means ability to write regularly in order to produce consistent content. One of the ways to integrate it in classroom without overwhelming your students (and yourself) is introduction of wrap-up reflection sentences. Technically, it consists of a few sentences or a short paragraph where students reflect on what they have done in today's class. It does not take much time and may be easily incorporated into final activity, where students are to answer a question, using grammar and/or vocabulary of the lesson. By completing such brief and uncomplicated pieces of writing in the end of each class, students develop writing habit and build their confidence. They are more likely to experience a decrease of anxiety level due to constant practice, as there is no reason to panic before any writing assignment if they got used to writing it in the end of every class.

This article has focused on developing writing skills through arranging writing-friendly environment. The strategies explored herein, from peer interaction to digital exploration, form the bedrock upon which writing proficiency evolves. Presumably, providing writing-friendly environment, integrating technology and interaction in your classroom can greatly affect students' performance in terms of mastering writing skill. However, it is crucial to remember about limitations of all of aforementioned strategies, as students and programs diversity will not allow appearance of universal model of making classroom writing-friendly.

#### SOURCES

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