CHAPTER - I

WRITING AND AUTONOMY

1.0 Introduction

_The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has learned that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security._

- Carl Rogers

The purpose of education, from a teacher’s perspective, should be to liberate learners so that they discover themselves and devise ways for lifelong self-improvement. Education in a broader perspective refers to all the experiences through which students learn. It embraces many aspects, including the pedagogy, proper conduct, technical competency, and the skills needed to manage life. It thus focuses on the cultivation of skills, trades or professions, as well as mental, moral & aesthetic development. Within such a definition of education, formal learning that is typically concentrated in the earlier stages of life becomes something minimal, and can no longer sustain the individual throughout his life. Thus, one could argue that there is, in general, a lack of support for learning beyond formal education. But due to the acceleration of scientific and technological progress, lifelong education has become very important. The knowledge and skills acquired in formal education at the primary, secondary and university level are
usually not sufficient for a professional career spanning three or four decades. Thus, there is a need for learning where opportunities are provided at all ages and in numerous contexts to be incorporated into mainstream education, and the evolution of a curriculum which focuses less on knowledge and more on how to learn. This then raises queries about the role of the teacher; he moves from being a transmitter of knowledge or content, and has to become someone who can encourage students to take increased responsibility for their learning. He thus becomes one who would aim to make his learners autonomous, knowing this autonomy will make him eventually redundant as far as that learner is concerned. Instead of worrying about this, however, he welcomes it.

Learner autonomy through a focus on learner reflection and taking responsibility for one’s own learning processes has become a central concern in the recent history of language teaching (Murphy, 2008; Little, 2009). If such autonomy is to be built, then it has to be done by creating opportunities and experiences which encourage student motivation, curiosity, self-confidence and self-reliance. This would, in turn, develop lifelong learners with self-determination and self-discretion who can effectively participate in society and meet the challenges of rapid social change.

One goal of teaching is to establish a sound knowledge base on which students will be able to build on as they are exposed to different life experiences. The passing of knowledge from one generation to another allows students to grow into useful members of society. Good teachers can translate information, good judgment, experience and wisdom into relevant knowledge that a student can understand, retain and pass to others. But it has to be accepted that it is impossible
to teach learners everything they need to know, in class. The teacher's task, therefore, is to show the learners how to become a teacher for him/herself so that he functions independently in the absence of him. This ability relates to the development of learner autonomy.

Learner autonomy enhances the learner's motivation, and leads to more effective learning. It gives students the right to exercise responsibility for their own learning. As a result, they become more motivated, less teacher-dependent, and will be able to meet their needs on their own. I understood learner autonomy can be developed in many ways. One effective way teachers can do this is by providing inputs in the form of multiple intelligences so as to cater to the needs of different learners' styles in acquiring skills that are important and transferable and can be utilized all their life.

The argument that I would like to put forward through this thesis is that if the learners are trained in providing with inputs which matches to their intelligences, then the learner gets engaged in learning through enhanced motivation. In turn this enhanced motivation will help the learner develop his performance or behavior i.e. to affirm what a student can do well, or to help the student to develop in areas that he or she does less well either qualitatively or quantitatively.

The point of giving inputs in various means is to help the receiver(s) do better the next time, through raising awareness and discussing possible ways of tackling issues that improve performance. It is sometimes not easy for us as teachers to realize that the responsibility for autonomous learning sits not only with the
learner, but also with the teacher. The learner's role and the teacher's role in achieving learner autonomy overlap. While the learners need to realize that the learning process is ultimately their responsibility, and they must take control of their own learning rather than just depending on the teacher, the teacher not only has to relinquish control but also needs to recognize that each learner is an individual and as such has an individual learning style. Teachers need to familiarize themselves with the different learning styles and accommodate them in their teaching, thus equipping learners with the skills to be autonomous. This autonomy needs to be encouraged by setting tasks that are achievable but require learners to work independently of the teacher. A major step towards autonomy is for learners to understand the importance of risk taking, being proactive, and establishing effective study patterns.

This is true of all learners, across all subjects and skills. However, in the context of a global language like English and its importance, the value and need for learner autonomy becomes much more crucial, particularly in a country like India where it is a second language. This study focuses the impact of explicit training by providing inputs in the form multiple intelligences on students' writing, and how it enables more autonomous learning to take place. The role of English and the current role of multiple intelligences propounded by Howard Gardner (1983), and contemporary parallel research on learning styles and brain-based education (Kolb: 1974, Owen Wilson: 1998) recognise individual differences from a wholly new perspective, focusing particularly on the intellectual functioning of individuals in the educational context.
1.1 Importance of Writing

The ability to write effectively, particularly in English, is becoming increasingly important in the global community, as a result of which instruction in writing is assuming an increasingly important role in second and foreign language education. As advances in transport and technology have made the world a global village, and enabled people from different cultures to meet and interact with each other, communication across languages becomes even more necessary. Therefore, the ability to speak and write a second language is being recognized widely as an essential skill for education, business and personal reasons. The ultimate goal of being able to write is for most students to be able to participate fully in all aspects of society and this value for learning how to write well increases as students' progress to higher education. Writing and critical thinking are seen as closely linked, and expertise in writing in an indication that students have mastered the cognitive skills necessary for higher education.

An integral component of the development of writing as a skill is the ability to brainstorm ideas, edit one's written language for grammatical, stylistic, organizational and other features. Of concern to most language teachers is a student's ability to edit for grammatical features. Beginning with the Writing Processes Movement in the 1970's, teachers have intervened while assisting students to development more expert writing processes (Silva 1990). Process writing consists of the following stages: the brainstorming stage, planning, writing the rough draft, editing, proof-reading, and then the final Product.
1.2 Issues in L2 Writing

Writing is an essential activity that all individuals have to engage in if they are to function in literate society. Most persons, however, unless they are creatively inclined, do not write for pleasure or even with pleasure. They write only if they are forced to and are often beset with seemingly insurmountable problems during writing. The product of their writing may also fail in precision of communication and may not lead to the kind of results anticipated by the writer. Most of the people find it difficult to put down their thoughts systematically and logically on paper.

The problem may lie in the fact that many people do not consciously have to think consistently for protracted periods, remembering, describing, reflecting, arguing or persuading. Speech almost always takes over in such functions in everyday life and allows for plenty of incomplete propositions, back-tracking, inconsistency, self-contradiction and other illogical moves, most of which get corrected due to the immediate and ongoing feedback interpolated by the other party involved in the conversation. Writing may not involve this continual feedback and revision in dialogic form, unless the writer is capable of mentally playing the parts of both speaker and interlocutor with logic, fluency and an awareness of reader expectations.

Moreover, what is finally written remains irrevocably present in print, and this product must then mediate alone with the reader, with no further contribution from the writer. This is possibly why, given the option, most people choose to communicate orally and not 'commit" themselves on paper. There are also the
reasons that greater time is needed for and more effort goes into the physical act of
typing or wielding a pen, in comparison with the comparative ease of speaking.
There is also the need, mentioned earlier, for sustained, logical flow of thought
in writing. Thinking, especially in the case of young learners, is frequently an
involuntary background mental activity rather than a consciously cultivated habit
that could contribute to the writing process.

The freedom to choose oral communication over writing is not often available in a
classroom situation where the learner, though shrinking from writing, cannot
avoid the activity, whether in class work, homework or tests. In large classrooms,
writing may become the only mode of teacher-learner communication and the sole
basis of learner evaluation. Yet, many learners are hampered by their inability to
correct their problems in L2 writing due to their lack of awareness of what the
reader expects and what style would be appropriate in the relevant context, not to
mention their lack of grammar and vocabulary.

The fact that in India, from primary school onwards, students have to begin
mastering the rudiments of academic writing makes the situation more difficult.
This is because L2 writing for academic purposes differs significantly from
learners' everyday speech or even from their oral use of L2 for academic purposes.
As Raiines (1987) observed, both the surface semantics ('what' to write), as well
as the deeper rhetorical features of text-creation ('how' to write) pose serious
problems to L2 writers, which if left undiagnosed, can end in bafflement causing
them to regard writing as an abstruse problem throughout their lives.
Another disturbing fact is that, very often, English teachers themselves are not aware of the particular demands of academic writing. They also do not know how to enable the learning of these features. It has emerged from teacher interviews conducted during the present study that teacher training courses in English often do not include such useful details of language pedagogy and focus instead on the history of English education in India and the contributions of philosophy and psychology to language learning without making the relevant connections between theoretical knowledge and its practical classroom application. In the absence of a foundation in the teaching of ESL skills, language teachers are often unable to understand the theoretical rationale behind various methods applied in the classroom. As a result, most of them depend over much on course books and on outdated content-based approaches.

At Navodaya vidyalaya the site of this study, English is regarded more in the light of a foreign than a second language, as all communication necessary in everyday life as well as formal occasions can be and usually are fulfilled in LI (telugu) to bridge communication with outsiders. Even in the corridors of English medium schools, the use of English is ridiculed as a pretension, though the situation is slowly beginning to change as students now realise the urgent need to learn English for higher studies and a prosperous career. The need for English has become paramount today but L2 learning is as yet in a transitional phase, where speaking and writing fluently in English is a fairly rare phenomenon even among English medium students. The standard of spoken and especially, written English, is quite low.
In India, schooling has a very specific purpose, aimed at entry into prestigious professional courses such as engineering or medicine, or into higher studies at the college or university level. The ultimate aim is for students to secure a successful career either in an established professional sphere or in an international firm. Every stage of schooling or career building is punctuated with a series of written examinations. Hence, it is the examination rather than the learner that becomes the focal point of the Indian educational system. Despite the central importance given to written exams by teachers, students, parents and curriculum framers, very few students learn to write as expected in school. In fact, every successive failure in examinations reinforces negative learner attitude towards writing and also a lack of self-confidence. The 2010 CBSE syllabi for Communicative and Core English in Classes X and XII respectively, mention the following as learning objectives under writing skills:

- "to enable the learner to communicate effectively and appropriately in real life situations" (p. 34)

- "promoting the higher-order language skills ... [in] preparation for the university ... as well as the language skills required for the workplace." (p. 36)

But in the actual classrooms of most Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) schools, L2 writing tasks follow the prescribed examination formats of letters, articles, reports, notices, telegrams, etc. and remain limited to teaching these, with the explicit objective of learning to write for the board examination.
This happens in a trickle-down effect right from higher secondary to primary writing classes. Hence, to help in generating content, classroom writing tasks should be provided in the verbal other than verbal or visual stimuli and so on so as to encompass different intelligences learners which are related to the future workplace or academic environment of learners.

Such practices totally obscure the differences between tasks that help learners in acquiring writing styles for different purposes or the various pre- and post-writing sub-skills, and tasks that test the learners' knowledge of writing for real life purposes. Learning the sub-skills and styles of writing is expected to occur automatically in the writing classroom while creating prescribed written products. Besides, not much attention is paid to age-appropriate student interests or popular youth culture in the material selected for L2 writing purposes, even in the earliest stages. Many of these writing inputs stem instead, from what adults think appropriate for young learners and topics in the CBSE course book, based on facts and statistics from environmental issues, teenage health, education, adolescence problems, etc. rather than what learners voluntarily take an interest in. There is little scope for learner initiative within tasks.

It also shows no awareness of the differential cognitive functioning that is recognized by Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory in order to cater to individual learners, because their objective is to prepare students for testing tasks that are set in the board examinations. Thus, even before the students can learn the processes of writing and come to look, upon it as a multifaceted tool for real life problem solving, they are preoccupied with formats, word limits and assessable products.
The usual steps of pre-writing, writing and post-writing with their inbuilt cycles of brainstorming, outlining, group discussion, multiple-drafting, conferencing, feedback, revision and editing have not been widely attempted in the L2 writing classroom, mainly due to time constraints. Arousing genre awareness has been attempted only through teaching writing formats and presenting model, writing products. Process and product approaches have been combined in task-based teaching, including the use of authentic writing inputs. To the extent that these techniques could actually be implemented in the classroom, some improvement in L2 writing has taken place. Apart from these, (Byrd, 2010) advocates the use of reflective writing as a means of developing teaching skills in a second language writing classroom.

Two significant concerns yet remain. The first is that, a very small percentage of students seem to benefit from such writing instruction and remedial procedures. The second is that, even 'good' students are seldom motivated to write and find pleasure in the act by such methods. In fact, writing, rewriting, redrafting and editing tend to be regarded as tedious, repetitive chores imposed by the teacher to obtain an end product that appears even more unattainable as a result. This phenomenon may be linked directly to the fact that teaching practices do not take into account the MI profiles and different learning styles favoured by individual learners. It must be remembered that few young learners are self-motivated. Yet, there is no provision in elementary or middle school for different kinds of writing tasks to suit individual differences. Consequently, those who do not write well also dislike writing processes too much to try and improve. Lack of motivation to
practice leads to continued poor performance in writing. The learner tends to be trapped in this vicious circle.

It is not surprising then, that classroom interactions with learners should reveal L2 writing as an activity that most are reluctant to engage in, even though they may take to speaking, listening and reading in L2 with greater enthusiasm and success. This lack of motivation in learners, caused by their inability to write effectively and consequent poor grades, along with the resulting lack of self-confidence, may turn into a very real psychological 'block' when the need to write arises in real life (Leki, 1992). Adults who cannot write well usually reconcile themselves to this inability as their own individual weakness, because others who have been through the same language learning and examination procedures at school appear to be fluent and effective in all forms of communication. It was earlier assumed that the reason for the failure to write adequately must be a lack of individual initiative, intelligence or aptitude.

The teaching-learning revolution in recent times, however, is in favour of recognising individual differences in learners and addressing these through enabling strategies of learning. (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Hyland, 2003). L2 writing has been studied from various perspectives (cognitive, affective and social) and divided into its component processes and purposes in order to reach an ideal pedagogy that would help learners create context appropriate texts. The prevailing belief is that writing can be taught and learnt, once the 'correct' method of doing so has been perfected. There is a need to offset this deficiency in writing pedagogy with of their own stronger intelligences and thirdly to develop their dormant
intelligences. Most teachers of L2 writing, however, do not restrict themselves to a single approach and apply an eclectic combination of what seems suitable to their own context (Hyland, 2003).

1.3 Types of writing approaches

Research on teaching academic writing in a second language gained momentum during the late 1960s with the emergence of nativist, cognitive and communicative theories of language acquisition and learning. In the second phase, teachers paid attention to the process of writing a text going through stages of drafting, editing, redrafting as was advocated in the process approach to teaching writing. More recently from mid 1980s the focus of teaching writing turned on the readers' direction or writing for different situations - the base of genre based approach to writing. In this approach, the focus was on models and key features (linguistic-social) characteristic of each genre of writing such as writing travel brochures, product descriptions, manuals for operating different electronic gadgets and such others. The genre based writing approach has been seen as framework for instruction with several examples based on a particular genre (Byram, 2004:234)

1.3.1 The product approach

One of the approaches to teaching writing is the traditional method where the focus is on the 'product' known as product approach, in other words, the production of neat, grammatically, correct pieces of writing. According to this approach, the teaching of writing focuses on "one-shot correct writing for the language practice"
(Cheung, 1999). The emphasis was on grammatical correctness and adherence to given models or guidelines (White, 1988) and there was little or no opportunity for the learners to add any thoughts or ideas of their own (Raimes, 1983).

Moreover, the approach focused only on the organization of ideas and learners were expected to make use of aspects of grammar or devices that had been taught to them by the teacher. Also, it emphasized the role of teacher authority: the teacher should be the one to correct errors. Any kind of self-expression was not encouraged in the approach. This approach, however, works well with huge classrooms but it does not encourage learners to think. Writing with the help of this approach would help teachers to grade/assess learners easily as the focus is on form. However, in mid-1960's a new approach developed in contrast to the traditional approach known as the Process approach, which is a linear process focusing on the processes of writing rather than the formalistic, end-product.

1.3.2 The process approach

Elbow's book "Writing without Teachers" first published in 1973 changed the way writing instruction was looked at traditionally. It starts with the opening lines "Most books on writing try to describe the characteristics of good writing so as to help you produce it, and the characteristics of bad writing to help you avoid it. But not this book." Elbow then continues: Instead I try for two things: (1) to help you actually generate words better, more freely, lucidly and powerfully: not make judgments about words but generate them better; (2) to help you improve your ability to make
your own judgment about which parts of your own writing to keep and which parts to throw away (vi-vii).

To accomplish these goals, Elbow suggested those writers "free write" (and not worry about correctness, logic and form); play with words and ideas; form writing groups and rely more on imagination than on criticism.

The process based models were a reaction against the "author-vacated" (Flower, 1985) and the dead prose of school writing. Process practitioners (Cheung, 1999; Flowers & Hayes, 1980; Murray, 1980) claimed that an emphasis on craft, voice and technique could lead to engaging, dynamic, strongly voiced learners' essays. Thus, the focus shifted from the final product itself to the different strategies a writer goes through to create this product.

In the process approach, the steps or stages are illustrated and practised: from the generation of ideas and compilation of information through a series of activities for planning, gathering, information, drafting, revising and editing. This sequence of activities typically occurs in four stages: "pre writing, composing/drafting, revising and editing" (Badger & White, 2000:154). Prewriting is the phase of idea gathering. Drafting is the process of writing a rough outline of what will be addressed. Once learners produce a rough draft, they read it again and share it with peers or a teacher to receive comments.

Then, they make modifications to their writings based on the feedback from their peers or teacher; revising or elaborating on the first draft. Editing, correcting mechanical errors like spelling or punctuation occur in the last stage. However, none
of the process writing procedures deal with linguistic knowledge, such as grammar and organization of the content. Even though the final stage of editing addresses some mechanical features of language, they were mainly concerned with the skills of processing ideas like planning and drafting. We now discuss another popular approach, the genre-based approach which grounds writing in particular social contexts and stresses the convention-based nature of discourse.

1.3.3 The genre-based approach

Since mid 1980's, considerable attention has been paid to the genre approach to teaching writing. In terms of writing in a second language, the genre approach has been defined as "a framework for language instruction" (Bryam, 2004:234). The term 'genre' has been defined as a class of communicative events and members of each subclass share some communicative functions (Swales, 1990), such as, film reviews analyze movies; editorial columns give ideas about content of a book, journal or magazine; and product manuals describe the mode of operation and a set of trouble shooting strategies for a specific gadget. So, for each written genre, there is a subset of communicative acts that writers should know and use to fulfill the expectations of an imagined community of readers of that genre. Therefore, each genre is made up of communicative features, organizational structure and linguistic features. For example, a letter of complaint would start with receiver's address, greeting, identification of complaint, justification of the complaint, demand an action, and have a sign off and sender's name and signature. In contrast, a personal letter may be narrative and may start questions in a friendly mood: the primary purpose here is to maintain good relationships. An argumentative text is
another genre that may emphasize the basic claim and its attendant facts, arguments and examples since it aims primarily at making an argument. In brief, it is the writer's purpose that determines the rules and conventions of writing. Therefore, the communicative purposes and the structural features should be identified when genres are used in writing classes.

A focus on structural organization and linguistic features means that the learners are taught how information in texts is sequenced, and what linguistic features constitute a text type (Biber, 1988). Hammond (1992 as cited in Partridge 1996) examined the characteristics of several genres and categorized them according to similarities in text type. For instance, recipes have the text type of procedure, advertisements that of description, news articles that of recounting, scientific papers prefer passive voice in presenting reports; and academic papers are likely to have embedded clauses (Paltridge, 1996:237-239). This implies that different text types involve distinctive knowledge and different sets of skills.

The notion of genres and its application in language teaching and learning has received attention in the last decade (Hyland, 2002). Many have brought to fore the potential of genre as a powerful pedagogic tool for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (Bunton, 2002; Cheung & Lai, 1997; Flowerdew, 2000; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Swales, 1990). These studies provide teachers with a way of looking at what learners have to do linguistically - the kinds of discourses they have to be able to understand and produce in speech and writing.
There are four stages in genre based instruction—modeling, guiding, practising and finally writing the genre independently (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). This is different from product approaches which involves imitating, copying, transforming models, and emphasizing the error free final product; and also the process approaches which focus on the process of producing a piece of writing from the prewriting stage to the revising stage to the final writing (Nunan, 1999). To Badger and White (2000), this genre-based approach is an integration of the product and process approaches:

...writing involves knowledge about language (as in the product and genre approaches); knowledge of the content in which writing happens and especially the purpose for the writing (as in genre approaches), and skills in using language (as in process approaches),

...writing development happens by drawing out the learner's potential (as in process approaches) and by providing input to which the learners respond (as in product and genre approaches) (p. 157-158).

1.3.4 Writing across the curriculum

In 1970's, there was a massive change in the curricular as well as demographic change in higher school education. At that time, teachers were having difficulties in helping learners who had problems in college writing tasks. Moreover, these problems with writing tasks were mostly due to the widespread use of objective types of question such as multiple-type /true-false in place of report writing or essays. Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) was started by Barbara Walvoord when she
found out that issues related to learner writing could not be solved by discussing but by implementing the techniques to help the learners to write better.

WAC refers specifically to the pedagogical and curricular attention to writing occurring in university subject matter classes other than those offered by composition or writing programmes, mostly housed in the English Department. The movement provided systematic encouragement, institutional support and educational knowledge to increase the amount and quality of writing occurring in history, science, mathematics and sociology (Tate et al., 2001).

WAC promotes following basic principles:

- writing is the responsibility of the entire academic community,
- writing must be integrated across departmental boundaries,
- writing instruction must be continuous during all four years of undergraduate education,
- writing promotes learning, and only by practicing the conventions of an academic discipline will learners begin to communicate effectively within that discipline.

With the help of this programme, learners will able to learn how to write and improve their thinking and develop ideas for the tasks they have been assigned. It will also help them to deal with the communicative tasks they will need to do in their jobs, no matter what kind of job it is. Moreover, it will familiarize them with the kind of
language they should use in their assignments within the discipline. This programme was expected to help teachers to gauge whether the learners have grasped the key concepts or whether more elaboration is needed. In addition to that, teachers would be able to help learners to incorporate writing as more communication and learning tool. Moreover, learners who are grounded in the fundamentals, teachers would have to engage them in more sophisticated analysis of ideas. This will help the teacher to check the suitability of level of materials and the way of teaching.

We have seen that there are various approaches that have been devised to help learners to improve their writing in academic contexts. Most of the teachers prefer process approach as it helps them understand the process learners undergo while understanding the rubrics of writing. However, for the present study we are trying to use how the explicit use of inputs in the form multiple intelligences of the learners so as to cater to their specific intelligences and to engage them in task which is hypothesized that would enhance motivation and ultimately leads to learner autonomy. The genre that is selected for the task is report writing for the secondary school students.

1.4 Remedial Approaches to L2 Writing

Various cognitivist models of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have tried to explain the mental processes involved in language learning from different angles but have generally considered cognitive processing as a unitary concept working in the same way in all individual learners. Even when individual differences have been considered, they have indicated differences in degree rather
than in quality of learner ability, aptitude and personality. Hence, they fail to explain why such differences occur or how to take them into account in order to make learning happen.

Expressivism emerged later as an offshoot of process methods to focus on the writer's mystic inner self. But this self continued to be seen as an undifferentiated being, to be discovered, moreover, without benefit of external writing frameworks or even teacher guidance (Elbow, 2006). Thereafter, the focus shifted from the L2 writer and individual differences to audience and genre concerns. Social constructionism especially, opposes the expressivist obsession with writer. It argues that meaning is not spontaneously created by the writer but emerges out of communicative contexts controlled by discourse communities. Genre and cultural approaches (J. Flowerdew, 1993; L. Flowerdew, 2000) on the whole, tend to be situated in the sociocultural context of discourse communities rather than approaching writing from the perspective of the learner. Far from considering the intellectual orientation of individual learners, genre studies usually advise writing models to guide all learners equally and iron out performance differences.

It becomes apparent why L2 writing pedagogy based on approaches that focus on writing processes, writer or contexts have alike failed to help those individual learners who face a deeper problem of cognitive mismatch with the learning inputs provided. Soon, such efforts to teach L2 writing were overtaken by hitherto marginalised cultural and socioeconomic issues in education that extended into composition studies as well (Fulkerson, 2005). The focus on the learning processes, attitudes and motivation of the racially or economically marginalised
learner in the L2 writing class is significant because it broke out of the mould of traditional perspectives in learner differences. Yet, however much sociopolitical issues like multiculturalism and bidialectism in composition studies may have led to controversial and continuing dialogue in academic circles, it remains questionable how far it is practical or even possible to admit them into the L2 writing classroom, which has always aimed to bridge the gap between present writing proficiency of L2 learners and the expectations of an academic community which monopolises the creation of written texts and the rubric thereof (Wible, 2006).

This movement is yet important in the history of L2 writing as it is an offshoot of a larger dawning realisation in the academic system of the prevailing injustice in the way marginalised learners are perceived within the education system. This movement in the U.S.A. ushered in an era that affected L2 writing pedagogy elsewhere in the world as well. Thus, instead of complacently trying to implement one perfect model of L2 writing, writing instructors have become increasingly aware of differences in learner situations and contexts and their differential needs (Atkinson, 2003).

1.5 Differential Approaches to L2 Writing

Various changes in theoretical principles of language learning, led to corresponding paradigm shifts in classroom perspectives from writer to reader to processes and purposes. But on the whole, the teaching of L2 writing has remained essentially confined to a fixed framework of learner differences in age, aptitude, personality,
ability, etc. which eventually almost amount to stereotypes. Recognition of such learner stereotypes has led, at most, to the inclusion of collaborative teaching and feedback techniques in order to provide learners with a wide variety of differences in teaching and feedback styles, made possible through task-based pedagogy, cooperative learning and peer feedback.

Group composition in the classroom, however, continues to be based on considerations of varying performance levels, gender or personality factors, none of which allows for the recognition of individual differences in cognitive functioning based on different neurobiological configurations within the brain. The CBSE syllabus advises teaching writing processes but the board examination focuses on specific product formats. As examination considerations predominate at all stages of schooling, writing tasks also focus more on writing as a product than as a process. No differentiation is made between product-oriented testing tasks and process-oriented learning tasks in the writing classroom.

Learning tasks provided through argumentation, debate and content based instruction were found to benefit student writing proficiency through generating interest and engaging learners (Brown, N.A., Brown, J., Eggett, D.L., 2009). The correct application of cooperative, task-based learning of language skills should also aim at integrating learner differences. But there are several factors working against this. Firstly, teachers lack practical training and experience in task-based and cooperative learning techniques. Secondly, writing tasks existing in course books are based on process or genre approaches and do not take individual
cognitive differences into account. Their reconciliation of learner differences is largely incidental. To some extent, they do attend to the variety and authenticity of material input but they fall short of providing different ways of learning based on individual cognitive functioning. Writing tasks automatically assume an identical mental framework for all learners as conducive to task fulfillment. The task design cannot explore cognitive differences as a possible means of learning to write.

In contrast, learning tasks based on MI not only have inputs catering to differentiated intelligence profiles in learners but can also be made culture-specific and learner-specific to match both LI and L2 learning. This is especially relevant to L2 writing tasks where interest motivation in learners plays an important role in initiating learning. Inputs which are learner-friendly, taking individual age and intelligence profiles into consideration motivate interest as well as task engagement in individual learners.

This study attempts to show how specialized writing tasks with MI inputs can motivate learners to write with greater confidence. No systematic study exists in the area of MI application to writing skills. However, Howard Gardner and his colleagues at Harvard University who undertook Project Zero to promote the applications of MI in various educational institutions in the U.S.A. and outside it, report an overwhelming success-story in applying MI inputs to language learning in general, from pre-primary right up to high school levels of education (Gardner, 1993c: Armstrong, 2003; Kornhaber, 2004).
1.6 Understanding Autonomy

Before we discuss the study any further it is important to understand the use of the term autonomy in the context of the present study. The concept of autonomy has been described variously but for the purpose of the present study we would broadly adopt Holec's (Holec, 1979:3) description of autonomy:

- ... In the context with which we are dealing, the learning of languages, autonomy is ... the ability to take charge of one's own learning.

- This ability is not inborn but must be acquired either by 'natural' means or (as most often happens) by formal learning in a systematic, deliberate way.

- It is indeed an ability, "a power or capacity to do something" and not a type of conduct, "behaviour". 'Autonomy' is thus a term describing a potential capacity to act in a given situation - in our case, learning - and not the actual behaviour of an individual in that situation.

To say of a learner that he is autonomous is therefore to say that he is capable of taking charge of his own learning and nothing more: all the practical decisions he is going to make regarding his learning can be related to this capacity he possesses...

- To take charge of one's learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this leaning, i.e.:
  - determining the objectives;
- defining the contents and progressions;

- selecting the methods and techniques to be used;

- monitoring the procedure of acquisition (properly speaking rhythm, time, place, etc);

- evaluating what has been acquired.

The autonomous learner is himself capable of making all these decisions concerning the learning with which he is or wishes to be involved. The present study attempts to put the learners in the teacher-researcher's class on the path of autonomy. It attempts to help learners to acquire the potential to take decisions concerning the above-mentioned aspects of learning with regard to their personal language learning habits.

1.6.1 The Need for Autonomy

The children, who enter the school now, will remain a part of the learning system for at least the next 12 years, and as adults may have to contribute to the world of work for another 35 years. As changes in science and technology are frequent and unpredictable, it is not possible to envisage what the nature of occupations will be in the next decade or fifty years from now. If the developments in various spheres around the world in the past two decades are any indication then it is not possible to anticipate the demands the future would make on human communication skills. We, therefore, cannot anticipate today skills and abilities that children would need for living effectively for their full span of adult life. It would therefore be necessary
that the young be prepared right from the beginning as lifelong learners. Therefore, autonomous learning is the key to successful survival.

Within formal educational contexts, it is fundamental to autonomous learning that the learner should develop a capacity to reflect critically on the learning process, evaluate this process and if necessary make adjustments to his learning strategies. Learning how to learn is thus a central component of an autonomous learning scheme.

Self-assessment by students is a good way to promote both ownership and responsibility, which are two important aspects of literacy development. One way of promoting these strategies is by focusing on how to teach students to become more independent learners. The process of learning to self-evaluate and to set goals provides students with opportunities to take responsibility for making decisions regarding their work, which in tum enables them to become partners with their teachers in making the decisions that concern their day-to-day learning activities.

In language learning, teachers can provide all the necessary circumstances and input, but learning can only happen if learners are willing to contribute. Their passive presence will not suffice. In order for learners to be actively involved in the learning process, they first need to realize and accept that success in learning depends as much on the student as on the teacher. They share responsibility for the outcome. In other words, success in learning depends very much on learners having a responsible attitude. Some degree of autonomy is essential for successful
language learning. No matter how much they learn through lessons, there is always much more they need to learn by practicing on their own. Also, the changing needs of learners will require them to go back to learning several times, when they will need to learn by practice on their own and they will need to be able to study on their own. The best way to prepare them is to help them become more autonomous.

The knowledge and personal qualities that learner involvement requires cannot be taken for granted, and need to be developed over time. A learner-centered approach needs therefore to contain an element of awareness, development, which is designed to help learners deepen their understanding of language learning and develop their ability to play an active and self-directive role in their language study. (Tudor, 1996.34)

Thus, in order to help learners develop their ability to undertake responsibilities for their own learning and work towards the goal of becoming autonomous learners, the concept of learning training was developed. Tudor defines this new concept as follows: ....Learner training could be defined as the process by which learners are helped to deepen their understanding of the nature of language learning and to acquire the knowledge and skills they need in order to pursue their learning goals in an informed and self-directive manner. (Tudor, 1996.p.37)

1.7 Autonomy and Language Learning

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines language as a *system of sounds and words used by humans to express their thoughts and feelings*. As language involves the usage of sounds and words, one has to possess more than one of the
following skills; listening, speaking, reading or writing, to claim knowledge of a language. Language is a dynamic means of communication, which involves not only a knowledge of the system of language, but also an awareness of the social, psychological and cultural factors that contribute in a rich way to the shaping of communication. Therefore, language is not a set of fixed structures. This is where difference arises between the teaching of language and the teaching of a content subject such as Political Science or Biology. Language is a tool that needs to be wielded effectively in different situations for different purposes with different kinds of audience. Therefore, language teaching involves empowering the learner with skills to use the language appropriately. This logically means that in language teaching we are not imparting a discrete, static and predetermined body of knowledge. Hence, it becomes imperative to involve the learner in the learning process or rather share the responsibility to acquire the skills. Mere rote learning of textual matter will not facilitate language generation.

*Through language we both receive a meaningful world from others and at the same time make meanings by reinterpreting that world to our own ends.*

(Barnes, 1991:33)

However, by far it is observed that in the present context of language teaching, language is seen essentially as content rather than medium. Successful language learning requires language to be simultaneously medium and content. In order to enable successful language learning it is essential that the classroom facilitates
negotiation among learners. This is possible only if there is decentralization of power. Allowing the learners to assume responsibility will interest them in the language-learning task. Apart from enabling learners to engage in making their own personal constructs there is also a need for the teacher to extend and reshape the construct in the target language. Burkert and Schwienhorst (2008) provide evidence that teachers who themselves are not autonomous language learners may have a negative influence on the development of autonomy in their students. The present study is partly an attempt to decentralize power so that the learners can use the target language as a medium independently to become more proficient and autonomous users of the language.

1.7.1 The role of a New Teacher

The realization that learners approach learning tasks in different ways has led to an interest in what learners themselves have to say about their learning. The area of learners voices’ (Benson & Nunan, 2005), is an example of this interest, and attempts to better understand learners’ motivations, reasons for success, fossilization or dropping out, or learners choices in how they approach the language learning process. Learning through their own initiatives, motivation and interests makes the process more successful for students. Thus teachers should try to establish an optimal environmental and psychological climate by allowing students to learn in accordance with their preferred learning styles. The teachers' role should be to help students discover their own learning preferences, and encourage their development by creating opportunities for different ways of learning. Instead of being the dominating authority, the teacher facilitates the
communicative process among the learners, giving guidance and advice when necessary. The teacher acts as an independent participant within the teaching-learning group. Any unnecessary intervention on the teachers' part may prevent learners from becoming involved in the activities, and hinder the development of their communicative skills. Of course, the teacher should not become a passive observer. It is his/her obligation to develop students' potential through external direction.

1.8 Learning and Multiple Intelligences (MI)

"An intelligence is the ability to solve the problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings"

--Howard Gardener, Frames of Mind (1983)

The theory of multiple intelligences has been implemented by educators in many parts of the world and hundreds of schools are currently using its philosophy to redesign education. Yet, the majority of Indian schools still remain confined to traditional lesson patterns, especially in L2 learning. Lectures, grammar worksheets and course books with standard language activities in the four skills predominate. Cuban (2004) claims that in the 20 years since the inception of MI, its influence has been highest on educators' beliefs and language and least on classroom practices! The challenge, according to Gardner (2003), is to reach out to many more teachers, school administrators and others who work with children, so that each child has the opportunity to learn in ways harmonious with his/her unique mind.
One of the most remarkable features of the theory of multiple intelligences is its provision of at least eight different potential pathways to learning (Armstrong, 2003). If a teacher has difficulty reaching a student in the more traditional linguistic or logical ways of instruction, MI theory suggests several other ways in which the material might be presented to facilitate effective learning at all levels. The language concept or skill being taught or learnt may thus be connected with task inputs in the form of:

- words (linguistic intelligence)
- numbers or logic (logical-mathematical intelligence)
- pictures (spatial intelligence)
- music (musical intelligence)
- self-reflection (intrapersonal intelligence)
- physical experience (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence)
- social experience (interpersonal intelligence)
- experience in the natural world (naturalist intelligence)

Providing such opportunities for students to learn in ways which make them most responsive, maximizes their potential for successful learning in the academic setting and in real life. Integrating MI into the classroom does not require any major overhaul of teaching methodology either. In general, supplementing and revising existing procedure with creative and innovative ideas suffice (Campbell, 1997). Glasgow and Bush (1996) emphasize classroom use and real world application of thematic and interdisciplinary units that provide cooperative
learning and include a variety of tasks accomplished through a choice of activities for MI.

Post-MI, brain-compatible, content-based teaching is now a reality for many teachers who work with early language learners. More than ever before, teachers are seeking ways compatible with learning styles and MI to teach students with a range of learner differences. When teachers use Multiple Intelligences Teaching Approach (MITA) to help their students understand how they learn best, then they can later use this understanding to make classroom learning more effective. Many variables impact language learning. These range from motivation and time-on-task to what is taught and how (R. C. Gardner, 1985). It is what students learn and how they are enabled to learn it that powerfully impacts the attitudes and motivations of learners. Simply put, focused teaching matters (Met: 2006).

1.8.1 The Implications of MI for Language Learning

The theory of multiple intelligences proposes a major transformation in the way schools are run. It suggests that teachers be trained to present their lessons in a wide variety of ways using music, cooperative-learning, art activities, role-play, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection, etc. to match with MI. This is being done with great success in (L1 and L2) language learning as well as across the curriculum in schools in the U.S.A. and parts of Europe. One of the chief advantages of MI is that it has reference to brain configurations and language function lateralization which do not reveal any significant differences between L2 and L1 language learning paths.
Writing is a major problematic area in L2 learning. Writing skills being central to the education and examination system in India, not attending to the cognitive and psychological needs of learners can lead to failure in acquiring L2 writing skills. This could have serious consequences, as is evident in the world of L2 (as of L1) writing, where many learners who cannot or will not write according to teacher and curriculum expectations are immediately labelled as 'unable' through inappropriately used medical terminology. Consequently, the number of Learning Disability (LD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) cases being cited and certified among urban Indian school students of various ages continues to grow at a disturbingly high pace.

This phenomenon has increased to the extent that CBSE has actually created a clause to accommodate such learners within the current examination system, allowing them extra writing time or a substitute writer and also the option of taking only one language paper instead of two. The reason why such labeling by an education board is disturbing is that there is no clinically verifiable proof of these psychiatric disorders in learners. As a result, many students who suffer from a variety of academic problems centering on reading and writing are falling into, the bracket of LD. ADD and ADHD. They are then being medicated with drugs that have been declared suspect and even banned in the West, after statistical evidence of their intake leading to depression and suicide among young learners. The researcher, as an educational consultant in the school where this
study was conducted, is personally aware of this phenomenon through direct interaction with parents and school authorities.

Also worrying is the growing number of news reports of teenage suicides in urban India as a result of failure in written exams, where the problem may not lie so much in learning the subject as in learning to write to examination specifications. Today, there are counselling sessions, student interviews, agony columns and teenage helplines on the media, all of which deal with examination stress. These indicate that the major cause of candidates' stress is not confronting a viva or lab practical in a subject, but their anxiety about how to write answers to exam questions. Thus, the problem of learning L2 writing is seen to have grown to a crisis point, with many learners failing examinations as they have never learnt how to write with confidence, in the first place.

Due to the importance of writing skills in the Indian educational system, with written examinations being viewed by all learners as a lifeline to the future, and also because writing appears to be one of the most difficult areas in language learning, this skill has been selected for the purpose of this study. The underlying principle of this study follows Allwright's (2005) view of Exploratory Practice (EP) as a reconciliation of action research and academic classroom research, stressing the plurality of understanding rather than precipitous or hasty problem solving. MI helps provide this multiplicity of perspectives to learning L2 writing. Ortega (2005) also speaks in favour of research which enables the articulation of professional and social responsibilities in the field of instructed SLA. From this
perspective, this study is pertinent to the present context of growing academic
discontent in the area of L2 writing and the concomitant blame game among
parents, teachers and educational authorities. The deeper responsibility and
accountability of individual researchers to the educational system within which
they operate, becomes evident in the course of this study.

(Gardner, Chen & Moran, 2009) identifies classroom teachers and administrators as
the most ardent audiences that have reacted to MI Theory. Many of them find that
its discussion of human intellect comports with their own experiences and their
own aspirations. This is especially true of educators who work with special
students: either the gifted, or students with learning difficulties, or even students
with a special flair for the arts, and with those who work with multicultural
populations that characteristically represent a wide range of intellectual strengths
and distinctive MI profiles. Learner achievement since the 1970s rests on such
allowances for learner differences made by visual, auditory, kinesthetic and other
learning styles (Kolb, 1974), MI and brain-based education (Goleman, 1997;

1.9 Background to the study

On studying the teaching-learning pattern at a Navodaya Vidyalaya, Peddapuram,
East Godavari, where the researcher himself was a student, a few facts emerged.
The eighty five percent of the learners who join Navodaya vidyalaya through a
district level entrance at VI class are largely from Telugu medium rural background.
They literally start learning English as one of the subjects from VI class. They
continue their study till VIII class in Telugu medium background in the state syllabus pattern. But from IX class they are supposed to study in the medium of English in the CBSE syllabus pattern. Then their struggle to understand concepts in English takes the front seat as they were supposed to do their exams in the same. So this predicament of the students forces them to go for rote learning and by-hearing techniques in doing their exams. The notes that they cram up for the exams are given by the teacher either through dictation or by writing on the blackboard. This mechanical way of cramming does not result in any meaningful outcome but deprives them from learning the real life skills especially writing which is very important skill in academic settings through which the learning of an individual is assessed. Consequently, learners' communicative competence is also hampered in such kind of situations. Added to the tragedy is the lack of ability on the teachers' part to handle the writing skill in an effective manner. The other factors responsible are lack of time and rigid syllabuses which do not give any scope to writing in specific. This is observed from learners who fail to perform well in the class X and XII Board examinations in English and also lack in confidence in real life communication using the target language. The blame for poor performance is invariably placed on the teacher's incompetence or the learners' deficient I.Q.

It is also observed that most schools at the secondary level resort to the use of the lecture method. Thus, the teaching practice prevalent in most schools is found to be teacher-fronted. The large population in the classrooms with over 40 learners parental/school management expectations are cited as the cause by the teachers for using didactic methods. 'Responsibility' of the discipline of the learners; 'covering'
of syllabus; ease in checking dictated/blackboard copied answers; being overworked etc. were other reasons quoted. The teachers often lack the knowledge of any alternative procedure, which could be resorted to. Societal expectations, honed traditionally, are usually pegged at a teacher-fronted class.

This trend in teaching learning does not generally pose a problem till class VIII as the examinations are content/memory based. However, when the learners enter class IX, as in the case of the learners studying in, the textbook and the pattern of examination changes to prepare the learners for the class X board exams, which largely tests the communicative competence of the learners. With 40 marks devoted to testing the comprehension of 'seen' and unseen prose and poetry and another 40 marks devoted to testing the writing skills of the learners, the learners and the teachers are in a quandary. The only conceived way out of the situation is to prepare the learners for obvious questions by asking them to memorize letters, essays etc. This result in, a few lucky students, with good memory, scoring averagely and others perform unsatisfactorily. Year after year, the blame for poor performance, as mentioned earlier, is posited on the learners or on the already frustrated teachers.

The present trend is indeed disconcerting. It is distressing to watch the number of young adults being returned to the society, after spending a number of years in Schools, with little confidence to face the demands of real life. The present study with the class XI learners who have to take a board exam, the forth coming year is a result of concern for these learners.
1.10 Purpose

As stated in the earlier section a teacher-fronted language class breeds over-reliance on the teacher. It also absolves the learner from taking any responsibility for language learning. This influences the attitude, motivation, and language performance of the learners. Learners are soon conditioned to being passive. Their role is relegated to being a receiver. This affects the attitude of learners and in long run it influences their confidence and performance.

The present study is an attempt to explore the possibility of improving language performance especially the writing among adolescent learners in a conventional classroom by putting them on the path of autonomy through (MI) teaching approach. Often a conventional classroom is characterised by certain restrictions in the form of overpopulation, exam-driven syllabus, rigid timetables, compulsion to maintain discipline, teacher-fronted teaching and so on. These aspects of a conventional classroom could be perceived as 'hurdles' by a second language teacher in using a learner-centered approach. In this study, we make an attempt to find a way despite these 'hurdles' in making writing a more enjoyable activity through providing an explicit training with multiple intelligences teaching approach.

1.11 Rationale of the Study

*Give a man fish, he eats it one day; teach him how to fish and he will never go hungry.*

- (An old Chinese proverb)
If we teach learners how to learn, then they would not be at loss in real life situations, as they would be armed with strategies to deal with whatever comes their way (this could relate to the examinations they need to face as well). Language teaching can rarely afford to be a product-oriented approach. Whether a learner is able to define nouns and adjectives or whether s/he is able to recall all the facts in the lesson does not count in the long run, it is the ability of the learner to use language effectively that matters ultimately.

The present study is guided by the rationale that for effective learning to take place, the onus of learning has to be borne by the learner. The role of the teacher can only be that of one who can facilitate learning. That is to say, that the teacher can only create situations in the classroom generating interaction which would kindle communicative needs and provide the learner with input. The situation could compel the learner to communicate by using the target language. However, beyond that the decision to learn has to be made by the learner. As is often said the teacher can probably lead the proverbial horse to the water but the decision to drink has to be guided by the thirst. The present study is guided by the rationale that if the learner is made conscious of his/her language needs and is trained to seek to improve his/her language skills through all the available sources then this could motivate the learner to learn by oneself. This reduced dependence on the teacher in a large classroom could improve the linguistic performance.

Research (Little, 1991) has proved that children progress from one stage of linguistic development to the next (even while acquiring first language) when they are ready, and not when they are told to do so by their parents or some other external agency.
That is to say that language acquisition (or learning) proceeds on the initiative of the child as it gradually learns to meet the communicative needs generated by its interaction with the environment. A teacher-fronted class does not enable the learner to make a choice, as seldom is the learner critically conscious of his/her level and is able to devise suitable strategies to affect it. Therefore, the present study favours the creation of situations in a non-threatening classroom using tasks. Here the learners would be called upon to use the target language sensitive to the varying relations they will have with the different persons they must communicate with; and becoming capable equally of taking initiatives and responding to the initiatives of others.

The study demonstrates that autonomy encourages learners to construct their own knowledge and gain new perspectives through hands-on experiences rather than follow prescribed information. This perspective recognizes the teacher as primarily a facilitator of learning. Rather than dictating what should be done, the facilitative teacher tends to act.

1.12 Research questions

a) Does Multiple Intelligences teaching approach generate motivation among the ESL learners?

b) How far Multiple Intelligences teaching approach helps to develop writing skills?

c) Do the motivation and development of writing skills lead to learner autonomy?
1.13 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the background, established the importance of writing in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom along with the problems involved in it; general theoretical framework comprising autonomy and language learning and the implications of MI in language learning; rationale, purpose of the study, and focused on the research questions on which the present project is undertaken. The following chapter presents the theoretical orientations from the published work like journals, books, published papers and review of unpublished theses.