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AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO READING AND WRITING

Writing in the second language (L2) has always been a challenging task not only for non-native students but also to teachers due to a number of reasons: 1) native speaker students have much higher language proficiency level; 2) writing techniques applied in the first language (L1) must be adapted to the educational needs of non-native students; 3) high speaking skills in L2 do not obligatory presuppose high writing skills to produce cognitively complex academic texts; 4) there are differences in L1 and L2 discourse and rhetorical modes, text cohesion, linguistic features, references to sources of knowledge and information [2: 6-15]. To succeed in academic writing, students must know how to differentiate main points, subpoints and different types of supporting material; how to correctly incorporate researched and analyzed information into their own writing; how to follow the demands of written English employing vocabulary relevant to the topic, style and audience.

“If students are to make knowledge their own, they must struggle with the details, wrestle with the facts, and rework raw information and dimly understood concepts into language they can communicate to someone else. In short, if students are to learn, they must write.” [1: 2] In this respect, writing and reading integrated in classroom activities enhances students’ understanding, encourages personal involvement with texts, and involves students transforming ideas into their own words [3].

During the course of academic writing in Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, master program students learn how to write an argumentative research essay on a controversial topic. This type of writing demands thorough analysis of relevant sources with their proper documentation and a developed reasoning pattern to present

opposing arguments. We use a set of tasks (for classwork or homework activities) which have proved to be effective to motivate students to read and re-read, to help them organize and clarify their thoughts on articles suggested.

At the writing-before-reading stage, responding to a thought-provoking quote that relates to the topic generates a personal, often unexpected and fresh, view on the subject. Students can be encouraged to freewrite whatever comes into their minds without worrying too much about grammar or spelling which lessens the fear of writing in a foreign language. Another activity that works well is the use of the KWL chart.

At the writing-while-reading stage, writing-on-the margins strategy helps students interact with the article suggested. Students should copy interesting or important words, phrases, sentences, ideas, or details from the passage. They can also give their responses to the copied text by asking questions, making connections to their thoughts or experiences about a topic, making personal associations, and expressing disagreement or agreement. Taking notes from the article and analyzing information, learners are suggested to highlight key ideas in the form of graphic organizers.

At the writing-after-reading stage, students compose an argumentative research essay with PROS (supporting ideas) and CONS (opposing ideas) based on the article analysis and additional individual topic investigation.

Literature

1. Graham S. and Herbert M. Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010. – 74 p.
2. Hinkel E. Teaching Academic ESL Writing: Practical Techniques in Vocabulary and Grammar. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2004. – 373 p.
3. Jacobs V. Reading, Writing, and Understanding/ Educational Leadership. – Vol. 60. -№ 3. – 2002. – Режим доступа: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov02/vol60/num03/Reading,-Writing,-and-Understanding.aspx>