CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL BACKGROUND

This chapter deals with a brief history of writing, the four language skills, and their relationship with each other. It differentiates between writing and speaking, the two main productive skills. The focus is on components of writing skill in order to point out the difficulties involved in its acquisition. It also contains various aspects of writing and its mechanics on the basis of which the research is carried out. The process and product approaches to writing are described as well as several important methods of teaching writing in First Language (L1) and Second Language (L2). The section deals briefly with the importance of English in the modern world and its position in the school curriculum.

The aims and objectives of writing skill in Std VI are mentioned, as per the syllabus designed by Government of Maharashtra. The section goes on to mention the aims and objectives of research, need and importance of the study, operational definitions used in the study, statement of the problem, a working hypothesis and null hypothesis, the variables, scope, limitations and significance of the study. Language is an integral part of human life. It is the chief means of communication. It is through language that a child contemplates the past, grasps the present and approaches the future. Language plays an important role in the mental, social and emotional development of an individual.

Language is the most important aspect in the life of all beings. We use language to express inner thoughts and emotions, make sense of complex and abstract thought, to learn to communicate with others, to fulfill our wants and needs, as well as to establish rules and maintain our culture. Language can be defined as verbal, physical, biologically innate, and a basic form of communication. Behaviorists often define language as a learned behavior involving a stimulus and a response (Ormrod, 1995). Written languages use symbols (that is, characters) to build words. The entire set of words is the language is called vocabulary. The ways in which the words can be meaningfully combined is defined as syntax and grammar. The actual meaning
of words and combinations of words is called semantics. Language consists of four skills namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills develop in human beings in the same order. Writing skill is the most advanced skill. Hence, before dealing with writing, it is necessary to understand the language skills and the relationship between them.

1.1 LANGUAGE SKILLS

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four basic language skills. Listening and reading are receptive skills, while speaking and writing are productive skills. In comparison, the productive skills are more difficult to master than the receptive skills. The four skills are developed in the same order that is, listening, followed by speaking, then reading and at the end comes writing. Thus, writing takes for granted the learning of the remaining three skills. One cannot speak without being a good listener. Listening is the base for speaking. Similarly, one cannot write without learning to read. Hence, reading serves as the base for writing. Reading cannot be developed unless one knows how to speak because it involves pronunciation, stress and intonation patterns. Reading also requires the knowledge of identifying the various alphabets, identifying words as groups of letters and sentences as groups of words. For writing, the same system has to be followed. Writing begins with learning to write the script of the language, writing capital and small case letters and also writing separate words, beginning sentences with capital letters, ending them with appropriate punctuation marks. It is the last in the hierarchical order and the most advanced language skill. This does not however mean that listening and reading can be ignored. In fact, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) involves the learning of all four skills. They are integrated. Language is classified into four skills for the sake of convenience. The four basic skills are related to each other by two parameters

- the mode of communication: oral or written
- the direction of communication: receiving or producing the message

The following figure helps to understand the relationship between the receptive and productive skills.
Listening is the first step in language acquisition. When a person is exposed to language input, through listening; the input is processed and internalized. Only then, the individual is able to speak the language. The greater and more varied the input, better will be the output. In short, a wide ‘listening base’ is essential for the development of speaking skill. A similar relationship exists between reading and writing. Wider the reading base better will be the output in the form of writing. It is impossible to develop writing without a strong reading base. Reading in turn cannot be developed without knowing how to speak. Speaking is based on listening. This is how each language skill depends on others, and together, they constitute language ability. This implies that for the development of writing skill, listening, speaking and reading cannot be ignored.

The competency in productive skill depends upon the corresponding receptive skill. So it must be remembered that in addition to other efforts, reading is important for development of writing skill. A good reader is a good writer. Students must be encouraged to read a variety of material suitable to their age group.

The relationship between the receptive and productive skills can be demonstrated as follows:

FIGURE – 1.2 Relation between Language Skills
1.2 WRITING SKILL

Writing is a method of representing language in visual or tactile form. Writing systems use sets of symbols to represent the sounds of speech. “Writing is a system of more or less permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered more or less exactly without the intervention of the utterer” (Bright and Daniel, 1989). “Writing is a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way, with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by everyone who knows the language in question and the rules by virtue of which its units are encoded in the writing systems” (The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Writings Systems 1999).

According to the Online Dictionary, writing is defined as “The act of one who writes.” It means handwriting or penmanship. It implies something written, especially:

a. Meaningful letters or characters that constitute readable matter.

b. A written work, especially a literary composition.

In ‘A History of Writing’, Steven Roger Fischer, (2000) argues that no definition of writing can cover all the writing systems that exist and have ever existed. Instead he states that a 'complete writing' system should fulfill all the following criteria:

- It must have as its purpose communication.
- It must consist of artificial graphic marks on a durable or electronic surface.
- It must use marks that relate conventionally to articulate speech (the systematic arrangement of significant vocal sounds) or electronic programming in such a way that communication is achieved.

Writing systems are both functional, providing a visual way to represent language, and also symbolic, in that they represent cultures and people. In ‘The Writing Systems of the World’, Florian Coulmas, (2000) describes them as follows:

“As the most visible items of a language, scripts and orthographies are 'emotionally loaded', indicating as they do group loyalties and identities. Rather than being mere
instruments of a practical nature, they are symbolic systems of great social significance which may, moreover, have profound effect on the social structure of a speech community.”

Writing systems can be divided into two main types: those that represent consonants and vowels (alphabets), and those which represent syllables (syllabaries), though some do both. English follows an alphabetical writing system. Syllabic alphabets are writing systems in which the main element is the syllable. Syllables are built up of consonants, each of which has an inherent vowel, E.g. *ka, kha, ga, gha*. Diacritic symbols are used to change or mute the inherent vowel, and separate vowel letters may be used when vowels occur at the beginning of a syllable or on their own. Alphabets, or phonemic alphabets, are sets of letters that represent consonants and vowels. In some languages, such as Czech, each letter or combination of letters represents one sound, while in others, such as English, letters might represent a variety of sounds, or the same sounds can be written in different ways. Writing is a creative process that allows someone to put down their thoughts on paper.

Great writing requires an extensive skill set. One has to understand language, syntax, and context. A firm grasp on grammar is essential. Each piece of writing must be organized and its sentences well-structured so it can be read smoothly. A vast vocabulary, a talent for puns, and a knack for storytelling are all skills that will benefit any writer.

1.2.1 THE HISTORY OF WRITING

Some of the oldest writing ever found has been cave paintings. Marks were made by cave men using sharp sticks, stones or paint. There was no alphabet or writing system that the cave men had, so they used pictures to write down things that were happening in their lives. Early men drew pictures on cave walls or rocks to leave messages and to honor the spirits.

One of the earliest kinds of writing or a writing system where special symbols were used to represent things is called cuneiform. Cuneiform consisted of symbols carved by reeds on wet clay tablets. It was used about 3500 BC to 2000 BC by the Sumerian people who lived in the Middle East. Cuneiform was mostly used to keep
lists for accounting and to record historical events. Another type of early writing is Egyptian hieroglyphics. The Egyptians carved signs representing objects and sounds. They even had a sort of alphabet with 24 symbols that stood for certain letters. The Egyptians were the first to create a type of paper, called papyrus. They used reeds found along the banks of the Nile river and layered it to make a paper kind of surface. The Chinese and Japanese use ideas instead of words to represent writing. Symbols that were used in certain patterns represented ideas.

The Phoenicians were the first to create alphabets, symbols that represent sounds, not pictures or ideas. The Greeks modified the Phoenician alphabet about 500 BC and it is a lot like the alphabet we use today. The word alphabet comes from the first two Greek letters - alpha and beta. The Romans changed the alphabet when they conquered Greece. The English alphabet still uses the same letters, but has added the letters J, U and W. The Romans were the first to link the letters together to make a flowing kind of writing, or cursive. People wrote on things found in nature, like rocks, stones and bones were the first things that people wrote on. Early people also carved symbols on wet clay. When the clay dried, the symbol would still be there, and they could carry the clay around. Later, Europeans discovered that the skin of animals could be used to write on, but it took a long time to make the material, called vellum or parchment, and it was very expensive.

1.2.2 ASPECTS OF WRITING

Writing skill has two different aspects. The first aspect is graphics. This refers to the ability to scribe letters with a pen/pencil on paper. The skill begins from holding the pen/pencil in the hand properly and writing the symbols that represent the letters of the alphabet clearly, correctly and neatly. One must be able to write capital letters, small letters, know which letters or parts of them are written above or below the line, what should be the size and proportion of the letters. This also includes the mechanics of writing like leaving sufficient space between letters of words and two words, leaving margins, writing from left to right and top to bottom of a page, paragraph indentations and correct use of punctuation marks.

The second aspect of writing skill is managing the content. Content may be defined as a descriptive or narrative passage, a dialogue, a formal report, an informal
message, a letter, an official notice or circular, a journalistic article, a reflective essay or a creative literary piece like a short story or poem. Each type of poem requires the selection of suitable words and style of writing. The spellings must be correct, sentences must be grammatically correct and arranged in a logical order, organizing thoughts or information systematically for effective expression.

The two aspects of writing can be compared to the act of driving a vehicle. While learning to drive, a learner must first acquaint himself with the different parts of the vehicle like brake, accelerator, and gears. Then he must understand the function of each part and get enough practice so that he gets accustomed to the mechanism. It is only after this stage that he can learn to take turns, stop at signals and navigate his way in a market place without running over someone. Until and unless the act of driving becomes automatic, he cannot become a skillful driver. Similarly, until the graphics and mechanics of writing become automatic, one cannot become a creative writer. It is not possible to express something in poetic language if one is engaged in spelling out words.

If writing is untidy and illegible, readers find it difficult to follow. If there are many spelling and grammatical errors and thoughts are unconnected, comprehension is impossible. Hence, development of writing skill is a serious affair which needs monitoring at every stage. Careful attention should be paid, so that incorrect habits will not be formed. Students find it tedious and uninteresting. It requires greater effort on their part compared to the other skills. For all these reasons, the researcher decided to develop an Activity Based Programme (ABP) directed towards neat, clear, proportionate, unambiguous writing as well as towards effective and creative writing.

Writing is a productive skill in the written mode. It is more complicated than it seems. It also seems to be the hardest skill for native speakers of a language since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way.

Here are some of the micro-skills involved in writing. (Bapat T.P., 2006) The writer needs to:
• Use the orthography correctly, including the script, and spelling and punctuation conventions.

• Use the correct forms of words. This may mean using forms that express the right tense, or case or gender.

• Put words together in correct word order.

• Use vocabulary correctly.

• Use the appropriate literary style.

• Make the main sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, and object, clear to the reader.

• Make the main ideas distinct from supporting ideas or information.

• Make the text coherent, so that other people can follow the development of the ideas.

• Judge how much background knowledge the audience has on the subject and make clear what it is assumed they don't know.

**Nature of Writing**

Writing is a visual form of communication, either printed in hard-copy or in electronic form. It follows conventions that are mutually understandable by the writer and the reader, even if these conventions change over time or are used with specific meanings in smaller speech communities (E.g., special texting rules used by a group of teenagers). Writing is considered a productive skill because the writer creates new language and does not only interpret existing information.

Here are some common terms used in the discussion of writing. While teaching writing skills at school level, the students are not exactly made aware of the pragmatic or stylistic backgrounds, however, the activities included in the ABP take into consideration the correct use of vocabulary and language expressions.
### TABLE 1.0 Terms used in the Discussion of Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>different media in which we write (letters, computers, cell phone texting) require different styles of writing and different communicative conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>ideas (message or content) that the author intends to convey to the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>type of expressive style a piece of writing has (E.g., poetry, short story, lecture notes.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexicon</td>
<td>vocabulary that is needed to convey the author's intended meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>formal aspect of language (E.g., subject-verb-agreement, tense, aspect markers, references)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatics</td>
<td>implicit messages a text conveys to the reader; shared expectations for communication by a social group (E.g., ways to greet in a letter, appropriate ways of phrasing ideas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthography</td>
<td>the way to write letters or symbols of written language; handwriting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>punctuation, spelling (accuracy), capitalization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Difficulties involved in Writing

Today’s students cannot manage writing skill in such things as persuasive writing through the school system alone. This can be due to a number of different factors. Some teachers simply are not trained to teach writing at the level where students need to be at different phases in their education. In addition, it can often be difficult to grade skills in writing simply because sometimes it is a matter of opinion or perspective depending on the type of writing involved.

Research shows that many students struggle with writing skills that show clear and concise ideas and thoughts that are written in a strong and coherent manner. Business writing such as cover letters, sales reports and business letters are an example where many students lack these skills.
1.2.3 IMPORTANCE OF WRITING

One of the most important basic skills a child will need throughout his education is writing. This is a skill they will utilize and improve during school and well beyond their graduation and into adult life.

Writing is important in a child’s life for several reasons. Daily responsibilities as an adult can consist of writing notes, directions and lists for ourselves and for others. Regardless of field or career choice, most occupations will require writing in any form including letters, memos and reports. Now more than ever, social relationships also utilize the skill of writing to a great extent. This can include everything from cordial greeting cards, thank you notes and greetings, short message service to extensive e-mail contact and letters to friends and family. The benefits from writing for a student go beyond the daily routine and necessities.

It is important that they feel comfortable and confident in their ability to write, as it will assist them in expressing themselves in terms of their feelings that sometimes cannot be used verbally as well. This can also be used to help to organize thoughts and ideas. Writing different ideas and expressions on paper can help a student visualize and come to better conclusions. Research indicates that writing enhances learning in several ways: Writing requires knowledge and focuses thought. In order to write, students must have something to say. Therefore, students must acquire and present content (facts, generalizations, and concepts) when they write. However, students do not merely express knowledge by writing, they also discover knowledge. Writing is inherently an integrative process, combining the total intellectual capacities of the writer. Writing enhances critical thinking. Writing shifts the responsibility for learning away from the teacher and toward the student. Ability to write empowers students with a sense of efficacy and achievement. A written essay belongs only to the writer, not another student or the teacher. More importantly, writing encourages personal learning. Properly designed assignments require students to not only collect knowledge, but to determine which knowledge to retain, which to discard, and how to present it. This can serve as an excellent diagnostic tool for the teacher. Writing leads to more questions and to the discovery of connections between events, people, and ideas.
Business writing such as cover letters, sales reports and business letters are an example where many students lack these skills. It is impossible to think of any field of knowledge or walk of life irrespective of English. English plays an important role in trade and commerce. National and international trade is carried on through English. Maintaining accounts, business correspondence, efficiency and success in industry, all depend on adequate knowledge of English. In Nehru’s words, English is ‘our major window to the outside world’. English is understood all over the world. It is the first language in UK, USA, Canada and Australia and a second or a third language in most other countries like Africa, India, France and Pakistan. Hence, English helps to foster political, cultural, intellectual and economic relations with the world. Development of English has resulted in the process of modernization of India. The study of English culture has helped to dispel ignorance and superstitions from the minds of the people. It has promoted scientific culture. English helps us to access the latest knowledge in science and technology. It is also referred to as a link language. It not only helps to link all the states in India but also keeps us linked to the rest of the world. The language link is a better link than any other kind of link. It leads to better understanding between different nations of the world.

A person knowing English has better career opportunities in almost every country. Diverse cultures are brought together. By giving up English we stand the risk of cutting ourselves off from the living stream of ever growing knowledge. Without knowledge of English India will be isolated from the world and enveloped in a dark curtain of ignorance. English is considered as a library language because advanced knowledge in the fields of Science, Medicine, Engineering, and Agriculture is stored in English. Latest material in other languages is speedily translated into English so that it can reach out to other parts of the world. Scholarly transaction of knowledge takes place only through English. Conferences and seminars on various topics at the international level are conducted in English. Even English literature is not confined to native writers from Britain. Many people find it convenient to express themselves in English rather than in their native languages. In the ‘Journal of English Language Teaching’, “The number of Indian writers who use English for creative writing is increasing gradually. It looks as if it has become one of the languages of India and its long and wise use by the Indian intelligentsia has given it a distinct identity” (
Reddy T. Prabhakar, 1997). This is indeed true. Today, ‘Indian English’ is a recognized variety of English, just as we find American English, in addition to the original British English.

1.2.4 FORMS OF WRITING

There are several forms of writing like descriptive writing, creative writing, technical writing, expository writing, narrative writing, persuasive writing, argumentative writing, autobiographical writing, and biographical writing and so on. Initially, students begin with descriptive writing and gradually proceed to more complex forms like narrative, expository or autobiographical.

**Descriptive Writing** - It is the clear description of people, places, objects, or events using appropriate details. An effective description will contain sufficient and varied elaboration of details to communicate a sense of the subject being described. Details used are usually sensory and selected to describe what the writer sees, hears, smells, touches, and tastes. Descriptive writing uses a lot of flowery adjectives and adverbs to describe what is going on or how something appears. This form of writing includes using descriptive phrases and figurative language. This includes, but is not limited to metaphors, similes, onomatopoeia, alliteration, personification and hyperbole. The writing is used often to create a feeling or visual experience. Words that are strong to the senses are often used, as well. The reader should be able to imagine how to see, hear, feel, touch, and smell what the author is describing. Descriptive writing is found in literature and poetry, but it is also found in advertisements and menus.

Students at middle school level are often given descriptive writing tasks. It is necessary for students to understand and identify descriptive topics and decide what content to include in their body of writing, which details should be included and which omitted.

**Narrative Writing** - It is writing that tells a story whether true or fictional. It is mostly imaginative in nature. The intention is to present ideas, issues and arguments in an imaginative and credible way through description, characters, settings, figurative language and five senses. While a work of imaginative fiction; it should be credible and plausible. It conveys information through description and figurative
language. This is the form of writing that tells a story. It can be non-fiction (autobiographies, biographies) or non-fiction (fairy tales, fictitious novels or short-stories.) This form of writing has a beginning (character development and introduction to the plot line), middle (additional plot, climax of the story) and end (conclusion or resolution of the story). Narrative writing has at least one character (person, animal or personified object) and a problem (conflict) that needs to be solved.

There are different types of narrative writing.

- A Biographical narrative shares an important experience from someone else’s life.
- A Fictional narrative tells a made-up, imaginary story. The intention is to entertain amuse or even shock at times. It can make the reader think about ideas and issues in new and different ways. It can provoke or move readers emotionally. It can stimulate the reader’s thoughts and feelings.
- A Personal narrative shares important experiences from the writer’s life. This is called autobiographical writing.
- The most common forms of imaginative texts include: short stories, radio, film and play scripts, exchange of letters, diary and journal entries, poetry, fables monologues and dialogue.

Narration is also a kind of description, but it is description of an incident or event. Children certainly enjoy stories, sometimes also adults. Writing stories or narrative passages requires an ability to arrange incidents in a logical and chronological order. Such exercises develop in students an ability to think systematically and arrange facts in order and these abilities are useful to them for grasping knowledge at higher level and expressing themselves convincingly. Narrative writing is also suitable for students at middle school level.

**Expository Writing** - It is writing that explains or gives information. It explains all sides of an argument or issue. It provides a balanced discussion of different views and presents the pros and cons of an issue so that the readers can make up their minds. Compare-Contrast essays show similarities or differences between two subjects. This form of writing exists to give facts. It does not require the plot line of
narrative writing, nor the character development. This form of writing is most frequently found in news stories, articles, and reports. The information in expository writing develops the main idea and provides additional details to support this evidence, including facts or quotations. As in all writing, it should have an introduction, body and conclusion that support the main idea.

- Informative essays provide information in a logical order.
- The most common forms of expository texts include: analytical essays, reflective essays, news reports, research texts, interviews, biographies and autobiographies, personal letters, speeches and submissions.
- This kind of writing is meant for students studying in higher classes, yet simple tasks like organizing information or letter writing can be handled at middle school level as preparing exercises for more complex and elaborate forms.

**Persuasive Writing** - It presents the writer’s opinion and tries to convince the reader to agree. The purpose is to argue and convince that author's viewpoint is correct and to influence others to agree with viewpoint. It sets out to argue and prove a case. It aims to convince targeted audience of the validity of a viewpoint on an issue by presenting logical argument. It presents ideas that follow in logical progression. It also anticipates and answers possible objections or opposing arguments. It presents well researched evidence to support the case. In persuasive writing, the author is trying to get the reader to believe in what he or she is writing. Political speeches and speeches given by lawyers in the courtroom are persuasive writing, as are reviews of movies or books and opinion articles in the newspaper. Persuasive writing includes a main idea, introduction, body and conclusion. The main idea encompasses what the author wants the reader to believe, and the remaining information supports that central idea. Good persuasive writing includes facts and strong arguments to make the author's opinion sound logical.

- Opinion essay gives the writer’s opinion, a view or belief that cannot be proved as a fact.
- Problem Solution essay presents a problem and tries to convince the reader that the writer’s solution will work.
- A pro-con essay evaluates what is good and bad about an idea or situation.
• The most common forms of persuasive texts include: essays, editorials, letters to the editor, opinion articles, feature articles, interviews, speeches, submissions.

• Essay writing and semi-formal letters do form part of syllabus for middle school level, although students are not mature enough for persuasive writing.

**Importance of Teaching Genres**

Writing adheres to different forms. While the qualities of good writing cut across all genres and forms of writing, each genre or form has its own "rules." The form a letter takes is different from the form a short story takes, for example, in a persuasive essay; the writer must take a clear stand on an issue and anticipate all objections/contrary arguments to his point-of-view. A good mystery writer weaves a trail of clues to the solving of his mystery.

In ‘A Day in the life of an animal’, students write from the point-of-view of an animal. Since the genre is realistic fiction, students must incorporate carefully-researched details about the animal’s life and behavior in their writing. A variation on the ‘A Day in the life of paper’ that works well for social studies writing is realistic or historical fiction writing in the form of diary entries. Here, students write from the point-of-view of a fictional character that is close to their own age. Students must incorporate details about the setting, historical period, dress, food, and customs that they have carefully researched. Writing about a person close to their own age allows students to use their knowledge of themselves, their curiosities, fears, feelings, to inform their writing.

Knowledge of different genres helps students to identify and select a suitable genre for their topic. It also helps them to decide the amount of content to be included. It prevents them from losing track of the body of writing and proceeds in the right direction.

**Tone and Diction**

A few other factors that need to be considered while writing are tone, voice and diction. They are extremely important because they help to achieve the purpose of writing and are also in accordance with the form selected.

Tone
Besides individual word choice, the overall tone, or attitude, of a piece of writing should be appropriate to the audience and purpose. The tone may be objective or subjective, logical or emotional, intimate or distant, serious or humorous. It can consist mostly of long, intricate sentences, of short, simple ones, or of something in between. Good writers frequently vary the length of their sentences.

One way to achieve proper tone is to imagine a situation in which to say the words being written. A journal might be like a conversation with a close friend where there is the freedom to use slang or other casual forms of speech. A column for a newspaper may be more like a high-school graduation speech: it can be more formal, but it can still be funny or familiar. An academic paper is like a formal speech at a conference: being interesting is desirable, but there is no room for personal digressions or familiar usage of slang words. In all of these cases, there is some freedom of self-expression while adapting to the audience. In the same way, writing should change to suit the occasion. Although writing exercises at school level are elementary and small children cannot select a proper tone, model pieces of writing must be presented to them at an early stage so that they develop a concept of tone. It will not do if they use a casual tone in a serious and formal piece of writing. The ABP prepared by the researcher contains formal and semi-formal letter-writing activities.

Diction

Diction is word choice. When writing, it is necessary to use vocabulary suited for the type of assignment. Words that have almost the same denotation (dictionary meaning) can have very different connotations (implied meanings). Diction can be formal, casual or slang. Besides the level of formality, it is also necessary to consider positive or negative connotations of the words chosen. Some types of diction are almost never advisable in writing. It is better to avoid clichés, vagueness (language that has more than one equally probable meaning), wordiness, and unnecessarily complex language. From time to time; the teacher must make students aware of correct choice of words. While teaching vocabulary, teacher can present the same word in different contexts and types of situations so that students do not use inappropriate words.
It is also necessary to make them aware of usage of words which differs with context. Just as they are expected to greet their teachers formally while speaking, they must maintain the formality of words in writing tasks. The ABP prepared by the researcher consists of a number of tasks related to development of vocabulary.

1.2.5 KINDS OF WRITING SKILLS

Comprehensibility skills for writing include:

- understanding that writing is communicating messages or information.

Fluency skills for writing include:

- recognizing the linear sequence of sounds
- mastering writing motions and letter shapes
- recognizing the chunking of words
- recognizing the need for space between words
- writing quickly

Creativity skills include the ability to write freely anything the learner wants to express.

**Paragraph Writing**

Oral language consists of sound symbols. However, one does not utter isolated sounds while communicating with others. A series of sounds are uttered in continuity. Sounds are combined to form words and further utterances. These speech utterances serve as blocks in a speech situation. Similarly, one does not write a message in isolated words. A series of words arranged in a particular manner form sentences. Sentences are further grouped together to make up a paragraph. Thus, a paragraph is a building block for any content writing. Students in Std. VI are introduced to paragraphs so that they can write stories or descriptive passages.

A body of writing is made up of paragraphs. A paragraph is a group of sentences that tell about one idea. It always begins with an indent. A paragraph should not be too long or too short. However, the length of a paragraph is decided by the content. Sometimes, a single sentence comprises a paragraph. If a paragraph happens to be too long, it should be further divided into two parts. But there is no specific rule regarding the length of a paragraph. Having too few sentences can cause a problem. If there are not enough sentences, it is advisable to be a little descriptive, to add
some adjectives and lengthen the paragraph. This is the guide to having a successful paragraph!

A good paragraph includes:

A Topic Sentence - this is the main idea or subject of the writing. It is one sentence which states your idea, point, or opinion. This sentence should use a strong verb and make a bold statement.

Supporting Sentences - these are the sentences that describe and give more detail about the main idea. Supporting sentences provide explanations and support for the topic sentence (main idea) of the paragraph.

The concluding sentence- restates the main idea (found in the topic sentence) and reinforces the point or opinion.

Logical Order - the sentences have to be put together in a way that makes sense. All the sentences must be related to the main idea. This will make the paragraph cohesive. The transitional sentence prepares the reader for the following paragraph.

When writing a classification paragraph, things or ideas must be grouped into specific categories. A description paragraph is about what a person, place, or thing is like. Sometimes, one may describe where a place is located. In an evaluation paragraph, one makes judgments about people, ideas, and possible actions. Evaluation must be based on certain criteria.

1.2.6 ELEMENTS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

There are three main elements to written communication:

- structure (the way the content is laid out)
- style (the way it is written)
- content (what you are writing about)

Structuring:

A good structure helps to express thoughts more clearly, whether in a dissertation, an essay, a job application letter or Curriculum Vitae. The purpose of communication should be clear before writing. Key points, facts and themes should be identified. Points should be presented in a logical order. The introduction and ending must be strong. The first will make an immediate and positive impression on the reader; the second will remain in their mind after they have finished reading.
Short paragraphs and sentences should be written rather than long, rambling ones. There should be only one point in a paragraph. The main point must be put in the first line and supporting sentences can be added later. Use of headings, sub-headings and bullet points will help the key points to stand out hence the reader can quickly scan the message for the main points.

**Style:**

It is necessary to consider the readers before beginning to write. The style can be formal or informal. Style refers to the way something is written. Writing should be neat and elegant. It should be concise, with an exact use of words and economy of style. It must be simple, direct and lucid. The paragraphs must not be too long. A blank line can be left between paragraphs to aid clarity. Sentences also must be short and simple. A sentence should contain just one idea. Sentences with more than thirty words should normally be split. The first sentence has to be interesting to catch the interest of the readers. The style should be suitable for the intended audience. Short, concrete and familiar words should be preferred to long, obscure and complex words. Wordy phrases and repetitions should be avoided.

**Content:**

Content refers to what the writer is writing about. Care should be taken regarding spellings and punctuations. It is necessary to think in advance about what is to be said. The essential points should be listed. The argument should be logical. Details should not obscure the main issue. The content must be positive and constructive. Text must be edited and revised to hone it until it is perfect.

**1.2.7 MECHANICS OF WRITING**

Mechanics include aspects of writing like spelling, punctuation marks and capitalization of letters. While punctuation marks are similar in all languages, students who learn English as a Second Language (ESL) find it difficult to spell words correctly. English has two types of letters – capital letters and small case letters. There are specific rules regarding capitalization of letters. It is necessary to teach the students the rules of writing. Spellings have to be learnt by heart initially but gradually, teacher should help the students to remember spellings by grouping words that have similar spellings together and by encouraging them to remember the ‘sight’ of a word rather than each letter it consists. Although punctuation marks are
more or less similar in most languages, there are some typical uses of punctuation marks in English like apostrophes for implying possession and so on.

Following are some of the basic rules for the use of punctuation marks in English:

**TABLE 2.0 Rules of Punctuation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'</td>
<td>Apostrophe</td>
<td>1. Used in contractions 2. Used to show possession 3. Used instead of numbers</td>
<td>1. Can't the boy see me? 2. The man's wallet was lost. 3. That boy was born in the summer of '99.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:</td>
<td>Colon</td>
<td>1. Used to introduce a list 2. Used after a greeting in a letter 3. Used between the numbers showing time</td>
<td>1. These animals live in the barn: the pig, the cow, and the horse. 2. Dear Mr. Farmer: 3. 12:33:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>,</td>
<td>Commas</td>
<td>1. Used to separate words in a list 2. Used to separate words and numbers in dates and addresses. 3. To separate thoughts</td>
<td>1. The pig, cow, dog, and cat went for a walk. 2. The boy was born in New Delhi, on Nov. 29, 1999. 3. After he finished his work, he went to sleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>!</td>
<td>Exclamation point</td>
<td>1. Used to show excitement or strong feeling</td>
<td>1. The picture is so beautiful!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( )</td>
<td>Parenthesis</td>
<td>1. Used to add information</td>
<td>1. The sound (in the street) is really loud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>1. Used at the end of a sentence 2. Used in abbreviations</td>
<td>1. The boy ate some food. 2. Mr. Joshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Question Mark</td>
<td>1. Used at the end of a sentence that asks a question</td>
<td>1. What did the boy eat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ ”</td>
<td>Quotation Marks</td>
<td>1. Used before and after words which is actual part of conversation 2. Used for special words or slang</td>
<td>1. He asked, “Where are you going?” 2. Karnad’s plays are based on ‘myths’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>;</td>
<td>Semicolon</td>
<td>1. Used to combine two sentences together without using linking words</td>
<td>1. The boys have fun in the school; I wish I could too!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another important part of punctuation is capitalization. Here are some of the rules for capitalization.

**TABLE 3.0 Rules of Capitalization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always capitalize the word &quot;I&quot;</td>
<td>He said I could use the computer!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always capitalize the first word in a sentence</td>
<td>This is a really neat web site!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always capitalize the first word in a quote</td>
<td>&quot;Wow! This is fun.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always capitalize abbreviations</td>
<td>Mr. - mister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always capitalize acronyms</td>
<td>WHO – World Health Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always capitalize names of peoples and their titles</td>
<td>Mr. Joshi and Ms. Joshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places</td>
<td>Mumbai, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays</td>
<td>Happy New Year!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months</td>
<td>January, February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days</td>
<td>Sunday, Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important documents</td>
<td>Declaration of Independence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.8 ORGANIZING WRITING

Writing a paragraph does not mean just stringing a few sentences together. The purpose and intended audience will enable students to decide the suitable form and select an appropriate style, a set of diction and tone. Next the students must decide the content. It will depend on the form. The content has to be presented in a logical manner to make it easy to understand. There are different ways and strategies that can be used by teachers to help the students to organize their thoughts and information that they wish to present. They are called graphic organizers.

Graphic organizers are a helpful way to organize information. They are helpful because:

1. They help to understand how things go together.
2. They help to remember information better.

3. They make it easier to write the final draft.

4. They help organize any type of writing.

There are a lot of different kinds of graphic organizers for different kinds of writing projects.

Cluster diagrams – good for descriptive writing, especially when there are a lot of different ideas.

Charts – good for writing directions of how to do something, or for keeping a lot of different ideas in categories.

Venn diagrams – good for comparing things that are the same and different.

Story maps – good for retelling books, plays or stories.

Cause and effect diagrams – good for explaining how something happened.

Outlines - good for big topics with lots of main ideas and details. Outlines are also good for persuasive writing.

Timelines - good for telling the order of how things happen in time.

Since story writing and descriptive essays are part of Std. VI syllabus in Maharashtra, developing stories with the help of outline is an activity included in the ABP. Instead of Cluster diagrams, the researcher has given pictures.

English is a compulsory subject in the syllabus of standard VI. This is because English occupies an important position in India, which is a developing country. For the progress of the nation on the background of globalization, the study of English language has become the need of the day. From this point of view, it is necessary to understand the position of English in India, in the curriculum and the syllabus

1.2.9 LEARNING TO WRITE

Writing is a complex domain to learn and teach because it requires bringing together many skills. Writing can also be applied in many different ways. Writing has its foundation in oral language, but its unique purpose, form, and function set it apart (Goodman, 1986). Whereas oral communication can rely on immediate verbal and
nonverbal feedback, written language is highly decontextualized (Sulzby, 1985; 1986).

As children come to understand writing's unique form, they must build and hone their competency in two broad areas: writing mechanics and writing process. Each contains a number of sub-skills. Writing mechanics involve everything from physically producing text to spelling correctly and producing accurate grammar. The writing process involves generating and organizing information, of which planning and editing are a part. The chart below illustrates the various tasks involved in writing and the prerequisite skills for each.

**TABLE 4.0 Writing and Pre-requisite Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Mechanics</th>
<th>Pre-requisite Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graphemic realization of writing</td>
<td>• Symbolic understanding (symbols have meaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alphabetic principle (letters represent speech segments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Memory for letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visual discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fine-motor skills (handwriting and typing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>• Graphemic realization of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sound-symbol connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognition and understanding of spelling conventions and patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Memory for regularly and irregularly spelled words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>• Linguistic comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Memory for words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar/ syntax/ semantics</td>
<td>• Memory for syntactically correct patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding and application of semantic conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognition and understanding of grammatical patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation/ capitalization</td>
<td>• Memory for punctuation types and capitalization rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding and application of punctuation and capitalization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 5.0 Writing Process

| Acquire knowledge | - Auditory, nonverbal, and reading comprehension  
|                  | - Short and long-term memory |
| Retrieve knowledge | - Short and long-term memory  
|                   | - Translation of cognitive information into language |
| Plan text         | - Understanding of purpose and goals of writing  
|                  | - Knowledge of planning processes and steps  
|                  | - Knowledge of various text structures  
|                  | - Ability to use or invent organizing tools to fulfill writing goals |
| Construct text    | - Understanding and application of text conventions  
|                  | - Words with appropriate inflection  
|                  | - Topic-centered sentences and paragraphs  
|                  | - Organization of information from broad to specific |
| Editing text      | - Application of writing mechanics ability to recognize errors or places for improvement  
|                  | - Ability to monitor text construction and monitor content cohesion and revise text accordingly |

Writing is different from other academic domains in the way its sub-skills come together. For instance, in areas such as mathematics or reading, students can benefit greatly from automaticity, in which they gain speed and accuracy as they learn to automatically follow a set of routines or procedures (McCutchen, 1988). Although automatized procedures can be helpful for some writing components (e.g. handwriting, spelling), they are not helpful for other components because some components of writing must remain more flexible. Word choice, sentence structure, and paragraph organization must change depending on the demands of the writing piece. A writer may need to produce a letter showing appreciation to a friend; a lengthy report on a factual, scientific topic; or an imaginative short story. Because of these changing demands, routinized or automatic procedures must actually be prevented, which results in a high "cognitive cost" to the writer. As an example, take the related processes of decoding in the reading domain and spelling in the writing domain. To decode successfully, a person need produce only single words and single
meanings. To spell correctly, however, that same person must correctly sequence a number of letters, requiring him or her to draw more information from memory. So a successful writer must be the ultimate multi-talker to maintain attention to many processes and details at once.

The main aim of introducing English is to communicate effectively when students complete their secondary education. The main aim of teaching a language is to develop the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. But most of the students are unable to communicate in English because of lack of exposure, lack of usage and so on. So keeping the present scenario in view, an attempt is made to teach the language skills using ABP. It is as per the suggestions emphasized by (NCF, 2005), which insists more on child friendly and child-centered education based on the experiences and knowledge of the child.

**Importance of writing in the Middle school**

"Writing can and should be taught, not just assigned, at every grade level" (National Writing Project, 2008). It is the job of teachers in every class to teach students how and when to use writing. The fact is that students still need to be taught and guided in writing. It is especially important in middle school due to the social and cognitive development students are experiencing as well.

Quality writing instruction requires that teachers do not assume students already know certain skills. Often, in previous grades, students may not have been taught skills needed to build on previous writing knowledge. As schools and teachers prepare students for the assessments every year, some subjects get pushed aside. According to Meredith state tests have harmed the instruction of writing, "As states have adopted lists of standards and multiple choice tests, meaningful writing instruction has developed into a series of fragmented assignments driven by test priorities” (Pike-Baky, 2005). Some years students may spend so much time focused on test preparation that subjects like writing are not addressed as thoroughly as needed, making writing missing in the overall curriculum. Hence, in every class, writing should be addressed, taught and used in classrooms.

Writing in middle school is also important because of the cognitive and social development students are going through. During middle school is when students
begin to truly develop skills and abilities to think abstractly, develop their own ideas and opinions and skills to solve real-life problems. Students in middle school are able to experiment with different cognitive abilities. "Writing is a very demanding task, requiring the orchestration of a variety of cognitive resources" (De La Paz and Graham, 2002). In middle school students are developing those resources and the abilities to draw conclusions, use language in more complex ways and are able to see writing for multiple purposes. "Language takes on an entirely new dimension for creative expression and comprehension once the child understands how figurative language, such as metaphor, conveys meaning" (Meece, 2000). It is an exciting time in writing in the adolescent period as they know more about language and how to use it in many different ways.

Students in middle school also desire and need interaction with peers as a part of their social development. Peer relations are very important and essential during adolescence. "Language, an essential component of social interaction, provides opportunities for young adolescents to interact and socialize with other people" (Manning and Butcher, 2001). Writing allows students to communicate and convey thoughts and messages at a time in development where they benefit socially from the opportunity to do so. Writing does need to be taught in the middle school as well as elementary and high school. At a time when students are able to develop deeper thinking skills and use writing in new ways, the process should be nurtured and encouraged. All middle school teachers can be writing teachers and all middle school classrooms can be writing classrooms.

When writing skill is properly developed at middle school level, it prepares students for higher education as well, a stage when they will have to use writing skill for amassing knowledge, learning technical and complicated issues in different subjects in arts, commerce or science. A fundamental ability to write well will enable them to adapt writing styles and conventions for different subjects and also master technical jargon.

1.2.10 TEACHING WRITING SKILL

There are certain steps involved in teaching writing skills. The following points show the general progression involved in the writing process:
1. Tracing letters and teaching the correct letter formations. While writing the strokes of straight or slanting lines follow a particular direction. Tracing letters helps students to understand how to follow the correct direction (From top to bottom or right to left). Letters as graphic symbols are also fixed in their minds.

2. Copying words – Letters are combined to form words. Isolated letters have no meaning. Words are meaningful units. Hence, copying words enable the students to understand the concept of ‘word’, in which a series of letters are closely written.

3. Copying sentences – The next bigger graphic unit is a sentence. One expresses oneself in utterances while speaking but one expresses oneself in sentences while writing. Copying sentences clarifies the concept of ‘sentence’, which is a meaningful group of words that makes complete sense. Words must follow a specific order in a sentence and words are combined into sentences according to grammatical rules of the language. Copying correct sentences at the initial stage helps them to understand the relation between different words in a sentence and their function. A written sentence is a visual representation of an utterance. The pauses and expressions in speech can be reflected in writing with the help of punctuation marks like question marks and exclamation marks. Short and long pauses are marked by commas and full-stops respectively. Every sentence begins with a capital letter.

4. Writing from dictation – This is the first independent activity that students carry out while developing writing skill. Since they do not copy the words, they are required to spell the words correctly.

5. Copying larger selections – Written material is organized content. Copying larger selections like few paragraphs enables the students to note how ideas are linked and presented in a systematic manner and how the content is gradually developed.

6. Writing from dictation of large selections – This exercise requires students to not only spell words correctly but leave space between two words, punctuate the sentences appropriately and write neatly and in legible handwriting. This is also an independent activity; yet the content is not prepared by the students.
7. Writing own narrations – In this activity, the students write their own content. They think, organize and present the content, all by themselves, following all the rules of writing, spelling words correctly and using grammatically correct sentences.

8. Teach Writing with Style – Style is an advanced aspect of writing. Students are familiar with tone and style in speech and they must understand that different styles suit different kinds of texts.

Teach Writing Forms – Various forms of writing serve various purposes and students must be able to select forms according to the content.

1.2.11 L1 AND L2 WRITING

Writing is a complex process that requires the author to be aware of and combine various components of language successfully. While the physical act of writing is fairly automatic for adult writers, in the L2 it becomes a conscious process once more, especially if the L2 orthography is different from the learners’ L1. The same is true if the rhetorical style of the L2 is vastly different from that of the L1. In case of vast differences in L1 and L2, knowledge on L1 interferes with acquisition of L2 to a considerable extent. At the same time, if there are similarities in L1 and L2, knowledge of L1 skills can be transferred to the acquisition of L2. There can be similarities or differences at every level – phonology, syntax or semantics. Between Indian languages and English, there exists a difference in writing system as well – while English follows an alphabetical writing system, Indian languages follow a syllabic writing system. This adds to the difficulties of L2 learners of English. They find it difficult to spell words correctly and remember the spellings. While the common sentence structure in English is SVO, in Indian languages it is SOV. Hence, construction of grammatically correct sentences is another problem faced by students.

Every individual is proficient in the basic skills of language namely listening and speaking in their Mother Tongue (MT) or L1. Hence, they find it easier to acquire all language skills. Their store of vocabulary in L1 is immense; they can choose appropriate words and styles in formal or informal situations and can transfer these
competencies to writing tasks. Hence, writing in L1 is not as difficult as acquiring writing skills in L2.

L2 writers spend less time planning and organizing ideas and have more difficulties in dealing with spellings and grammar. To counter this, L2 instruction should include time for planning both content and form, for generating ideas as well as for improving accuracy. We use writing for a variety of everyday communicative purposes, from making a shopping list to writing essays for school or creating reports for a presentation at work. In this computer-mediated age, being able to write is an essential skill in any language. These uses of writing should guide the development of writing tasks in the L2, both when setting up the curriculum and when designing individual tasks. Specifically, there are several design principles to consider when planning for L2 writing:

- Language activities should reflect plausible, real-life communication.
- L2 writing can have the same wide range of purposes as L1 writing.

L2 writing should be taught systematically, not as a random thing used here and there only as a support task. Writing involves several skills. They help the learner gain independence, comprehensibility, fluency and creativity in writing. If learners have mastered these skills, they will be able to write so that not only can they read what they have written, but others can read what they have written. Writing skills are specific abilities which help writers put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and to mentally react with the message.

1.2.12 EFFECTIVE WRITING PRACTICES

- **Writing strategies:** It is necessary to teach students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their written products. This may involve teaching general processes (e.g., brainstorming or editing) or more specific elements, such as steps for writing a persuasive essay. In either case, it is recommended that teachers model the strategy, provide assistance as students practice using the strategy on their own, and allow for independent practice with the strategy once they have learned it.
- **Summarizing text:** Students must be taught procedures for summarizing what they read. Summarization allows students to practice concise, clear writing to convey an accurate message of the main ideas in a text. Teaching summary writing can involve explicit strategies for producing effective summaries or gradual fading of models of a good summary as students become more proficient with the skill.

- **Collaborative writing:** Students must be encouraged to work together to plan, write, edit, and revise their writing. Teachers can provide a structure for cooperative writing and explicit expectations for individual performance within their cooperative groups or partnerships. For example, if the class is working on using descriptive adjectives in their compositions, one student could be assigned to review another’s writing. He or she could provide positive feedback, noting several instances of using descriptive vocabulary, and provide constructive feedback, identifying several sentences that could be enhanced with additional adjectives. After this, the students could switch roles and repeat the process.

- **Goals:** Specific goals must be set for the writing assignments that students are to complete. The goals can be established by the teacher or created by the class themselves, with review from the teacher to ensure they are appropriate and attainable. Goals can include (but are not limited to) adding more ideas to a paper or including specific elements of a writing genre. Setting specific product goals can foster motivation, and teachers can continue to motivate students by providing reinforcement when they reach their goals.

- **Sentence combining:** Subsequently, students must write more complex and sophisticated sentences. Sentence combining involves teacher modeling of how to combine two or more related sentences to create a more complex one. Students should be encouraged to apply the sentence construction skills as they write or revise.

- **Process writing:** Flexible, but practical classroom routines that provide students with extended opportunities for practicing the cycle of planning, writing, and reviewing their compositions can be implemented. The process approach also involves: writing for authentic audiences, personal responsibility for written
work, student-to-student interactions throughout the writing process, and self-evaluation of writing.

- **Inquiry:** Writing assignments that require use of inquiry skills should be included. Successful inquiry activities include establishing a clear goal for writing (E.g., write a story about conflict in the playground), examination of concrete data using specific strategies (E.g., observation of students arguing in the playground and recording their reactions), and translation of what was learned into one or more compositions.

- **Prewriting:** Students must be engaged in activities prior to writing that help them produce and organize their ideas. Prewriting can involve tasks that encourage students to access what they already know, do research about a topic they are not familiar with, or arrange their ideas visually (E.g., graphic organizer) before writing.

**Models:** Students should be provided with good models of the type of writing they are expected to produce. Teachers should analyze the models with their class, encouraging students to imitate in their own writing, the critical and effective elements shown in the models.

1.3 TEACHING - LEARNING APPROACHES AND THEORIES USED IN THE ABP

**Behaviorist Approach**

It is based on Thorndike’s stimulus-response principle. Behaviorists view learning as a result of stimuli and responses through the use of rewards. This approach emphasizes performance rather than the reasons that the learner performs a certain way. Educators who use this framework break a content area into component sub-skills, sequence them, and then transmit them to students mostly by direct instruction such as lectures or reading assignments. This teaching approach assumes that once students have learned the parts, they can put them together as a whole and apply them when needed (Fosnot, 1996; Bredo, 1997). Further, students are viewed as passive learners who need external motivation and are affected by reinforcement (Skinner, 1953). The behaviorist tradition dominated educational thinking and designs for many decades.
According to Nativist theories of language (Chomsky, 1986), human beings are unique in possessing a faculty for language. According to Chomsky, children are naturally endowed with knowledge of language in general which equips them to learn a language. In contrast, the cognitive view stresses the essential similarity of linguistic knowledge and other forms of symbolic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge is treated as consisting of a universal set of symbols, for example, phoneme, verb, noun phrase, morphological features and rules for combining these symbols to construct the sentences of a language.

According to Natural Approach, communication is the basic function of language. Language is a vehicle for communicating messages. This can happen only when people acquire language naturally. Acquisition is unconscious as opposed to conscious learning, which impedes acquisition. The Humanistic approach gives importance to human values. It delves into the nature of learning process. According to this approach, not only the intellect but the whole person is involved in language learning.

Critics of this idea argue that a behaviorist explanation is inadequate. They maintain several arguments:

- Learning cannot account for the rapid rate at which children acquire language.
- There can be an infinite number of sentences in a language. All these sentences cannot be learned by imitation.
- Children make errors, such as over - regularizing verbs. For example, a child may say *Billy hitted me*, incorrectly adding the usual past tense suffix *-ed* to *hit*. Errors like these can’t result from imitation, since adults generally use correct verb forms.
- Children acquire language skills even though adults do not consistently correct their syntax.

Communicative Language Learning (CLL) was developed by Charles Curran, a Roman Catholic priest and a professor of Clinical Psychology. He observed that adults are often threatened by a new learning experience. Curran believed that if teachers can act as language ‘counselors’ they can help the learners to overcome this
fear. A language counselor tries to understand the struggle faced by a learner while internalizing a new language system. By being sensitive to the student’s feelings the teacher can help them to overcome their negative feelings and turn them into positive energy for learning a new language.

The connectionist theories view linguistic knowledge as a complex network of associations that allows for parallel processing.

**Skill Based Approach**

The emphasis is on developing the four skills of language. The basic skills required to learn and use language in daily life. Listening, speaking reading and writing are studied in the same order. While listening and speaking are basic, reading and writing are more advanced skills. However, the drawback of this approach is that students find it difficult to integrate all the four skills. At the same time, each skill is considered in isolation and developed with care.

In the ABP prepared by the researcher, the writing skill is isolated and emphasized for bringing it to perfection. The sub-skills and mechanics of writing are also taken into consideration in activities like using capital letters and appropriate punctuation marks, writing grammatically correct sentences and writing associated words to a given list of words. The research is based on the skill based approach in the very fact that the writing skill is considered in isolation, and separated from other language skills. There are several theories of SLA and each theory has advantages as well as disadvantages. The research is based on the merits of several approaches to language learning and a number of theories based on them. Hence, it would be appropriate to say that a mixed method is used in preparing and implementing the ABP for development of writing skills of students.

**Present/Practice/Produce (PPP)**

During an initial teacher training course, most teachers become familiar with the PPP paradigm. A PPP lesson would proceed in the following manner.

- First, the teacher presents an item of language in a clear context to get across its meaning. This could be done in a variety of ways: through a text, a situation builds a dialogue.
Students are then asked to complete a controlled practice stage, where they may have to repeat target items through choral and individual drilling, fill gaps or match halves of sentences. All of this practice demands that the student uses the language correctly and helps them to become more comfortable with it.

Finally, they move on to the production stage, sometimes called the 'free practice' stage. Students are given a communication task such as a role play and are expected to produce the target language and use any other language that has already been learnt and is suitable for completing it.

It all sounds quite logical but teachers who use this method will soon identify problems with it:

- Students can give the impression that they are comfortable with the new language as they are producing it accurately in the class. Often though a few lessons later, students will either not be able to produce the language correctly or even won't produce it at all.

- Students will often produce the language but overuse the target structure so that it sounds completely unnatural.

- Students may not produce the target language during the free practice stage because they find they are able to use existing language resources to complete the task.

- The problems involved in PPP approach can be overcome in a task based lesson program.

In letter writing activity which is included in the ABP prepared by the researcher, the PPP approach was found most convenient. The format of a letter was first presented before the students and a few letters were given for practice. Later on the students wrote letters independently. This approach gives equal importance to the process as well as the product approach.

This approach was also useful in procedure writing activity included in the ABP. The students were presented with a procedure for preparing salad, wrapping a gist, making a greeting card and filling up the school bag. This was followed by a practice session and finally, they could carry out the tasks independently on their
own. Task-based approach to SLA is applied to prepare a program for development of writing skills. This is a work of applied research.

Task Based Approach

Task- based learning offers an alternative for language teachers. In task- based learning the teacher doesn't pre-determine what language will be studied, the lesson is based around the completion of a central task and the language studied is determined by what happens as the students complete it. The lesson follows certain stages.

Pre-task
The teacher introduces the topic and gives the students clear instructions on what they will have to do at the task stage and might help the students to recall some language that may be useful for the task. The pre-task stage can also often include playing a recording of people doing the task. This gives the students a clear model of what will be expected of them. The students can take notes and spend time preparing for the task.

Task
Students complete a task in pairs or groups using the language resources that they have as the teacher monitors and offers encouragement.

Planning
Students prepare a short oral or written report to tell the class what happened during their task. They then practice what they are going to say in their groups. Meanwhile the teacher is available for the students to ask for advice to clear up any language questions they may have.

Report
Students then report back to the class orally or read the written report. The teacher chooses the order of when students will present their reports and may give the students some quick feedback on the content. At this stage the teacher may also play a recording of others doing the same task for the students to compare.

Analysis
The teacher then highlights relevant parts from the text of the recording for the
students to analyze. They may ask students to notice interesting features within this text. The teacher can also highlight the language that the students used during the report phase for analysis.

Practice
Finally, the teacher selects language areas to practice based upon the needs of the students and what emerged from the task and report phases. The students then do practice activities to increase their confidence and make a note of useful language.

“A task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right, with a beginning, middle and an end” (David Nunan, 2008).

Any curriculum content can be taught through tasks. The key point is that teachers will have to prepare their own worksheets and tasks. The teacher must stay very active during a task-based session, guiding students individually or as a group.

Role of the Teacher
• Co-operate, listen and respond to the students’ needs
• Decide what tasks to work on
• Decide when to try a new task
• Correct and keep feedback
• Help the students to monitor each other

Types of Tasks
1. Rehearsal tasks – A piece of classroom work in which students rehearse in class a communicative act that they will carry outside the class.

2. Pedagogical tasks – A piece of classroom work which involves the learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than tasks.
3. Activations task – A piece of classroom work involving communicative interaction, but not one in which learners will be rehearsing for some out-of-class communication. They are rather designed to activate the acquisition process.

Task-based learning has some clear advantages:

- The students are free of language control. In all three stages they must use all their language resources rather than just practicing one pre-selected item.
- A natural context is developed from the students' experiences with the language that is personalized and relevant to them. With PPP it is necessary to create contexts in which to present the language and sometimes they can be very unnatural.
- The students will have a much more varied exposure to language with task based learning. They will be exposed to a whole range of lexical phrases, collocations and patterns as well as language forms.
- The language explored arises from the students' needs. This need dictates what will be covered in the lesson rather than a decision made by the teacher or the course book.
- It is a strong communicative approach where students spend a lot of time communicating. PPP lessons seem very teacher-centered by comparison. Just watch how much time the students spend communicating during a task based learning.
- It is enjoyable and motivating.

These points are important to consider in order to designing more effective writing tasks that:

a. Fulfill the pedagogical purposes of the assignment (E.g., do not say that the task practices narration when all it does is drill the past tense).

b. Reflect pedagogically sound practices (E.g., the process approaches to writing, effective feedback).

c. Can be successfully completed by the students (i.e., the sub-skills that they need have been reviewed and/or learned), and have a meaningful learning outcome (E.g., help students learn something they can actually use, either to support
another skill area or to communicate in authentic L2 situations. Creative writing allows students to experiment and play with the language, and thus, to take ownership of the language. In addition, creative writing is usually engaging and motivating for students. It also helps learners view language as an authentic communicative tool, with a focus on meaning, not merely as a linguistic system. This study relies heavily on task based language teaching.

**The Naturalistic and Humanistic approach**

Tracy Terrell was a Spanish teacher in California and Stephen D. Krashen was an applied linguist at the University of California. In 1977, they advocated a new philosophy of language teaching. Their philosophy was published in 1983 in their book called “The Natural Approach”. The book contains theoretical sections prepared by Krashen that outline his views in SLA and sections on implementation and classroom procedures, mostly prepared by Terrell. The Natural Approach was related to the Natural Method or Direct Method (DM) but they are not synonymous terms. The principles are the same but there is a difference in the two. The Natural Method is just another term for DM. “In its extreme form, the DM consisted of a series of monologues by the teacher, interspersed with exchanges of questions and answers between the instructor and the pupil all in foreign language a great deal of pantomime accompanied the talk” (Cole, 1931).

The term ‘Natural’ used with reference to the DM implied merely that language learning principles conform to the natural way in which children acquire a language. Terrell and Krashen share this view in their Natural approach, but their approach does not emphasize teacher monologues, repetition, formal questions and answers. In Natural approach, there is greater emphasis on exposure, or ‘input’.

The chief merit of this approach is that it is supported by Krashen’s theory of how language is learnt. In the words of the writers, “It is based on an empirically grounded theory of SLA, which has been supported by a large number of scientific studies in a wide variety of language acquisition and language learning ” (Krashen and Terrell, 1983).
Theoretical Assumptions: According to Natural Approach, communication is the basic function of language. In this, it is similar to other communicative approaches. Language is a vehicle for communicating messages. This can happen only when people acquire language naturally. Acquisition is unconscious as opposed to conscious learning, which impedes acquisition. The Natural Approach is based on five main tenets, which are as follows:

a. The Acquisition or Learning Hypothesis

b. The Monitor Hypothesis

c. The Natural Order Hypothesis

d. The Input Hypothesis

e. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

a) The Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis -

According to this hypothesis, acquisition is different from learning. The former is an unconscious process and the latter is a conscious process. The L1 or MT is acquired naturally. An L2 is always a second language because the learner already has knowledge of one language. This hypothesis mainly emphasizes that consciously gained knowledge is not the same as acquisition, nor does it have the same value or potential for use as acquired competence. Acquisition is informal and implicit, in which the learner is not aware of rules. ‘Acquisition’ means knowing a language while learning means knowing about a language. Only an ‘acquired’ system can be internalized. A learned system works as a monitor or editor. Learning results in explicit knowledge about the forms of a language.

In India, English is learnt as a L2 and the aim of the ABP is to allow the students to learn English and not acquire it as a MT. The ABP program is prepared with limited and specific learning objectives and does not attempt to go beyond them. English is learnt by the students in a formal setting and specific activities are assigned with specific intentions. In allowing the students to learn unconsciously, through different activities, an attempt has been made by the researcher to make L2 learning as natural and meaningful as MT acquisition. However, the program consists of limited activities which cannot develop a competence similar to the MT.
b) The Monitor Hypothesis-
According to this system, whatever is consciously learned, can serve one important function of ‘monitoring’ the use of language. It helps to correct what is expressed. Monitor hypothesis explains the influence of learning in acquisition. Acquisition initiates an utterance. Conscious learning acts as a monitor and editor. The grammar or rules that are learned to monitor an expression and correct it. Thus, it has three functions- planning, editing and correcting. But the monitor hypothesis can function only if certain conditions are fulfilled. They are - time, opportunity for use and knowledge of use. It is implied that second language learners have sufficient time at their disposal, the focus on form; they know the rules of grammar with the help of which they correct utterances. Hence, according to Krashen, conscious learning has minimal functions of correcting deviations from normal speech, and polishes it. Individuals either ‘over-use’ monitor or ‘under-use’ it. Those who use the monitor appropriately are called ‘optimal’ users.

In the ABP, there are specific activities designed to teach grammatical rules to the students. The teacher points out the incorrect construction in the form of feedback which allows the students to monitor their learning. Hence, beginning with activities like ‘correct the sentences’ and ‘arrange the words in correct order’, the program goes on to include more and varied language tasks like writing paragraphs, descriptions and stories.

c) The Natural Order Hypothesis-
According to this hypothesis, the elements of a language are acquired in a specific, natural order, and hence it is predictable. This order is regardless of the age or background or knowledge of the L1 of the learner. L1 research has proved that certain words or grammatical structures are learnt before others. Learners make typical errors during the process of language deviation. These errors are observed in L1 and L2 acquisition and they are to be considered as marking natural stages in deviation of communicative competence. According to Krashen, the natural order is found in L2 as well. However, a language teaching programme should not be programmed structurally, following this natural order. Natural order should be allowed to develop without interference from the learned system.
In this study, the researcher has taken into consideration the natural order theory. The teachers do not interfere with the learning order of the linguistic elements. Through the assigned activities, the students learn language skills in their own way and may learn to write some words before they learn how to read them with correct pronunciation.

d) The Input Hypothesis
This hypothesis logically follows the natural order hypothesis. According to Krashen, learners progress along a natural order, when they receive L2 ‘input’. The ‘input’ is what the learner is exposed to of the L2 material. This hypothesis relates to acquisition, and not to learning. According to Krashen people acquire language best when the input is slightly beyond the current level of competence. That is, when the learner is at stage i, acquisition takes place if the learner is exposed to input which is i+1. Comprehensible input should be one step ahead of the learner’s grammatical knowledge. How can the additional (+1) input be comprehended? Clues based on situation and the context, extra-linguistic information and knowledge of the world make comprehension possible. If the input consists of grammatical structures which the learner already knows, or those which are too difficult for him, such input does not lead to acquisition.

Krashen has also stated that the ability to speak fluently, that is, communicative competence, cannot be taught. It ‘emerges’ gradually in the course of time, as the learner gains enough linguistic competence by understanding and processing input.

When talking to children, one has to tune one’s speech to the child’s level of understanding. It has to be simplified and accompanied by gestures and actions while presenting several instances of (+1). Similarly, while talking to an adult learner who has limited language proficiency, simple codes should be provided that facilitates second language comprehension. The speaker should speak slowly, repeat, re-state and use yes/no questions instead of Wh-questions to make messages more comprehensible.

e) The Affective Filter Hypothesis —

According to Krashen, a number of affective variables play an important role in SLA. Some learners are highly motivated, have a positive attitude and confidence.
They are less anxious than the emotionally charged. Hence, they learn better. Low motivation, lack of confidence and over anxiety create a ‘mental block’ in the learner’s mind and impede acquisition. Hence, the emotional state or attitude act as adjustable filters that allow free passage impedes or blocks input that is necessary for language acquisition. There are three kinds of affective variables related to SLA:

- Motivation - highly motivated learners learn faster.
- Confidence - confident and self respecting individuals are more successful.
- Anxiety - Low personal anxiety and low classroom anxiety are more conducive to SLA.

Hence, according to Affective Filter Hypothesis, learners with a low affective filter seek and receive more input, are more interactive and receive and internalize more input. Anxiety acts as a high affective filter and prevents SLA. It is believed that affective filter arises during adolescence. Adolescent learners are more conscious and have fear of embarrassment. This accounts for children being better language learners than adults. Creating stress-free atmosphere in the classroom helps to create a low affective filter and reduce anxiety, so that better acquisition takes place.

Implications of the theory:

The above hypothesis has obvious implications for language teaching:

- Teachers should encourage students to acquire language in a natural way. The focus should be on development of communicative competence and not on grammatical rules or structures.
- Comprehensible input which is a step ahead of the learner’s competency level should be provided. Visual aids and actions should be used to make the input more comprehensible.
- Emphasis should be on listening and reading (input). Sufficient time and input should be given to allow speaking to ‘emerge’.
- In order to lower the affective filter, the atmosphere should be relaxed, tension free, so that there will be no anxiety. The input should be interesting and meaningful, and should not put any stress on the learners.
- Focus should be on communication rather than form.
In the present study, the researcher has made every effort to guide the teachers in promoting students to learn the language aspects in target. However, the ‘affective filter’ is something too individualistic and differs from learner to learner. It does not come within the control of the teacher to any significant extent. The ‘filter’ depends upon factors socio-economic background of the students, their individual interests and learning capacities and so on which is beyond the scope of the program.

Natural Approach

The Natural approach is mainly ‘designed to develop basic communication skills, both oral and written and the purpose of a language course will vary according to the needs of the students and their particular interests’ (Krashen and Terrell, 1983).

Hence, they suggest a plan in which the teachers determine situations in which the students will use the teaching learning and the topics on which they will communicate. At the end of the course, the students are not expected to acquire a set of words or structures. The classroom activities are not organized about a grammatical syllabus.

Hence, content of syllabus is anything interesting to the students and aimed at the goals. The selected topics should also aim at creating a low affective filter. There should be a range of vocabulary input. The teacher should present comprehensible input in the teaching learning. Teacher discusses pictures, objects in the classroom and daily activities. As speech begins to emerge, teacher should provide simple response opportunities. In the beginning yes/no and one word answers should be elicited. As competence improves pair or group work is encouraged. The Natural approach borrows techniques from other methods and adapts them to suit its principles.

Role of learner-

There is a basic assumption that learners should not try to learn a language in usual sense. The learners’ chief task is to process input, internalize it, and proceed towards communication. The learner is challenged by that part of input which is beyond his competence, and he constantly attempts to comprehend it by relating it to the context, situation and teaching aids used by the instructor. The role of the learner
changes as communicative competence develops. Learner is expected to participate in group discussions.

Role of Teacher-

The teacher spends most of the time providing comprehensible input. The teacher is the primary generator of the input which has to be me + 1. In order to make input comprehensible, the has to use pictures, objects, actions, gestures and present input in a meaningful contexts that would enable the learner to interpret it. Teacher has to use non-linguistic cues to a great extent. Thus, the teacher has an important role in this approach.

The teacher also has to create and maintain a friendly and stress-free atmosphere in the classroom. This can be done by not demanding speech from the students until they are ready for it. The teacher should avoid correcting the errors of the students so that they do not feel embarrassed. The teacher should organize a variety of pair and group activities. The teacher must be resourceful and is responsible for collecting, designing and presenting content and instructional materials.

Conclusion-

The Natural method is based on the observation of how learners acquire a language in a natural setting. It indeed makes sense to language teachers and practitioners that a rich variety of input or exposure leads to successful language acquisition. It is also true that meaningful and comprehensible input promotes learning. It is also true of all learning that over anxiety creates high affective filter which hampers language acquisition.

The theory of Krashen and Terell also raises certain doubts. It cannot be absolutely true that conscious learning does not contribute to language competence. His differentiating between learning and acquisition is not very convincing. Also the same ‘natural order’ regarding words and grammatical structures is not hundred percent true in case of every learner. There are so many exceptions. This is definitely not true regardless of the L1 knowledge of the learner. It has been proved that transfer of knowledge of L1 does take place in SLA. Similarities in two languages lead to quicker and better transfer.
How can one decide the competency level of a learner and ensure i+1 input? This can be different in case of different learners. The approach advocates fluency rather than accuracy.

In spite of these drawbacks, the Naturalistic approach was appreciated by many teachers. It led to integration and adaptation of new techniques drawn from a variety of methods. The researcher has also borrowed certain tenets of the Naturalistic approach. He relies on the similarities in MT and L2. The activities are the comprehensible input provided to the learners. Transfer of certain language aspects can be taken for granted in case of some students but it is not possible to verify; however, this is beyond the scope of this study.

The Humanistic Approach

This approach gives importance to human values. It is not based on linguistic themes, but on philosophical principles based upon the study of human nature. It delves into the nature of learning and psychological insights that foster the learning process. According to this approach, not only the intellect, but the whole person is engaged in the process of language learning. Every person has some social identity, self-respect, feelings and emotions. A learner cannot put aside these factors while learning a language or anything else for that matter. Language learning methods based on the humanistic approach give due consideration to the ‘human’ aspect of an individual. According to Stevick, (1980) following are the most important characteristics of humanism –

1. Feelings: They include personal, emotional, and aesthetic appreciation. This aspect of humanism tends to reject whatever makes people feel bad or whatever destroys or forbids aesthetic enjoyment.

2. Social Relations: This side of humanism encourages friendship and co-operation, and opposes whatever tends to reduce them.

3. Intellect: Including knowledge, reason and understanding. This aspect fights against whatever interferes with the free exercise of the mind, and is suspicious of anything that cannot be tested intellectually.
4. Self-Actualization: The quest for full realization of one’s own deepest true qualities. This aspect believes that since conformity leads to enslavement, the pursuit of uniqueness brings about liberation.

The methods based on Humanistic Approach were all developed by people outside the language teaching profession. The ‘language learner’, who is basically a ‘human being’, is the prime focus in these methods. These methods value the following principles, as stated by (Richards, 2002).

- Development of human values
- Growth in self awareness and understanding others.
- Sensitivity to human feelings and emotions.
- Active student involvement in learning and the way learning takes place.

There are four methods based on Humanistic Approach. They are -

1. Community language Learning (CLL)
2. The Silent Way (SW)
3. Suggestopedia
4. Total Physical Response

All the above four methods do not uphold all the values or principles equally. However, they incorporate some of the tenets. Each method believes in learner-centeredness as a powerful source of nurturing human values. All these four methods are not relevant to the present study, hence only two methods, namely, the silent way and suggestopedia are discussed here.

The Silent Way-

The SW was evolved by Caleb Gattegno in 1960. He was a teacher of mathematics. As the name suggests, in this method, the teacher remains silent and the students do most of the talking. The students are also encouraged to build up their own ‘inner criteria’. They become independent learners. They learn to depend on their own resources as they realize that they can use the ‘knowledge of their own language to open up some things in a new language’. Absence of correction from the teacher
helps them to develop inner criteria. They learn to correct themselves. The teacher is silent, and does not explain, so learners are compelled to analyze, synthesize, make generalizations, arrive at conclusions and formulate rules as they find suitable. Inner criteria also allow learners to monitor their performance. Thus, inner criteria plays central role ‘in ones’ education throughout one’s life (Gattegno, 1972). The simplest way thus facilitates what psychologists call ‘learning to learn’.

Theory:-

According to Gattegno, it is necessary to group the ‘spirit’ of a language and not just its elements. By ‘spirit’, he refers to the phonological and supra segmental elements that combine to give the language its unique sound system and melody. The learner must get a ‘feel’ of the teaching learning. Gattegno opines that the L1 has a role to play in SLA. According to him, the process of SLA is radically different from learning L1. The learner ‘cannot learn another language because of what he knows’ (Gattegno, 1972). Thus, the Naturalistic Approach is unsuitable for SLA. It is necessary to develop an artificial approach, one which is strictly controlled.

Principles

- The most basic tenet is that ‘teaching must be subordinate to learning’. (In the ABP, there is no ‘teaching’. The students are allowed to learn through the given activities)
- The maxim of ‘known to unknown’ is followed. (This maxim is followed in various activities in the program. The students proceed from a familiar task towards unknown aspects of language)
- Sounds are basic building blocks of all languages. (Since the focus is on writing skill, the sound aspect is not given attention)
- Teacher’s silence encourages peer interaction and group work. ( The teacher allow the students to engage in activities and encourage peer interaction )
- The teacher is a ‘silent’ engineer who maintains a non-threatening atmosphere in the class. ( It was made clear to the teachers to maintain a stress free and pleasant atmosphere while the students were involved in the activities )
• The learning system is activated only through intelligent awareness. (The given activities motivated the students and initiated interest)

• Silence is the best vehicle for learning. It gives the learner an opportunity to concentrate on the task to be accomplished. It aids alertness, concentration and mental organization. (All the activities required complete involvement of the students and concentration on the given tasks)

• Silent awareness should be followed by active trial. SW is related to ‘problem-solving’ approaches to learning. In the words of Benjamin Franklin,

Tell me and I forget
Teach me and I may remember
Involve me and I learn”. www.goodreads.com/quotes:Retrieved 5th Aug.2013 (Benjamin Franklin). Accordingly, the learners are actively involved in doing the activities which enables them to retain knowledge.

Procedure-
The SW depends on two important teaching aids - The fidel charts and cuisiniere rods. The Fidel charts consist of blocks of different colors on a black background. Each block of color represents a different sound in the teaching learning. Cuisenaire rods are colored wooden rods of different lengths, each standing for a different word or sound. These aids are used to build up words or sentences.

A SW class follows a standard format.

Syllabus
It follows a structural syllabus. The sentence is the basic unit of teaching. Students are presented with structural patterns. Grammatical rules are learnt inductively. Vocabulary and choice of vocabulary is crucial. Functional and versatile words in the TL are selected. Language items are introduced according to their grammatical complexity. They are selected on the basis of previous knowledge of students.

Teaching aids –
The SW depends heavily on the use of set of colored rods, color coded vocabulary, pronunciation, wall charts, pointer and reading-writing exercises. The materials are designed for use by teachers as well as students, independently and co-operatively.
Role of the Teacher –

The teacher’s chief effort should be to resist his practices of assisting and directing the students. Stevick expects the SW teacher “to teach, to test and to get out of the way” (Stevick, 1980). ‘Teaching’ implies presenting the item by using non-verbal cues. Teaching is immediately followed by testing. Testing is mainly eliciting response from the students, while the teacher remains silent. Teacher silently monitors peer interaction amongst students. Teacher should use teaching-aids, gestures and set the atmosphere, all from a distance.

Role of Learners-

They follow the instructions of the teacher, observe, assimilate, try, make errors, correct them, apply them to the task, and are completely involved in the language learning process. They should try to perform activities assigned by the teacher as independently as possible. They interact with peers and participate in group activities with a spirit of co-operation.

Conclusion-

The method, on the whole, is not so revolutionary. It exemplifies traces of traditional methods like Situational language teaching and Audio-lingual methods. It follows the traditional lexical and structural syllabus. The strength of the method lies in the innovative procedure followed in the classroom, the focus on the learner and indirect role of teacher and the high responsibility placed on the learner.

Suggestopedia:

This method was advocated by Georgi Lozanov, a Bulgarian doctor of medicine, a psychiatrist and a parapsychologist. The methodology is based on suggestology, a psychological theory that says that human beings respond to subtle clues of which they are not consciously aware. Suggestopedia is a pedagogic application of suggestion. It helps learners to overcome their apprehensions about learning and clear the mental barriers to learning. It is based on the traditions of Indian Yoga and Soviet Psychology. Yoga can be used to alter states of consciousness and the use of rhythmic breathing. According to Soviet Psychology, students can be taught a given
subject matter at the same level of skill. Success is certain for the academically gifted and ungifted alike.

The most conspicuous feature of SW is the use of background music. Music has a therapeutic effect; it gives increased self satisfaction, energizes and creates order. It helps to relax the learners.

Principles –

- Suggestion is at the heart of the theory.

- Suggestion is successful when the learner is in a receptive state of mind. Receptivity of the mind can be increased with the help of music, the room, the furniture, seating arrangements, decorations and color background.

- Relaxation of the learner is important. It facilitates open mindedness and keeps the learner stress free.

- According to Lozanov, his method has a suggestive - desuggestive sense which creates a ‘constant set up access to reserves through concentrative psycho-relaxation’ (Lozanov, 1978).

The following are six components through which suggestion and de-suggestion –

1. Authority - The impact of information coming from an authoritative source is greater. Lozanov believed that scientific sounding language and committed teachers constitute a ‘ritual placebo system’ which appeals to learners. (The language input in this study is provided by teachers who are authority figures for the children)

2. Infantalization – Authority of teacher also creates parent –child relationship between teacher and student. The learner becomes the child, the infant and surrenders himself to the authority. (A close relationship already exists between the students and their regular teachers whose help was taken in implementing the ABP. Hence, every suggestion of the teachers was positively and readily accepted by the students)

3. Double planedness – The room, the environment and the surroundings also play an important role besides the teacher. (An attempt was made to maintain a congenial atmosphere in the classroom while the students were engaged in activities)
4. **Intonation** – The successive rise and fall of tone is very effective upon the listeners. It helps to dramatize the session. (The researcher gave some instructions to the students personally and tried to control his tone to make an impression on the students and encourage them to participate in the program and extend their cooperation)

**Procedure** –

A suggestopedia course lasts for 30 days and consists of 10 units of study. Classes are held 4 hours a day, 6 days a week. Each unit consists of a dialogue consisting about 1200 words. The content is graded according to content and grammar. The teacher first discusses the general content. The dialogue is presented along with its translation in the native language. The students imitate the teacher. There are question/answer sessions. Students make new combinations on the basis of what they have learnt and generalized. On the last day, each student participates in a play based on the dialogues. It is extempore rather than planned.

**Role of the teacher** –

The teacher has to present the materials. He has to implement each stage of the course as per the plan. Teacher uses pictures translation, asks questions, traces the progress and exerts authority. Presenting the dialogues appropriately and repeatedly is the teacher’s main task.

**Role of learners** –

Listening, imitation, role-play and active participation leads to successful performance of learners. In the first phase, they are just expected to relax and listen. They are not expected to manipulate, generalize or figure out what is presented but to maintain a pseudo-passive state. They are expected to encourage their own infantalization. The second phase includes role-play, games, answering questions and songs exercises.

**Conclusion** –

Lozano claims that just as a pill acts as a placebo for a patient who believes that it will cure him, the student should believe in the ritual placebo system created by the
teacher. Certain techniques from suggestopedia can be harmonized with other successful techniques to make teaching-learning more effective.

Certain tenets of suggestopedia have been used by the researcher in combination with tenets from other theories to make the implementation of the ABP as successful as possible.

**Cognitive and Constructivist Approach**

Cognitive theory is a learning theory of psychology that attempts to explain human behavior by understanding the thought processes. The assumption is that humans are logical beings that make the choices that make the most sense to them. Information processing is a commonly used description of the mental process, comparing the human mind to a computer. Pure cognitive theory largely rejects behaviorism on the basis that behaviorism reduces complex human behavior to simple cause and effect.

Social cognitive theory is a subset of cognitive theory. In contrast to behaviorism, cognitive psychology focuses directly on the structure and operation of the human mind. One of the main influences on cognitive psychology was the development of the information processing approach (Anderson, 1985). Information processing theory is a branch of cognitive psychology concerned with the way humans collect, store, modify, and interpret information from the environment; how the information is retrieved and stored; and how people use the knowledge and information in their activities.

Cognitive theory assumes that responses are also the result of insight and intentional patterning. Insight can be directed to (a) the concepts behind language i.e. to traditional grammar. It can also be directed to (b) language as an operation - sets of communicative functions.

A variety of activities practiced in new situations will allow assimilation of what has already been learnt or partly learnt. It will also create further situations for which existing language resources are inadequate and must accordingly be modified or extended - "accommodation". This ensures awareness and a continuing supply of learning goals as well as aiding the motivation of the learner. Cognitive theory therefore acknowledges the role of mistakes.
Example of Cognitive Theory

An infant experiences the house cat; they know that it meows, is furry, purrs, eats from a bowl in the kitchen, hence develops the concept of cat first then learns to map the word “kitty” onto that concept. Memory and the concept of time and space determine the use and understanding of language (Piaget, 1926).

Arguments against Cognitive Theory

- It is difficult to know exactly how much of language development is dependent on other facets of development (causation-correlation errors possible)
- Many concepts may be acquired long before any language is used to convey them yet simply never voiced.

Example:

- Write a telephonic conversation making an enquiry about railway booking.
- Complete the sentences to make them meaningful
- Read the passage and write answers to the given questions

Learning how to write a coherent, effective text is a difficult and protracted achievement of cognitive development that contrasts sharply with the acquisition of speech. By the age of five, spoken language is normally highly developed with a working vocabulary of several thousand words and an ability to comprehend and produce grammatical sentences. Although the specific contribution of a genetic predisposition for language learning is unsettled, it is apparent that speech acquisition is a natural part of early human development. Literacy, on the other hand, is a purely cultural achievement that may never be learned at all. Reading and writing are partly mediated by the phonological speech system, but an independent orthographic system must also be learned. Indeed, writers can put to use virtually everything they have learned and stored away in long-term memory. But they can only do so if their knowledge is accessible.

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)

The CALLA is an instructional model for L2 learners based on cognitive theory and research. CALLA integrates instruction in priority topics from the content
curriculum, development of the language skills needed for learning in school, and explicit instruction in using learning strategies for academic tasks.

The goals of CALLA are for students to learn essential academic content and language and to become independent and self-regulated learners through their increasing command over a variety of strategies for learning in school.

CALLA can be used in ESL, English as a foreign language, bilingual and general education classrooms.

CALLA’s principal objectives are to assist students in:

- Valuing their own prior knowledge and cultural experiences, and relating this knowledge to academic learning in a new language and culture
- Learning the content knowledge and the language skills that are most important for their future academic success.
- Selecting and using appropriate learning strategies and study skills that will develop academic knowledge and processes
- Developing abilities to work successfully with others in a social context.
- Learning through hands-on, inquiry-based, and cooperative learning tasks
- Increasing motivation for academic learning and confidence in their ability to be successful in school.
- Evaluating their own learning and planning how to become more effective and independent learners.

The ABP enables the learners to improve writing skill which is extremely important in their future academic success. All assigned activities are inquiry based and cooperative to some extent. It is through tasks that students gain confidence and are motivated further. The aim of the given activities is to make them effective and independent learners.

A Cognitive-Social Learning Model:

- The learning process is mentally active and strategic.
- Learning involves higher level thinking, not just memory.
- Social context and interaction are critical.
- Students learn content by relating it to their prior knowledge.
- Students learn processes through integrative practice individually and with peers.
- Learning strategies can be taught and learned.

**Constructivism**

Constructivism is an outgrowth of cognitive science. Constructivism views learning as a process of knowledge construction, with concept development and comprehensive understanding as the goals states that constructivism is a movement that combines cognition from a developmental perspective with other important issues, such as motivation, self-directed learning, and a focus on the social context of learning. According to (Glasersfeld, 1996), there are two main aspects of constructivism. First, learning is a process of knowledge construction instead of absorption. We construct knowledge based on our own perceptions and conceptions of our world; therefore, each of us constructs a different meaning or concept. Learning, in constructivists’ view, requires the building of conceptual structures through reflection and abstraction. Since each learner has to construct his or her knowledge, concepts cannot be transmitted from teacher to learner by means of words. Learning occurs only when the learners are actively involved in the construction and reorganization of concepts.

Second, knowledge is highly related to the environment in which the learner experiences and constructs the knowledge. In other words, understanding is indexed by experience.

Therefore, constructivists emphasize cognitive experience in authentic activities. The context need not be the real world of work, however, to be authentic; rather, learning activities should employ the type of tasks that are the ordinary practices of the culture (Brown et al., 1989; Duffy and Jonassen, 1992; Resnick, 1987).

The second main aspect of constructivism is similar to situated learning. Situated learning takes the theory of social and ecological interaction as its basis. Situated learning emphasizes social interaction. Constructivism, on the other hand,
emphasizes context and environment. One of the recommendations of constructivism is to engage students in building objects. This is a promising approach to assist learners in constructing theoretical constructs. This objectifying approach serves several purposes.

First, it becomes possible to manipulate these objects and observe the effects, and by doing so the presentation of the concept is visible. Second, manipulating objects allows learners to raise their own questions, generate their own hypotheses, and then test the hypotheses. Third, object displays ensure that individuals talk about the same thing and have visible references for the discussion. In constructivism, constructing an understanding requires that the learners have the opportunities to articulate their ideas, to test those ideas through experimentation and conversation, and to consider connections between the phenomena that they are examining and other applications of the concept. The opportunity for learners to discuss and clarify their experiences is essential, because it encourages self-organization and reflective abstraction. This reflective abstraction is the driving force of learning. Dialogue within a community promotes further thinking. A constructivist classroom is seen as a community engaged in activity, reflection, and conversation for students to achieve advanced knowledge acquisition, multiple presentations that revisit the same concepts in different contexts, at different times, and for different purposes are essential for obtaining mastery.

The Teacher’s Role-

Using a Constructivist approach, teachers are challenged to provide teaching techniques that support students’ construction of their understanding. Teachers need to make the concepts and phenomena interesting and important to the students. The teacher should offer a variety of methods for exploration and provide various approaches. Content must be covered multiple times. Multiple implications and applications of the concept must be presented in realistic, meaningful contexts, and the interconnections among knowledge components must be made explicit. No single presentation is sufficient to provide all pertinent information.

A Constructivist Approach to Teaching-

In addition, merely providing the experience is not sufficient; the teacher should ask questions and listen carefully to students’ interpretations of the data. The teacher
must push students to think as clearly as they can about their ideas. The teacher should perceive errors as the results of the learners’ conceptions for the moment, because at that moment that is what makes sense to the student. To modify students’ misconceptions, the teacher will need to elicit an explanation as to how the students have arrived at their answers, and ask questions or provide a different presentation to allow the students to discover their errors and construct them correct concept. This is when the objectifying theory becomes useful. By allowing students to manipulate objects, the concepts become visible, as do the misconceptions.

Students may discover their misconceptions themselves because their designs do not make sense even to them.

As long as students are having fun, they are motivated and attentive, and it also helps to release the frustration inherent in constructing understanding.

The Learner’s Role-

Constructivism places the learner in the center of the learning process; however, little discussion has focused on learners themselves and how they experience the approach. Most constructivist instruction intentionally presents learners with situations that make them examine their existing knowledge and structures, forcing them to reorganize and construct new models. The learners, not the teacher, are responsible for defending, proving, justifying, and communicating their ideas to the classroom. These types of tasks place a very high cognitive demand on the learners. They are no longer able simply to memorize the content and repeat it on tests and assignments.

Second, learners are asked to take on more responsibility for task management than in conventional instruction. This shift of responsibility is necessary if students are to become autonomous thinkers and learners; yet, many students are not used to managing their own learning. The teacher should make sure that just enough help and guidance is provided, but not too much. It would be difficult, however, for a teacher to support large groups of students. This is where the support that comes from working in groups can be helpful to students.

Third, some students may not want to do the hard work of constructing their understanding and taking on the responsibility of managing their learning. From the
students’ perspective, they are being asked to discover concepts for themselves when they thought that they could be told the concepts, do some exercises, and move on. A constructivist approach asks students to think both about the concept and the process of learning the concept.

Assessment

The most criticized aspect of constructivism is assessment. Instructional designers ask what to assess and how to assess. If the process of construction is the essence of learning, should the process or the result of the process be assessed? If concepts constructed may vary from student to student, what criteria should be used for evaluation?

Evaluation strategies should be consistent with the two main aspects in constructivism, namely, learning is a process of construction, and context is important in the learning process. Effective assessment should be part of the instructional process. Students’ demonstrations of knowledge acquisition, their products, should be noted as only part of the evaluation; the process should also be evaluated.

The second suggestion is that evaluation should occur in contexts that are as rich and complex as those used in instruction. Since it is important to present multiple perspectives in a constructivist learning environment, the evaluation process should also reflect and accept multiple perspectives. Evaluation therefore requires a panel of reviewers, and each reviewer should have the credentials for evaluating students from a meaningful perspective. Allowing for multiple perspectives does mean the absence of standards. Constructivism views learning as a process in which the learner constructs new ideas based on current and past knowledge.

Example:

- Write a picture description
- Write a meaningful description with the help of the word ‘school’.
- ‘Learning by Doing’ helps to make knowledge of students concrete and realistic. Students get actual, firsthand experience. This is useful for development of writing skill.
The present study is based chiefly on Cognitive theory and Constructivism. Yet, it is not possible to ignore other theories completely. The principles of all theories are not mutually exclusive, consequently, some activities included in the ABP prepared by the researcher show traces of behaviorism, naturalism, suggestopedia, input hypothesis, monitor hypothesis, affective filter hypothesis and of course, the critical age factor.

At the same time, the study relies heavily on cognitivism, constructivism and task-based approach.

1.4 POSITION OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

In this scenario of globalization, a need is felt for a global language, and undoubtedly, English has acquired the position of global language on account of several reasons, both social and political. Today, English is considered to be an international language. “An international language belongs to its users, not to the countries whose national languages have become internationalized” (Edge, 1993).

The position of English in the world today has changed greatly and the number of users is increasing rapidly. Whatever be the future of English, the current figures show that it is way ahead of other languages when it comes to communication across continents and people. Graddol (1997) has predicted that “Those who speak English will outnumber first language speakers, and increasingly, will decide the global future of English.” There has been a change in the function of English over the last century, from ‘great literature’ to a ‘tool of communication’. It is a time of exciting changes in the development of English. The changes are occurring much faster than at any other time in the history of the English language. In the present world perspective, English is an important language and extreme sentimental urges should not make us give it up. English is a living language because it grows and enriches itself as the time passes. It possesses capacity to assimilate words from other languages. Therefore, it has become a very flexible vehicle of thought. It provides greater capacity of reason, judgment, critical balance and equity.

English is an international language. It is spoken and understood by a vast majority of people living on the globe. It is, therefore, a world language. Knowledge of English is essential for establishing intellectual, cultural, economic, commercial and
political relations with the rest of the world. Therefore, English serves as a link language. In the present context of the world situation, India cannot afford to remain isolated from the rest of the world. There are nations that are advancing by leaps and bounds. There are cultural, economic and political movements, throughout the world. India has much to learn from these and to contribute to these. For such active participation, study of English is a must, for it is a window to the world. English has been assigned the role of a library language. English language is rich in humanistic, scientific and technical literature. More and more knowledge produced through English language has made it a living stream of growing knowledge. Mastery of English means an easy access to the vast treasures of knowledge. English can serve as a unifying link for greater and greater unification of India with the world.

English was introduced in India about two centuries ago. Lord Macaulay was mainly responsible for sowing this foreign plant of English in the Indian soil. During the British rule over India, English enjoyed the top-most position. It was the first language in the whole country. It was the lingua franca of the literate. It was considered to be the queen of languages. In every walk of life, it was the vehicle of thought and activity.

In 1947, India became independent and the British left the country. The whole administration, including the language policy came into the hands of Indian authorities. The very question of the place of English in India became controversial. Some leaders like Mahatma Gandhi argued that English should be uprooted from the country, but some others favored the retention of English.

People like C. Rajagopalacharya and Pandit Nehru realized the importance of English in the progress of the nation. In the words of Pandit Nehru, “One hundred and fifty years of intimate contact has made English an integral part of our educational system, and this cannot be changed without injury to the cause of education in India. In addition, English has become one of the major languages of the world and Indians can neglect it only at the risk of loss of themselves.”

Efforts were made after Independence to replace English which was the language of administration with Hindi, but with no success. Today, people have stopped arguing about replacement because undoubtedly, English is taking long strides in the global
situation. Moreover, Hindi is neither understood nor favored unanimously by all states in our country. English, as a linking language is convenient and accepted by all, thus solving the language problem in this multi-lingual nation.

During the British period, English was the official language of the rulers. It was almost used as the lingua franca of the country. It enjoyed the most prominent place in the curriculum of the secondary school. It was a compulsory subject. It was the medium of instruction. It was the language of administration, commerce and international counsel. Because of this prominent place of English, Indians were naturally driven to it and for good or bad. They found themselves in a psychological bondage of English. Such a dominant position of English brought about some evil consequences.

According to the educational theories, a subject taught through the mother-tongue of a child, is understood thoroughly well. English, because it is a foreign language was something unnatural to Indian students. English as a compulsory language was an obstacle in the rapid spread of education. Indian languages remained neglected and underdeveloped. We cannot, however, remain blind to the good consequences. To mention only one, it was the study of English language that inculcated nationalism, independent thoughts and a burning desire for freedom. It created consciousness of political bondage which finally flowered into attainment of Independence.

English is a foreign language in India is true, but with a difference. English is one of the richest languages of the world. It has become the language of science, commerce, trade and international negotiations. It cannot be ignored for higher scientific technological studies. Hence we must benefit ourselves by this language. Almost 60% of the world's advanced research is done in English and the rest is quickly translated into English. So it becomes necessary for an Indian to know English otherwise he will cut himself off from the world knowledge.

1.4.1 TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN MAHARASHTRA

The teaching of English in Maharashtra is in chaotic and far from satisfactory state. The standard of English here is falling day by day. The active vocabulary used by the students is very poor. Quite a significant number of students cannot use even common structures.
Below are the conditions under which English is taught and learnt in most of the schools in Maharashtra (A.R. Bisht, 2001). These are also some of the observations made by the researcher during school visits.

a) Lack of qualified and competent teachers.

b) Inaccurate methods of teaching English.

c) Apathy to new techniques and procedures.

d) Lack of incentives for in service professional growth of English teachers.

e) Inadequate provision of Audio-visual Aids.

f) Lack of research in the field of methodology of teaching English.

g) Examination oriented attitude of the school authorities, teachers, parents and students.

There is a need to increase the time given to the study of English. There is also a need for orientation courses and in-service training of teachers. A revision of the curriculum to make it less burdensome would also be helpful.

1.4.2 PLACE OF ENGLISH IN CURRICULUM

Formal education in India was started by the British. Consequently, after Independence, the medium of instruction in secondary and higher secondary education was English. Gradually there was a shift in the medium of instruction from English to mother tongue at all levels. This policy was framed by the Government at the central level. But the hard fact is that realizing the increasing impact of English on life and career of individuals, there is a mushroom growth of English medium schools all over the country. The demand for English medium is growing not only in urban areas but also in rural parts. Recently, some state governments have introduced English from standard I in all the schools. The three-language-formula was designed in 1956, according to which, every school student was required to study three languages:

1. Mother tongue, that is, the regional language

2. English

3. Hindi (in states where Hindi is not the Mother Tongue.)
4. In case the MT is Hindi, the child could learn any other regional language.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education: 2000 relating to language states that the Three Language Formula is still relevant and efforts should be made to implement it more vigorously.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education: A Discussion Document, released on 1st January, 2000 states that "In a number of states/organizations/boards, however, the spirit of the formula has not been followed and the mother tongue of the people has been denied the status of the first language ....". Because of the changed socio-economic scenario, the difference between the second and the third languages has dwindled. Thus in reality there may be two second languages for all purposes and functions.

1.4.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF WRITING SKILLS OF STD. VI

This research deals with the development of writing skills in students of Std. VI. It is necessary to consider the objectives of writing skills, according to which the syllabus for English has been designed. Teacher’s handbook published by Textbook Bureau, Maharashtra State, following are the aims and objectives pertaining to writing skill for Std.VI (Revised Syllabus, 2005).

The general aims of teaching English at the upper primary level are to make the students aware of the importance of English in their education and make them competent to use English independently.

The objectives related to writing skills are as follows:

- To write in a neat legible hand with correct spellings and punctuation marks.
- To write with ease and confidence.
- To write with appropriate structure and idiom.
- To use different forms of writing like letters, stories, reports etc.
- To learn to write independently.
- To develop an individual style of writing.
- To develop an implicit understanding of English syntax and grammar.
- To use reference material like dictionaries, directories etc.
- To develop the habit of writing neatly in one line
• To complete the sentence meaningfully.
• To enjoy writing various words related to the given topic.
• To complete the dialogue and instructions.
• To write answers based on a passage and frame paragraphs.

The researcher observed that the above objectives are not achieved in most schools; hence he prepared the ABP as an attempt to achieve the objectives of writing skills at primary level.

1.5 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Writing is an important language skill and one of the difficult skills for most Indian students.

Pandian, S. (2007) commented in his paper on changing paradigms in English language teaching that language teaching is indeed a difficult job. Teaching English language and covering the syllabus may be very difficult. The teacher should yield to change. Language teachers should carry their studies which will make them self-confident, self-reliant and ever-changing to be up-to-date in all activities.

Kadam Pornima (2011) had prepared a language skill development program in English for B. Ed students, using an experimental method. The program was prepared for development of four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. The result of the study showed that students had performed well in listening, speaking and reading but writing skill program still needed improvement.

From the above studies it is evident that more attention needs to be paid towards the development of writing skills at the right stage, before they develop incorrect habits. Hence, the researcher selected writing rather than any other language skill for this research. Researchers all over the world tried various methods for effective teaching of writing skills, yet, it is generally considered to be difficult and hence, there is tremendous scope for further improvement as well as devising new methods of dealing with writing skill.

Considering the age group of the students, that is students studying in Std. VI, the researcher thought that interest can be developed in writing as second language by devising a method that includes activity. It is also necessary to sustain the attention
of the learners by keeping them actively engaged. Hence, the researcher thought that perhaps, an ABP can be successful in improving the writing skill of students of Std. VI.

**Reasons for preparation of Activity Based Program:**

Ram, S.K. (1989) had made an attempt to understand the methods and techniques of teaching English used by teachers at class VI level. He came to the conclusion that teachers used the traditional technique of teaching though they were trained to use new techniques. Teachers were found to be unaware of structural and situational approach.

David Nunan (1991) presented his views on influence of the communicative task on curriculum development. Language teaching methodology and an overview of the research base for Task Based Language Teaching are discussed in the study. The communicative task has evolved as an important component within curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation. Task based language teaching, characterized by various communicative principles and features are supported by a healthy research agenda which emerged from the process oriented L2 acquisition.

Rajendra, M. (1992) made an attempt to develop activity centered teaching of English. It was an experimental study. The findings indicated that activity centered approach of teaching English gave an improvement in reading skill. He observed that learners prefer activity based teaching.

Nunan, (1996) believed that teachers must find out what students want to learn and how they want to learn. Williams and Burden (1997) affirm that teachers’ beliefs play an important role in language learning.

Harakara Karuna,(1996) tried to improve English writing skill of VIII Std. Students through training program based on synectics model designed by William Gordon. This package proved effective for improving writing skill.

Hayes, D. (1997) wrote one practical book on helping teachers to cope with large classes. The writer suggested that when teachers deal with large classes, training methodology must be primarily task-based and inductive. He further added activities used in coping with large classes such as – 1. Video- clips 2. Training in ERICs (a
collaborative process) where trainees collaborate with teachers and get an opportunity to share ideas and experiences. In addition to suggesting problems of large classes which are divided into 5 areas – discomfort, control, individual attention, evaluation and learning effectiveness, Hayes also discusses training activities to overcome problems in the classroom.

Bada and Okan, (2000) believed that teachers should be aware of learner’s preferences to conduct classroom activities.

Prasad, K. (2000) used drawing as a medium to teach Telugu, English, Environmental Studies and Mathematics in his research, titled ‘English through Drawing’. The objective was to develop creativity, self-confidence and understanding of the students. Alphabets were presented through pictures and students had to identify them.

After conducting a thorough review of related literature and on the basis of his own experience in teaching and dealing with primary school language teachers, the researcher came to the following conclusions:

- Writing requires a lot of practice. It is mechanical. School children find it rather dull and tedious. Particularly, students do not find the graphical aspect which is the foundation of the writing skill meaningful to their experiences.
- Grammatically correct constructions are necessary in writing. Students are unable to frame correct sentences. Students find it difficult to write meaningful sentences.
- Written sentences, unlike oral sentences have to be complete in structure and sense; hence students need to take extra care.
- Written mode is a permanent record and serious in nature, so students are apprehensive about it.
- Students are unable to write in a legible handwriting.

Since writing is different from other language skills teaching writing skills have to be handled in a different manner in the classroom. For example,

- Writing skill requires devotion of more time.
• It is necessary to allot more time to writing skills in the school time table.
• Teachers have to teach mechanics of writing before they can actually begin with writing activity.
• Separate time must be given for practice.
• Writing needs individual attention which is not possible in large classrooms.
• Activity based tasks are beneficial but they cannot be executed by untrained teachers and they need more time.
• Teachers lack confidence in preparing their own teaching material in order to give sufficient exposure to the students in writing skill.

Hence, the researcher decided to prepare an ABP to make the task of acquiring writing skills easy for students and to help the teachers to use effective teaching method.

The present study would help teachers to create interest in the students in the writing activity and follows a play way method.

• The program reduces the mechanical characteristic and engages the students’ attention.
• It takes into account the graphics stage as well as the content writing stage.
• It is graded and follows the maxim of easy to difficult.
• It provides a variety of activities that keep the students engaged and interested.

The researcher has studied English as a teaching method. During his visits to Marathi medium schools in order to examine the current status regarding teaching and learning of writing skills, he observed that students make many mistakes while writing and that they find writing most difficult compared to other language skills. At the upper primary level, writing is the most important skill.

From classes first to fifth, children are neither interested in learning a new language which is not relevant to them nor are they aware of the importance of English. It is only after class V that students are sufficiently equipped with the basics for English and writing in the true sense begins to develop as a basis for higher classes. If students fail to learn the basics of writing at this stage, they remain weak in the skill
in future. The foundation has to be strong and hence, the researcher selected Class VI for implementation of ABP.

The study also enabled the researcher to get an idea about the strategies employed by teachers in the current situation to develop writing skill among students. It also pointed at the fact that existing writing skills can be improved by utilizing an activity based program. The researcher emphasized on all aspects like mechanics of writing, use of capital letters, appropriate spacing of characters, correct spellings and legible handwriting, which could help students to develop their writing skills.

Besides graphics the more important aspects are descriptive writing, creative writing, and writing letters.

- The survey helped to get information about different writing activities conducted by teachers.
- Creative and independent writing ability can be developed through the program.
- Self-learning techniques can be promoted.

Students can understand the mechanics of writing like writing across the page from top to bottom and left to right, beginning new sentences with capital letters, beginning a paragraph with an indentation.

- The program can help to overcome the difficulties encountered by students while carrying out independent writing activities.
- Writing activity could be a joyful and meaningful experience to the students. It would pave the way for further development in higher classes.

**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

**1.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

To Prepare and to test the effectiveness of an Activity Based Program on writing skill in English for the students of Std. VI.

To make teaching of writing more effective, the researcher developed an ABP which the students find more interesting and can be an alternative to conventional methods. The program is prepared with the intention of improving the writing skill of students of Std. VI in Marathi medium schools.
1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Effectiveness –

Conceptual - Producing a result that is wanted or intended producing successful result (Online Dictionary, Retrieved on 7th April 2012).

Operational - In this study, the word ‘effectiveness’ is used to see a desired result of ABP on the basis of the difference between mean scores of pre-test and post-test.

Activity:

Conceptual - State of doing, an energetic action or movement, an educational process or procedure to stimulate learning through actual experience. It is a purposeful and planned action (Webster’s Dictionary, Retrieved on 15th November, 2012).

Operational - In this research, activities include the written actions to be performed by teachers and students. All activities are oriented towards developing the writing skill of students.

E.g. (Cognitive theory)
- Making meaningful sentences by using the given words.
- Writing words that have similar meanings or which are opposite in meaning.
- Constructing a story with the help of given outline.

E.g. (Theory of constructivism)
- Writing small pieces of conversations.
- Procedure writing and describing the pictures

Activity Based Program:

Operational - It includes a set of purposeful pre-planned activities prepared by the researcher for students of Std. VI, for improving their writing skills.

Writing skill:

Conceptual - Writing is an ability to express feelings and emotions in written form in English. It includes all the objectives of writing skill like developing good writing
habits, writing in a straight line, using appropriate punctuation marks, writing dialogues, complete sentences and creative writing.

Operational - In this research, writing skill includes ability of students to express emotions and thoughts through written medium, by using appropriate vocabulary, correct grammatical constructions and punctuation marks.

**Students of Standard VI:**

The students who have studied English as a compulsory subject as a third language from, Std, I to VI, who are in the age group 11 to 12 years.

1.8 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1. To identify the existing strategies used by teachers for improving writing skill of students.

2. To investigate the problems faced by students while writing in English.

3. To develop an Activity Based Program for developing the writing skill of students.

4. To test the effectiveness of an Activity Based Program on writing skill for Std. VI students.

1.9 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (For objectives No. 1 and 2)

- What are the existing strategies used by teachers for teaching writing skills to students?

- What problems do students face while writing in English?

1.9.1 HYPOTHESIS

**Research Hypothesis (H₁) (For objective No. 4)**

The implementation of the ABP will show positive results in improving writing skill of students.

**Null Hypothesis: (H₀)**

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test in development of writing skill before and after the implementation of ABP.
1.10 ASSUMPTIONS

1. There are individual variations in acquisition of language skills (Noam Chomsky, 1965).

2. Engaging students in activities brings about incidental learning (Nunan, 2004).

3. Students show the same stages in development of grammatical knowledge (Hunt Kellogg W., 1965).

4. Errors cannot be avoided without a sound knowledge of grammar (M.M. Gandhi, 1885).

5. Students are aware of graphics and mechanics of writing (Scores in pre-test).

6. Students come from different Socio-economic background.

1.11 SCOPE

- All Marathi medium schools having Std.VI.

1.11.1 LIMITATIONS

- The effectiveness of ABP in developing writing skill of English was based on the responses given by the students to pre-test and post-test.

1.11.2 DE-LIMITATIONS

- The ABP is prepared only to develop writing skill.

- The study is carried out only for the students of Std. VI in Z P Marathi medium schools located in Aland- Markal cluster, Pune.

- The study is limited to the structural aspect of sentences and word formation and not to all aspects of writing.

- Findings and conclusions are applicable only to the students of Std. VI from Marathi medium schools.

1.12 CONCLUSION

The first chapter serves as a General and Theoretical background to the study. The General background has covered all necessary details, starting from language skills, with special emphasis on writing skill, the history of writing, different writing systems, aspects of writing, difficulties involved in writing and methods used for
teaching writing skill. The steps involved in the development of writing skills are also covered.

It also deals with the importance of English in India and the growing importance in the modern world. It discusses the position of English in the curriculum and the aims and objectives of teaching English in India. In the following part, the researcher has given the various theories and approaches to language learning and teaching and explained how they are used in preparation of the ABP. The meaning and concept of ABP have also been explained.

The next part is about the theoretical background, in which the researcher has dealt with the steps to be carried out in the research. The aims and objectives, need and importance, justification for selecting the topic and standard, reason for dealing with writing skill and choosing the ABP, the operational definitions, the hypothesis, details of sample are all covered successively.