CHAPTER V

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE TEACHING OF WRITING AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL

The research done in the earlier chapters directs the individual researcher into more well-defined views with regard to the teaching of writing. The examination of courses in writing in Chapter II, the indepth observation of 'learners' needs' as perceived by student writers and teachers as well as 'learning needs' as realized through analysis done with the aid of discoursal frame works available in current linguistic theory in Chapter III, and the Principles of Composition offered in Chapter IV lead to a number of suggestions for the teaching of writing at the undergraduate level. On the one hand these suggestions offer recommendations with regard to syllabus design and on the other to a change in teaching methodology with a redefinition of the role of the teacher.

Recommendations with regard to syllabus design:

1. Definition of the term 'syllabus'.

The term 'syllabus' signifies an educational perspective. One such view is offered by Allwright who sees the syllabus "as PLAN", as "REALITY", and "as EFFECT". As a plan a syllabus must try to predict,

for a particular situation what learners will need to have learned by the end of the learning experience being planned for". The syllabus "as reality", on the other hand, comprises all that takes place in the classroom i.e pre-planned learning opportunities "that are part of the syllabus as plan", events "that arise independent of any plan, perhaps simply as a by-product of classroom interaction". The syllabus "as Reality" has reference to all that takes place in the classroom enriched or otherwise. The syllabus "as EFFECT" is all that gets learned by each individual learner - which can vary from individual to individual. According to Allwright "the best learner is presumably the one who maximizes the uptake from all available learning opportunities not just those that directly reflect the teacher's original plan".

What the general teacher and student is familiar with is the explicit syllabus "as plan", the prespecification or preselection of items. Though it is now being realized that this prespecification is only one part of a complete teaching programme providing only a statement of aims, it forms a very valuable part to the teacher

3. Ibid., p.3.
4. Ibid., p.5.
and the student. The teacher has to devise ways and means of achieving these aims and the student immediately sets the syllabus targets as maximum goals. Besides providing a tangible educational plan, the syllabus "as plan" provides teachers with a tool to compare what has been attempted in the classroom with the targets prescribed. This approach to syllabus planning is upheld by C.J. Brumfit when he argues that the syllabus has two roles:

"On the one hand, it is a means of activating and motivating the capacities of students to acquire language, and thus provides a structure for initial teaching of linguistic tokens (either as language items, or through content selection). On the other hand, it is a device to enable teachers to check coverage and appropriacy of material, so that adjustments can be made retrospectively and the long-term process of teaching can be monitored. In this sense it provides a basis for remedial work, correction and revision in class, as well as self-awareness and renewal for teachers out of class".

These are some of the advantages of an explicit, external syllabus. It does not attempt to cover all aspects of the teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom but its usefulness for teachers and students cannot be ignored. As Brumfit says,

"Indeed without the specification, it is difficult to see how the criticism of approaches to language teaching can proceed, for we shall have no criteria for measuring whether one kind of language performance is taking place at the end of our course rather than another, and thus relating what is done to what is offered by the teaching programme. We may wish to teach the process, but we have to measure the product".


6. Ibid.
However, some of the disadvantages or limitations of the syllabus as plan is that it gives expression only to certain aspects of teaching - the content and not the method. Each stage in this syllabus is regarded as a separate unit and does not envisage another stage or further evolution. No provision is made for future learning and teaching and this reflects a lack of forward planning. The examination system only serves to produce records and makes no provision for feedback, either for the student or the teacher, and therefore does not provide for self-evaluation, improved methodology, curriculum development or changes in educational policy which then have to originate from without, rather than from within. Besides, it is based on a rationalist ideology in education rather than an empiricist one.

"The prime concern of the rationalist must be with knowledge, and especially that knowledge which he or she is convinced has some intrinsic universal or overriding value. The prime concern of an empiricist philosophy of education must be with the development of the individual since it is only by starting from there that allowance can be made for the tentative nature of knowledge and values that the continued evaluation of both which empiricism commits us can be promoted and that the ossification and the reification of knowledge can be prevented." 7

Thus it is maintained that in educational planning there is a constant need for investigation, review,

experimentation and revision. This cannot be attempted by the usual administrative body that is far removed from the teacher and the classroom but should begin with the teacher and the learner. This leads to the changed role of the teacher in the teaching process— not as an implementer of given programmes but one who in accordance with linguistic principles designs writing courses and goes on to teach them.

Allwright's second type of syllabus - the syllabus as Reality refers to all that is not planned so deliberately. Here the abilities, awareness or knowledge of the teaching community in terms of linguistics, literature or methods of teaching should be taken into consideration as well as the range of teaching styles prevalent amongst them. Due attention should be paid to actual teaching methods in the classroom and the manner in which teaching presentation would be most effective.

The syllabus as Effect focuses on learning by the individual. Elsewhere in "Syllabus Design and Evaluation" Allwright comments that it was Corder who made the distinction between 'input' and 'intake' stating that though teachers control the input, materials, aids, what is said or taught in the classroom, the individual learner controls the intake - by a process of selecting what he wishes to attend to. This suggests that the learner may impose a natural sequence on the learning process.
"Given such a possibility it would seem reasonable to hope to study learners to determine this 'natural' sequence and then to order the syllabus in precisely this way to facilitate rather than hinder the 'intaking process'. 8

In such a syllabus, selection and sequencing would be determined by the learners natural preferences and this would result in a 'learner-generated syllabus', in which Allwright maintains

"we are no longer talking about qualitatively different stages; that should prompt us to reconsider what sorts of items (rather than simply which items) are to be presented to the learners". 9

Taking this view one could begin with the individual user's model of the language as in Suggestopoeia rather than the analyst's and pursue the objective of "qualitatively different stages". But in the second language classroom where the teacher student ratio is 1:75 one would have to begin with the model presented by homogeneous groups of language performers. Cognizance should be taken of different learning patterns amongst students and those who would benefit most by a particular learning pattern should be offered that pattern of activity. Others may benefit by a learning pattern that is slightly or radically different and should be provided for as

well. Of course all this demands a great deal of awareness and knowledge on the part of the teacher who would have to make choices regarding the best route to be used to help different groups of students advance - through individual work, partnership work or team work.

Whether one wishes to regard syllabus construction as "Plan", "Reality" or "Effect" a change of focus is desirable in the teaching of writing at universities in India - from an emphasis on the elements of the language and the teaching of the constituents - in some theoretical manner - to its use. A focus on discourse will enable teachers and students to bring about this change of emphasis from form to purpose and function. It will also provide a reorientation in teaching materials and classroom techniques towards meaning and purpose and, as it is concerned with suprasentential structure, will indicate the manner in which larger stretches of language can be formed. Besides, teachers being more aware of the discoursal features involved in writing would focus attention on guiding writing development rather than determining syllabus content.

**Further representations of the notion of syllabus**

Prabhu 10 offers four representations for the notion of 'Syllabus', regarding it as (a) an operational

construct (b) an illuminative construct (c) an instrument of organizational control (d) a document of public consent.

a) As an operational construct the syllabus is concerned with "what is to be done in the classroom, not necessarily with what is perceived to be taught or learnt thereby". The procedural syllabus which is an exemplification of this type of syllabus is based on the above principle. Teaching here is dependent on inter-teacher relationship as exchange of lesson plans and indications of their success form part of procedural guidance. The procedural syllabus, also employs 'task based teaching' which is based on 'task types' rather than specific tasks and is dependent on the categories of information (such as rules, prices, distances), the modes of request made on the learner (inference, calculation, collation of information) and types of constraint (the shortest time, the lowest cost). The cognitive complexity of a task, Prabhu states, is dependent on (i) the amount of information relevant to the task (ii) the reasoning needed (such as deducing, inferencing etc.) to perform the task (iii) the amount of precision required, such as linguistic correctness, accurate understanding and production of the language to accomplish the task (iv) the conceptual knowledge or world knowledge involved in performing the task and (v) the

degree of abstractness involved. (The last is a criterion in task difficulty as familiarity with the aims and restraints of a task makes for easier task - performance. Besides these listed above, Prabhu states, that the procedural syllabus employs cognitive complexity 'information-gap' tasks followed by 'reasoning-gap' tasks which can be regarded as a "special case of grading by the reasoning required" in its design. Information gap tasks appear at the beginning of the course while reasoning gap tasks appear later. It was also observed that a change from the oral to the written medium offered greater difficulty while a change from non-linguistic to linguistic modes of information made more demands on the learner.

Prabhu advocates a certain degree of 'generality in specification' when designing courses, as a single syllabus cannot anticipate all the sources of challenge that will confront the individual learner, and goes on to argue that what constitutes "reasonable challenge" for a class depends on "the learner's knowledge of the world and cognitive state, the teacher's ability to give help through simplification or negotiation, and his or her assessment of learners' success". The

13. Ibid., p.89.
14. Ibid.
procedural syllabus, he maintains, cannot be evaluated by the degree of generality or specificity but by its "operability" — the degree of support it offers for some of the teacher's decisions.

b) As an 'illuminative construct' the syllabus is concerned with the product of learning and the content of the course. (For example, a course built on the grammatical structures of the language would be regarded as a content syllabus). The techniques employed in a 'content syllabus' can be distinguished from the teaching procedures which inform the syllabus as 'operational construct'. These are terminological distinctions, however, for as Prabhu clarifies, a procedural syllabus does not divorce itself from the notion of 'syllabus as an illuminative construct'. The view that language is a development of organic growth "is itself a conceptual model". As he goes on to explain, "the probable complexity of the internal system which represents grammatical competence, the development of that system as a holistic process, and the formation, deployment and revision of abstract cognitive structures have all drawn on illuminative constructs for their articulation".

16. Ibid., p.90
17. Ibid.
c) **As an 'instrument of organizational control'** the syllabus is regarded as a system by which 'supervisory control' is established. Some of the notions associated here include the monitoring activity in the classroom and general levels of uniformity, often sought in teaching.

d) **As a document of public consent** it is maintained that a syllabus should be a document and record available for examination and criticism by the public.

3. **Types of courses.** Hutchinson and Waters\(^{18}\) recognize three main types of course design: 'language centred', 'skills centred' and 'learning centred'. The 'language centred course' goes on to describe the learner's target situation as well as theoretical views on language, use these to identify linguistic features of the target situation, create a syllabus, design materials to illustrate the syllabus items and formulate evaluation procedures. Hutchinson and Waters point out that the benefits of this course are that it begins with the learner and works on to an evaluation of the syllabus. In this approach the syllabus is the main constituent of the course providing the texts, exercises and bases for evaluation. The advantage of such a course is that it is logical and straightforward. The disadvantages

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are that though the course begins with an assessment of learner's needs, the learner is not taken into consideration through the remainder of the course. Lack of flexibility, disregard of feedback procedures, inability to take into consideration the margin of error are some of the drawbacks of its design. It is also based on the erroneous view that since analysis of the inputs of the course are systematic and organized, the learning that follows is also systematic.

'A skills centred course design' maintains the view that language behaviour is based on skills and strategies for the production and reception of discourse. These courses are not based on performance data but on the competence that underlies performance. A 'skills centred course' analyses target needs, selects suitable texts, specifies the skills required, adapts the texts necessary to focus on them, devises techniques to teach and constructs a system to assess their acquisition. The skills centred approach, does not base itself on surface data but the competence that underlies performance. It employs needs analysis in order to discover the competence required to perform in the target situation as well as to discover the knowledge and abilities of learners. The skills centred approach takes more cognizance of the learner than a language centred approach. It takes into account the language processing ability
of the learner, builds on the positive factors and not just the 'lacks'. Hutchinson and Waters point out that in the final evaluation a skills centred approach regards the learner as "a user of language rather than as a learner of language" and is concerned with "the processes of language use not of language learning".

A 'learning centred approach' Hutchinson and Waters state is also known as a 'learner-centred' approach. In a learner centred approach, learning is determined completely by the learner. A truly learner centred approach is not a formalised approach, and therefore it is not employed at present. This is because predetermined syllabi and materials (which are not advocated in learner centred approaches) are demanded by institutions. Learning is dependent on the learners' prior knowledge, their interest and motivation in using that ability for further learning and to comprehend new information. Learning is appreciated not just in terms of 'intake' alone but 'negotiation', and the learner's goals, the learning context and the route the learner takes to reach his/her goals become important.


20. Ibid.
While a language centred course is based on situational performance and a skills centred course on the competence that underlies that performance, a learner centred course goes on to investigate how competence is acquired by the learner. A learning centred course identifies the target situation, analyses it, then analyses the learning situation, formulates syllabus and materials, uses the materials and evaluates learner achievement. While a language centred course bases itself on the requirements of the target situation, and the skills centred course takes this as well as the learning situation into consideration, a learning centred approach has to consider the learner at every stage. Course design here is regarded as a negotiated and dynamic process with interrelated components. It begins with the identification of learners and the learning situation which together with knowledge of language theory facilitates, on the one hand, a more comprehensive identification of the attitudes and wants of potential learners and constraints on the teaching learning situation, and, on the other, an identification of the skills required to function in the target situation. Both these components enable the writing up of syllabus and materials in a manner relevant and beneficial to the learning situation. Part of the implications of a 'learning centred' approach is that a single focus in language teaching cannot be maintained and a more integrated approach has to be followed. Many more
factors such as the learner's interest, enjoyment and involvement influence course design. Thus the learning context is taken into account and the complexity of the learning process recognized.

So it is observed that syllabus design, has in recent years moved away from the notion of a 'content syllabus' or 'language centred' syllabus composed of definite linguistic items and fixed level objectives. Prabhu\textsuperscript{21} states that content syllabuses are over elaborate, employ too many specific language dimensions - in terms of grammar, lexis, notions, functions or discourse. Such syllabuses are often so 'highly structured', 'multi-dimensional' in composition and 'systematically complex' that they result in a delimitation of language, and strict adherence to form wherein little choice is offered to the learner. Allwright\textsuperscript{22} challenges the traditional concept of syllabus as a specification based on linguistic content and sequencing. He demonstrates its weakness from the standpoint of a) second language acquisition research. b) classroom research. c) classroom innovations d) work in ESP or 'the British Challenge' as he terms it. He states that second language acquisition studies disprove the notion of a universal sequence

22. Allwright, "Syllabus Design and Evaluation".
and posit the possibility of a natural sequence which should be facilitated. Work in the field of classroom research has not supported teacher imposed sequences on learners. Innovations in the classroom, also, go to show that universal generalizations with regard to language teaching are undesirable for local situations. Finally, he states, work in the area of ESP (The British Challenge) which basis itself on identifying learners needs and specifying target language behaviour, appear to base themselves on an artificialization and simplification of the language learning process. Such approaches he terms 'situational approaches' to course design as they do not attend to the process of learning. They are based on linguistic analyses of the target language that may have little validity in terms of learning criteria. He therefore advocates, the use of a 'procedural syllabus' which "specifies classroom procedures but makes no attempt to specify or to sequence target language content".23 In this type of syllabus, sequences of activities and classroom routines are specified. A greater fit or similiarity is developed between the learning situation and the target situation and classroom observation becomes necessary in syllabus evaluation with the teacher being the key variable.

From the discussions of the syllabus so far, it has been noted that courses that emphasise what Allwright refers to as 'plan or 'specification', Prabhu refers to as a 'content syllabus' and Hutchinson and Waters refer to as a 'language centred' syllabus, are inadequate as representations of language learning. The larger dimensions of language pedagogy, it is perceived, have to be included in course design.

The Proposal

The proposal being made here is for the formation of a course in writing that helps the learner become a more confident, disciplined writer who progressively acquires greater control, in his writing. A course based on this aim would involve the teacher in showing learners how writers shape their text, on the one hand, and in enabling learners to shape and reshape their writing, on the other. The teacher would therefore be involved in consciousness raising techniques and sensitization procedures that would make writers more perceptive of discoursal norms as well as more aware of their own writing processes. It would result in the teacher concretizing the learners' expressed needs and requirements as well as the teacher's perceptions into explicit guidelines for course design. Equally the teacher would employ procedures which would go on to develop in the learner a greater understanding of his
writing actions. It would involve the teacher in enabling the learner to define his writing behaviour and thus become more conscious of his reader, purpose, intentions and the parameters of writing.

A. **Showing learners how writers shape their texts**

This process of aiding learners to shape their texts would involve the teacher in sensitizing the learner to features of writing, and in encouraging the learner to analyze written products. As noted earlier, in a writing situation governed by strict context dependency, linguistic and semantic principles control linguistic realizations. Thus frequent language use and a perception of how writing is performed, in a given set of circumstances, enables the learner to become aware of the linguistic conditions that govern particular writing behaviour. In order to develop this context sensitivity and reveal to learners how writing is performed, the teacher could go on to devise a course on the needs of learners, the teacher's own perceptions, and linguistic theory.

The work done in investigating students' needs (in Chapter Three), in delineating the principles of composition (in Chapter Four) and in defining the concept of syllabus (in Chapter Five) can be employed by the teacher in formulating a writing course pertinent to undergraduate learners.
Formation of a writing syllabus requires selection of the components of writing according to descriptions of language use. The principles of composition derived in Chapter IV are:

1. Reading is important for the development of writing ability.
2. Writing should be taught with a focus on the illocutionary act to be performed.
3. Writing should be treated as a cognitive activity.
4. The frequency of writing experience is important for writing proficiency.
5. Training in revising procedures is important in the teaching of writing.

It is noted that some of the principles mentioned above deal with the components of the written piece (the focus on the illocutionary act and the need to regard writing as a cognitive activity), some with the activity of writing (the importance of revision) and others on the factors that promote writing (the reading ability and frequency practice in writing). Thus the principles direct attention to a description of written language on the one hand and suggest practices that aid its learning on the other.
Using these principles and the situational requirements or instances of use enumerated by students themselves in Chapter Three, the teacher can go on to formulate a course in writing pertinent for the learner. The needs analysis provides an account of the purposes for which learners wish to acquire the language with some indications of the setting to be employed, the role undergraduate learners wish to assume, the written communicative acts they wish to have practice in, the language functions involved in performing these acts, and the discoursal skills required.

For determining course design, however, the data pertaining to learners' needs, as Allwright states, requires interpretation. For illustration here, reference can be made to an account offered by Allwright,24 of two workshop activities given to Polish research scientists who were helped to perceive their 'needs' and 'lacks' and to express their wants. Discussions in Polish and English amongst the learners and needs

24. Allwright, "Perceiving and Pursuing learners needs".
analysis charts were employed to determine how learners rated the frequency and importance of items noted. The learners were then presented with interpretations of the charts and encouraged to speak about their priorities. Allwright notes that in this way learners were not only noting their needs but also making judgements and evaluations with regard to their proficiency. He points out that such feedback also provides a picture of the student's perception of himself as a learner. A course outline was then presented to the learners so that each could determine how he could use it to achieve his goals. Classwork, self-access study or writing workshop time and private consultation time were offered on the timetable together with evening activities - games, films - as well as self access facilities - listening, language work, reading and writing, and communication activities. In this way, the students were enabled to perceive their needs as well as aid the course directors in making decisions about how to assist them in pursuing their goals.
Allwright reports that teachers sorted the learners into groups on the basis of proficiency tests, took Needs Analysis charts to the class, and reported greater responsiveness in class time. One of the techniques used by Allwright was to bring the grammar workbook to class and ask learners not only to complete exercises but to select exercises which they thought would be useful as well. In this way, learners were not only making decisions regarding their self-access time but also pedagogical decisions about how they could conduct their language learning often without the help of a teacher. (Midcourse evaluation, however, revealed that learners wanted more classtime and less self-access time - as they expressed difficulty in using the latter efficiently).

However, it is to be noted, that the course had been used with adult learners who were proficient, educated users of their native languages. The learners had already achieved a great deal of independence in their learning behaviour other than English, were able to explicitly delineate their needs and arrange a learning programme beneficial to them. Undergraduate learners in the second language situation are not comparable because the factors of age, lower levels of efficiency
in the mother tongue or regional language, less well-formed goals makes the delineation and the chartering of a course of vague and confusing process. Therefore the teacher in the second language situation would have to formulate course design. In small classes in the second language teaching situation the teacher may attempt to satisfy individual needs but would find it more practical to cater to group requirements in the large classes.

A questionnaire (Appendix I) was given to 99 students of a Pre-University science class, in the local situation being examined in this study, with the intention of eliciting writing tasks students wished to learn. The questionnaire that was designed as a class profile, also sought information on the students present abilities and the foundation for such achievement. Queries related to the learners' linguistic backgrounds, their mother tongues or regional language preferences, the number of years they had studied with English being their medium of instruction or their second language and, to some degree, the extent they used English outside the classroom. The answered questionnaire also provided information on students previous learning goals, educational experience as well as general interests and responses on the areas students had use for in written English - areas of academic study, career pursuits and requirements.
The list given below offers a view of the learners priorities in terms of the number of learners who expressed a need to study or have practice in a particular writing task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Type of written activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 54</td>
<td>Writing a letter of application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 36</td>
<td>Writing for the college notice board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 22</td>
<td>Taking minutes at a college or association meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 19</td>
<td>Writing for a newspaper or magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 15</td>
<td>Writing compositions or essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 11</td>
<td>Formal letter writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 05</td>
<td>Writing a letter to a friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 03</td>
<td>English grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 03</td>
<td>Notes at a class lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. 03</td>
<td>Writing autobiographies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. 01</td>
<td>Story writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. 01</td>
<td>Writing poetry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher given this data has a list of written discoursal activities the student wishes to engage in. They represent exercises which are socially and academically relevant to the learner as well as psychologically of interest. They are learner - selected items and can therefore be considered learning requirements which, if attended to, will create genuine learning behaviour.
However, as pointed out, by Allwright earlier, these writing needs have to be interpreted and the discrepancies adjusted between the learners priority rating and the teacher's own informed viewpoint. For example, in the above questionnaire survey, it is observed that the learners expressed written needs are, in certain circumstances, distant from the linguistic similarities of the tasks. While 22 students expressed the need to learn how to take notes at a college or association meeting only three expressed the need to take notes at a class lecture. Besides, it is noted, that it is not the cognitive difficulty of a task (which could be regarded as a factor important to the teacher), that determines student need. This is observed when, in the table above, thirty six students mentioned they wished to write for the college notice board (which activity, amongst the students surveyed, was regarded as informal writing) while only 15 wished to write compositions and essays. At the same time, the students offered important feedback on their writing pursuits. Except for 5 students (items 10, 11, 12) stating, they wanted to learn 'expressive' forms of writing, the rest of the class listed activities which could be categorized as 'occupational' or 'situational' which they perceived as being essential for their academic and social written purposes.
However, given the above inventory, the teacher will then go on to investigate the learner's specific demands, examine the linguistic characteristics of each and group those that are similar in terms of the illocutionary act being performed, the cognitive difficulty of the task, the nature of shared knowledge required to perform the exercise and the learner's familiarity or lack of familiarity with such forms. As writing is "a rule - governed form of behaviour" the teacher will go on to investigate the concomitant circumstances - reader, purposes, context - that are associated with such an act and provide these conditions in the writing task he devises so that the learner performs the written act correctly. Knowledge of speech act theory, the purposes of writing, the writing and reading context, writers and readers preoccupations and constraints and some predictions with regard to students writing behaviour - given a particular set of conditions - enables formulations of a task. Felicitous conditions are created to facilitate a particular act of written communication. The more defined and precise the parameters of the writing task, the more predictable will be the students resultant writing.

Given the students needs, listed above, the teacher may decide to group the students requirements according to the illocutionary act performed in each - requesting, stating, describing, reporting etc - in accordance with the regulative and constitutive rules that would determine writing behaviour. The teacher would thus perhaps group the items 1, 6, 7 under Information Exchange, 3 and 9 under Note taking, item 4 under Reporting, item 5 under Expository writing and items 10, 11 and 12 under Subjective Personal writing. The categories that would be formed would be:

1. Information Exchange
2. Note-taking
3. Reporting
4. Expository writing
5. Subjective Personal Writing

The teacher then has options in designing the tasks. The teacher may go on to teach writing by progressing from smaller acts of discourse to larger ones, as advocated by Widdowson (1984). Employing reading - analysis or rhetorical transfer exercises, smaller acts such as generalizations, statements and definitions could lead to pairs of acts cause-consequence, statement-qualification, statement - exemplification - to larger acts of discourse such as elaboration or exemplification.
The teacher may present learners with information to read, direct the learners attention to aspects of written discourse and guide written response as in Widdowson's *Reading and Thinking* which is designed according to cognitive difficulty level. The course could then focus on the activities the student requires and others the teacher believes are necessary, in cognitive hierarchies.

1. **Presenting information** - offering system-part relationships, class-member relationships, spatial and temporal relationships, diagrams, tabular forms, lists of properties and structures, data concerning structures, systems in action and processes ranging from the simple to the complex in design and finally on facts regarding causal relations, chronological and evolutionary development.

2. **Generalizations** - specific and general statements, generalizations - examples.

3. **Definitions** - definition + generalization + examples.

4. **Classification** - general and specific.

5. **Descriptions** - purposes, properties, processes and the ordering of information.


8. Reportmaking - observation and investigation, amplification, explanation, hypothesizing.

The reading materials offered for such a course would direct the reader's attention to purpose, function, reciprocatory participant and the different discoursal aspects of the writing. The employment of visual support, which acts as a co-text, aids learner's understanding and interpretation.

Following the outline proposed by Johnson, the teacher could go on to teach a particular illocutionary action in definite and precise ways - by devising exercises in which students insert facts or information, by analysing the form of the illocutionary act, given an example, or write down an illocutionary form from a given table. The teacher may decide to employ 'information - gap' and 'reasoning - gap' activities which involve the gathering of information and entail the processes of inference, deduction, reasoning and perception. These activities involve 'conveyance of information' and 'negotiation' of meaning.

Employing yet another methodology, the teacher may generate activity cycles as in Prabhu's Procedural
Syllabus. Here writing tasks that employ a cognitive model, are based on 'information - gap' and 'reasoning gap' activities, where attention is paid not to language forms but results in 'meaning - focussed' activity. Task sequencing here depends on inter-teacher negotiation and discussion arriving at "common sense judgements of increasing complexity". As the teachers on the Bangalore Project were themselves experienced practitioners in the field of linguistic study, notions of "increasing complexity" were also refined by implicit definition. The tasks were comprised of verbal content and visual delineation. They involved understanding and use of graphic presentation, tables of contents, cross references and catalogues - explicitly - stated information - which required expression of quantities and amounts, time, location and directions, means, cause/result, purpose/reason, condition/contrast. The resultant activities appear to deal with cognitive hierarchies that involved.

A. Describing
   1. Labelling
   2. Naming
   3. Recording

27. Ibid., p.39.
B. **Interpreting**

1. Explaining
2. Inferring
3. Deducing

C. **Generalizing**

1. Abstracting
2. Summarising
3. Evaluating

In such a course, the nature of the activity patterns the reading material that is offered to the learner.

On the other hand, in order to develop subjective personal writing, the teacher may find it useful to concentrate on strategies dealing with "content generation" and the "shaping" of discourse. The techniques offered by Flower and Hayes\(^{28}\) - such as "brain-storming", "staging a scenario" and "playing an analogy" allow for more free association of ideas, and help in developing habits of thinking. Flower and Hayes also provide strategies for expressing ideas through "cue words", "nutshelling" and "freeing of ideas". These are effective strategies for the 'prewriting' and 'writing' stages of an essay and Flower and Hayes suggest, as well, the technique of requiring someone else to read what the writer has written and communicate it as a means of rewriting. But these latter tasks would require the student to learn to shape his or her writing.

Enabling the learner to shape his or her writing

So while the writing teacher will construct tasks on a socio-cognitive scale, in conformity with students expressed needs and teachers' perceptions, and in accordance with theoretical principles, the teacher will realize that performance of a writing task is not sufficient, in itself, to bring about adequate discrimination and discernment in writing activity. Individual apprehension of the forms of written discourse results in individual patterning which then requires singular attention. Students individual realization of discourse rules are noted by their different orders of meaning, different lexical and semantic choices and are person oriented. It is in this context that the teacher will go on to devise strategies which will enable learners to shape and reshape their own writing.

Some of the differences in students' writing have been observed in the analysis done in Chapter Three, and in the distinctions noted by 'experienced' and 'inexperienced' writers in Chapter IV. Bereiter and Scardamalia go on to look deeper into some aspects of these differentiations when they compare writing to a route where performance depends on what path the student is following towards competence. To those, on the high road, writing

is a "self constructed problem",30 a continuous attempt to perfect all the complexities of the art, while for those on "the low road" writing is a "knowledge telling" exercise. Scardamalia and Bereiter state that

"students on the high and low road end up with dealing with many of the same matters - audience considerations, purposes, organisation, coherence, style etc. The difference is that for students on the low road all these are obstacles to be overcome, to be handled in such a way that they no longer take much time or thought. For students on the high road these are not obstacles but properties of the task, and their aim is not to minimize them but to unify them into a coherent task construction so that they may be dealt with as parts of a whole rather than piece meal". 31

The following therefore are some of the strategies that the teacher can employ to enable learners to direct their own writing.

A. Exercises in comparison and evaluation.
B. 'Reformulation' and Revising.
C. Conferencing strategies.

A. Exercises in comparison and evaluation

In classroom studies undertaken by this researcher, it has been noted that there has been far greater understanding of what is involved in the act of writing when writers have been provided with the writing scripts of co-writers and required to evaluate such responses in the categories of 'effective', 'adequate' and

30. Bereiter and Scardamalia, "Does learning to write have to be so difficult?", p.25.
31. Ibid., p.28.
'ineffective' writing and provide reasons for their selections. This involved the writers in the tasks of comparison, evaluation and definition.

The following exercises had been constructed:

**Exercise A**

A group of undergraduate science students had listed writing application letters as their highest priority. They were therefore given the task of formulating a bio-data they would have to take with them for a job-interview. (Refer Appendix II). The task was not constructed but selected from a newspaper and photocopied because students often expressed the opinion that classroom writing was divorced from reality. So, in order to make learners aware that writing catered to actual, beyond-the-classroom needs, an advertisement from a local newspaper served as stimulus material for the students to respond to.

Students wrote out their biodatas offering information on their name, residence, date of birth, educational institutions, duration of the courses and grades earned. However, it was noted, that even in the students tabularized responses there were differences in the grouping of details, and the headings formulated by individual students. Pedagogical experience revealing that explicit teacher direction here would not have satisfactorily
fostered learner perception, copies of two students' answers to this task—one which featured more correct headings and favoured increased reader comprehension than the other, which had a few unnecessary headings and extraneous information, were circulated amongst the learners (Refer Appendix III). The students were required to examine both answers and state in writing which would be preferable, giving reasons. The majority of the students after examining both answers stated that the first was preferable. A few stated that they preferred the second as it provided more information.

This exercise thus drew the students' attention to the manner in which specific propositional content could be represented and encouraged them to examine and evaluate writing that had varied factual content on the same topic. It revealed to the teacher that even in tasks of a definite nature where propositional information could be categorized under definite headings, students responded to tasks differently and that it was necessary to make students aware of how their selection of language brought about changes in meaning or could be less or more informative.

Exercixe B

The same group of students were later given an advertisement published in the form of a block in the
newspaper. (Refer Appendix IV). They were then informed that the institution that had published it was a charitable organisation that wished to make the announcement in the 'classified ads.' column, at lower cost, where the charges were per word only and so were asked to formulate the announcements.

It was found that the students wrote out the propositional content of the advertisement more concisely - eliminating unnecessary vocabulary and employing short forms. Again copies of two students responses to this task - one made up of fifty six words and the other of forty five words were given to the whole class to determine which would be preferable. (Refer Appendix V). Most of the students selected the shorter advertisement for subsequent publication while a few students argued that the longer one was preferable as it provided more facts and information. One student stated that the difference between one advertisement and the other was that one was "a command" while the other was "a request". Scrutiny of this kind, it was observed, enabled students to become more aware of propositional structure, the functional nature of the writing and the illocutionary act being performed.

It was thus observed that each writing exercise had necessitated two tasks for more in-depth learning.
The first a reading-writing task that focussed on 'language use', the other a reading-evaluation-writing task that brought about 'language-learning behaviour'.

The reading-writing exercises had been selected with reference to students prior knowledge, needs and writing motivations and encouraged writing in conformity with linguistic rules, conventions and purposes. The reading-evaluation-writing exercises required students to compare two pieces of writing in order to determine which was the more effective communication. It demanded explicit expression of the purposes and goals of writing, identification of the meaning of given writing pieces, comparison and expression of linguistic problems. In defining and forming solutions to linguistic problems in writing, students were making explicit the rules, meanings and conventions of written behaviour. Thus though there had not been explicit teacher direction, the task of comparing co-writer's responses in order to determine and select which was more suitable to a writing task gave rise to learning behaviour that focussed on explicit linguistic features. The reading-writing task had focussed on language required for written use and involved the student as a 'user' of the language. The reading-evaluating-writing task focussed on meta-communicative language required for learning to write and involved the student as a 'learner' of the language.
From this work it was concluded that it was necessary to engage learners not only in teacher-devised exercises for occupational writing which focussed on the students immediate response to a given exercise but also engage the learner in the task of discussing the problems and solutions involved in writing. This activity involved them in explicit comparisons, evaluation and formulation of language, and expression of the linguistic nature of writing. The students were thus offering written products and then meta-communicating about language and defining what was further required for beneficial and effective writing.

Employment of the same procedures, were used also for note making and paragraph writing. It was observed that the reading-writing activity for each task followed by reading-evaluation-writing activity provided greater understanding of the nature of writing. At the end of the academic year students were asked to write a paragraph on the same topic they had been given at an entrance test at the beginning of the year. After they had written the paragraph they were each given the writing they had done on the same topic earlier and required to comment on any changes they observed.

The following passages constitute the work of one student at the beginning and end of the academic year (Sample 1 & 2) on the same topic, as well as his awareness of changes in his writing (Sample 3).
Write a paragraph of one of the following:

a) The advantages of being the youngest in the family.
b) My most memorable match.
c) The music I enjoy most.

X. Paragraph

There were only a few seconds to go for the whistle in the final match played between St Joseph's College and Balmore in the lush green school ground. By luck the ball hit the defender and landed in front of my feet. It was once again opportunity to score my dream goal and glory and fame for my school - Bishop Cotton School.

I struck the ball with my right leg with tremendous force and the next moment my dream came into reality. I had shot the winning goal, earned victory for my team. There was something clothed clicked inside me and then I knew pure and everlasting joy of scoring a goal.
Sample 2

Writing done at end of the year

Vishnu Narayan

My most memorable match - (cricket)

The venue for the cricket match was the grand and beautiful Chinnaswamy Stadium. The match was between the future hope of cricket and the Indian eleven. The stadium was a festive look with thousands of spectators looking forward for the match. As the captain of the future hope, my job was to put up a comprehensive performance and thermo the pressure was naturally on us. The Indian eleven elected to bat on a sunny day with full form and scored almost two hundred and fifty runs in the allotted fifty overs at a brisk rate of five runs each. Our team started cautiously losing three wickets by the wicket each. At the fall of the fourth wicket I walked in with a mental of

...
reading for a dramatic finish with my individual
score on eighty-three. The team was
rallying. They began to make mistakes. The
expectations were at the edge of their seat
waving unbelittlingly. Our team needed fourteen runs in
the beginning of the last over. The crowd sensed
the tension and excitement and cheered for every
run we made. We needed five runs from the last bowl to win the match against
the highly favored Indian team. What happened
was quite amazing. I smashed the bowl and to my
amazement the bowled ball had soared over the
wicket. We had won the match. The crowd shared
unbelittlingly knowing it not to laugh or cry. Thus
it was a tender and brilliant match and my
most remarkable match which earned me fame and
respect.

Sample 3

In the second essay written lastly I had
made many changes to my former one written.
During the beginning of the year in the second
semester my vocabulary and thinking of correct words
was increased considerably. For the former my
sentences on winning the match were not properly
described whereas I've latter my writings are
described to a very great extent. In the other
hand my handwriting was very tame advantageously.

Since my ability is in much of maintaining
writing has led to me at downfall of my writing
and to a certain extent in spelling which may
be right or wrong.
The studies delineated here throw light on the importance of revising and reviewing in enhancing learner awareness. The exercises given above showed that while reviewing other students writing, learners were engaged in the following processes:

i) **Comparison and Evaluation**

Students were making comparisons between the two given samples of writing and implicitly or explicitly (if so required by the teacher), evaluating them in terms of 'satisfactory', 'less satisfactory', or unsatisfactory writing. This implied, on the part of the learner, knowledge of written conventions and the goals and purposes of writing. It involves comprehension of the text, comparison with the writer's intention and knowledge of what is linguistically possible for the same situation and purpose, and perhaps more appropriate and effective. It involves the reviewer displaying knowledge of a particular linguistic act in terms of purpose, function and context.

ii) **Identification**

Such comparison leads to identification of areas
where change is required. The identification of different types of changes involve different types of knowledge. Some types of knowledge may be within the undergraduate learners range - correct spelling, punctuation and some sentence level grammatical items. But other types of knowledge affecting the holistic nature of the writing process may be less accessible. Identification of problems therefore showed improved conceptualization of a writing task.

iii) Definition

This is a linguistic task. Far more complex for the undergraduate learner than the problem of identification, is the task of expressing and defining the nature of change required in a piece of written discourse. Students if required by the teacher to state why a particular change in a piece of discourse is required are then going on not only to demarcate the area of change but express, in their own terms, the type of modification required. This is a genuine learning activity which makes the writer more aware of the features of written discourse. The following exercise described here below offers an illustration of student's attempts at definition:

Revision Exercise A

Copies of three answers, (Appendix VI) from term papers written by different members of a first year
degree class were made available for the whole class. The students thus had three representations of the same writing act. They were first required to categorise the three answers into 'satisfactory', 'less satisfactory' and 'unsatisfactory' answers. They were then required to state the qualities that made these answers fit such categories.

When required to state the characteristics of the answer that made it 'satisfactory' the students listed the following features: the answer being "complete" in itself (referring to the facts provided and the necessary and relevant information arranged logically). They also commented on the initial moves in the "satisfactory" answer as offering "a good start". The inclusion of sufficient detail, brevity and conciseness in an answer were the other features noted. The less satisfactory answer was categorized so because of "lack of organisation, insufficient details, inadequate explanation, little elaboration "not enough explanation about the situation and the incidents", "use of colloquialisms" and "lack of clarity in descriptions and arguments". 'Poor' and 'unsatisfactory' answers according to the students had information that was irrelevant or "not presented in a systematic way."

The students were then required to state if they had derived any benefits from the task. They stated
that it had been helpful, had provided them with an opportunity of correcting their errors, made them aware of their omission of important facts, enabled them to write "more detailed" and improved answers, advanced their "knowledge about writing and provided them with an approach in writing an answer". (However, two students protested against the repetitive nature of the exercise and stated that it was "useful to a certain extent" and mentioned that "after that it became monotonous" - an effect also noted earlier in Chapter IV).

iv) Modification

This requires comprehension of a piece of written discourse, perception of the intentions of the writer, and ability to reconstitute the piece of writing more appropriately. The task demands manifestation of explicit comprehension and writing skills.

Revision Task B

The above group of I year degree students were again given cyclostyled copies of the answers of two students in the class (Appendix VII) at the term examination. They were required, at first, to list the type of changes required in each of the answers. After completing this task they were required to rewrite any one of the answers.

Some of the changes that were required in the two answers, as they commented, were the need for greater
"elaboration" and explanation (mentioned by 38 students), omission of details (3 students), lack of examples (1 student), gaps in information and argument (6 students), inefficient organization and presentation, insufficient linkages (1 student) as well as avoidance of repetition, lexical correctness to allow clearer understanding, grammar and punctuation errors.

After they had listed the changes that were necessary in the two cyclostyled answers given, they were required to rewrite anyone of the answers making the necessary changes. Before beginning this task many students orally expressed reservations in rewriting, stating that they could not make changes but could write another answer. Their ensuing written work (Appendix VIII & IX) confirmed their doubts. It was observed that they had difficulty in satisfactorily adopting the initial writers propositions and intentions. Their resultant writing did not appear to be a revision of the first writers work. It did not incorporate additions, deletions, examples and illustrations which they had stated were necessary. It contained new propositional content with different initiating and concluding devices.

The comparison and evaluation exercises, detailed above, had been formulated because it had been observed that undergraduate writers, when required to revise, made changes at the sentential level only and were not
perceptive to the import and direction of larger sections of writing. Because of this, the comparison and evaluation exercises involved beginning undergraduate students in examining and analyzing writing features or anomalies in small acts of written discourse while advanced learners were offered larger acts of discourse. In this way an attempt was made to sensitize students to their own writing or that of co-writers, and to make them aware of what actions they perform as they write.

B. 'Reformulation' and Revising

'Reformulation'

A revising strategy devised by Allwright, Woodley and Allwright is the reformulation theory elaborated by them for the teaching of academic writing. Their research, besides offering a strategy, also goes on to investigate the differences between native as compared to non-native writing (which is not within the concerns of the present study). But of import to this research is the notion of "reformulation" as a pedagogical technique. The strategy was developed and tested by Allwright and Allwright in university based study skills courses in classes which were small and with regard to linguistic ability, relatively homogeneous.

Description of procedures

A common writing task with propositional content in a 'scrambled' form was given to the class. The learners first discussed how the material could be organised, sequenced and paragraphed. The students then wrote their first drafts, one of which was given to a native speaker to 'reformulate'. Reformulation, the proposers state, as a process is not very well researched as yet, but explain that essentially it requires the native speaker to try to understand what the non-native was trying to write and then to write it in a form more natural to the native speaker. This may involve making changes at all levels, but the point of any such change must be to bring out the original writer's probable intentions, not to deliberately substitute a new set of intentions for them. 33

The non-native first draft and the reformulated version are then typed to provide anonymity and copies made for all the learners.

The class examines the two versions, makes careful note of similarities and differences, and suggests reasons for the native speaker's changes. The ensuing classroom discussion enables the non-native learner, whose work has been reformulated to reflect on his/her writing. Other learners too begin to examine their writing. Allwright, Allwright and Woodley pay great importance to the class-room discussion stating that

33. Allwright, Woodley and Allwright, "Investigating Reformulation as a practical strategy for the teaching of academic writing", p.3-4.
"the public discussion has a vital role to play in ensuring that the reformulation does not mislead, and that it is used creatively as a starting point for a much wider consideration of the problems involved in attempting to produce written work that adequately expresses a writer's intentions." 34

After the classroom discussions each learner writes a draft and the procedure is followed for several weeks till the whole written task is completed and handed in. The students are then given a native speaker's version of the whole task. Thus the strategy depended on one native version of the task, a number of non-native first drafts, or reformulation of at least one of the first drafts and a number of final drafts.

Part of their research, as noted earlier, concerned the differences between native and non-native versions of the task, in which disparities in sentence level accuracy and syntactic and information packaging measures employed were observed. But, as they concede, some of the difficulties with the 'reformulation strategy' arise from basic objections: the first is that a good native writer reformulation may not constitute a good example of native writing. The other is that non-native writers may believe that they have to manifest the competence of native writers, which they regard, as

34. Allwright, Woodley and Allwright, "Investigating Reformulation as a practical strategy for the teaching of academic writing", p.5.
an unrealistic aim.

However, some of the findings of this study are relevant to the success of revision strategies. The importance paid to class discussion, lack of formal accuracy and absence of an expressed writing syllabus are important aspects of their theory. Besides their research statistics throw light on the need for practice in revision. They state that out of the subsequent modifications made by the learners 69.8% were in the direction of the reformulations. The proposers themselves emphasize that the class discussions have the most influence on the researchers as the reformulations themselves serve only as models.

"What gets discussed in class depends entirely upon the outcome of the comparisons made by the learners between their drafts and a native writer's reformulations of them. In this sense what we have is a procedural syllabus........................not a content one, since only the procedures are pre-planned, not what each learner should get out of them." 35

Revising

Revising as approached in Chapter IV, is an intellectual skill essential for developing written activity. It is also an evaluation strategy which enables writers using their own resources to become aware of their written performance and to make modifications

35. Allwright, Woodley and Allwright, "Investigating Reformulation as a practical strategy for the teaching of academic writing", p.25.
in keeping with purposes and intentions. To be proficient, learners need to be aware of written conventions, written forms, readers requirements and expectations as well as the writers own. Revising, viewed in this manner, is not a local activity limited to a single piece of written work but is a cognitive process which involves the writer's experiences with written encounters directed to a cross section of purposes and contexts. Revising strategies increases the learner's knowledge concerning the parameters of writing, enables the writer to develop written interactions as he intends with the reader and develops improved and well focussed writing procedures.

On the one hand, revising can be regarded as a deliberate focussed activity which forms a particular stage in the writing process and, on the other, as a process that merges with the other processes of writing. While the previous chapter discussed the theoretical perspective of writing, some of the instructional practices connected with revising are listed here.

Murray\textsuperscript{36} offers classroom procedures for encouraging the skill of revising which will be discussed later under the heading of Peer - group interaction. He perceives writing as an activity that involves 'rehearsing' 'prewriting', 'drafting' and 'revising', as well as

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the forces of 'collecting', 'connecting', 'writing' and 'reading' and states that revising is a type of 'rehearsing'. He states that the process of revising is one in which "the writing stands apart from the writer and the writer interacts with it, first to find out what the writing has to say, and then to help the writing say it clearly and gracefully." He observes also that in the process of evolving meaning when writing, "the writer doesn't look primarily outside the piece of writing—rule books, rhetorical traditions, models, to previous writing experiences, to teachers or editions. To learn what to do next the writer looks within the piece of writing." This direction 'to look within' is emphasized in the comparison and evaluation exercises described earlier, the revising strategies advocated here and the conferencing procedures later. As writing teachers, Murray states,

"We do not teach our students rules demonstrated by static models; we teach our students to write by allowing them to experience the process of writing. That is a process of discovery, of using written language to find out what we have to say. We believe this process can be adapted by our students to whatever writing tasks face them— the memo, the poem, the text book, the speech, the consumer complaint, the job application, the story, the essay, the personal letter, the movie script, the accident report, the novel, the scientific paper. There is no way we can tell what our students will need to write in their lives beyond the classroom, but we can give our students a successful experience in the writing process. We can let them discover how writing finds its own meaning." 39


38. Ibid., p. 7.

39. Ibid., p. 20.
The fixed-stage model of composing has been criticized because, firstly, it does not take into consideration the recursive nature of the composing process and, secondly, because it does not represent the hierarchical structure of writing.

Flower and Hayes offer a model of composing made up of three main constituents - 'the writer's long-term memory', 'writing processes' and 'task - environment' - each of which is made up of a number of sub-processes. Their 'Cognitive Process Model of Composing' is a comprehensive description of the writing processes which they perceive as being hierarchically structured. Their model suggests that 'reviewing' and the sub processes of 'evaluating' and 'revising' can be ranged with the processes of 'planning' and 'translating'. Therefore they perceive revising as a pre-writing as well as post-writing activity, and view it as being composed of two sub-processes - 'evaluating' and 'revising'. On the one hand 'reviewing' could be a conscious process which leads to further 'translating' or deliberate evaluation. On the other hand, it can be "a thinking process that can occur at any time a writer chooses to evaluate or revise his text or his plans". They


41. Ibid., p. 376.
state that revising enables the writer to perform a "means/ends" analysis on his own writing - attention is directed to the "ends" one hopes to attain by writing and to evaluate the "means" that may help one to accomplish this. They suggest that such strategies enable conversion of "writer - based prose" into "reader - based prose". This enables conversion of the writers' own "egocentric or writer - based organization of information into a reader - based structure that meets the practical and cognitive needs of a reader". Among the strategies they advocate for this conversion is first to organize a paper round a problem. This helps to focus a reader's attention as well as enables the writer to subordinate his information to his goals and functions. The second is to organize ideas in a clear hierarchy or tree. A third strategy that Flower and Hayes advocate is for the writer to request a reader to explain what has been written. In this manner the writer receives the necessary feedback.

42. Flower and Hayes, "Problem Solving Strategies and the Writing process," p.278.

43. Ibid., p.279.
C. **Conferencing Procedures**

The conferencing mode is a form of conversation that serves as a foundation for the composing activity. Researchers state that talking about their ideas enables writers to express their thoughts explicitly, facilitates the role play activity required in writing and focuses the learner's attention to the process of meaning development. Some of the procedures employed here are:-

1. **Teacher - student conference**
2. **Group - peer discussion**

1. **Teacher - student conferencing.** The teacher - student writing conference is regarded as a 'pedagogical event'. It is regarded, on the one hand, as a 'conversational dialogue' in which, in the turn taking process, meanings and interpretations are continuously negotiated, providing for the personal element in what is essentially an academic activity. On the other, it is a teaching-learning event which provides the student with the opportunity to express himself, the teacher with the occasion of perceiving and attending to the individual students writing needs as well as providing the

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45. Ibid., p.107.
student with new knowledge.

Freedman and Sperling report on a study which focused on a writing conference in which one teacher and one student were involved. The data analysis examined the topics covered in conversation. Those that dealt objectively with some feature of subject matter were regarded as 'intellectual' while those which were concerned with feelings were regarded as 'affective'. The discourse was portioned into 'idea units' which was defined as "a segment of discourse that coincides with a person's focus of attention or focus of consciousness". This enabled distinction of the focus of attention in conversation. Different students, it was noted, focussed on different types of topics and formed their own agendas.

Their research also threw light on teacher behaviour. It was noted that teachers gave greater praise to high achievers, and issued invitations to them to return for future conferences while low achievers, on the other hand, tended to initiate topics that were likely to alienate the teacher. The teacher, in the study undertaken by them, gave quantitatively and qualitatively different explanations to the four students in the project with higher achieving students receiving more expository


47. Ibid., p. 111.
explanations delivered in a formal register. Some of the criteria employed by Freedman and Sperling in evaluating spoken discourse in conferences includes (1) the number of times discourse occurs and the number of idea units within each occurrence (ii) whether such occurrences are characterized as highly colloquial or academic (iii) what motivates the discourse.

Beginning writers 'talk about themselves', in the conferencing activity, and this enables them to progress from speaking to writing. (Mature writers, on the other hand, 'talk to themselves', about their writing and their writing offers them feedback). Beginning writers, it is also observed, were less able to look at their writing detachedly and wrote without taking the reader into consideration. Conferencing allows such imbalances to be set right. Though a multidimensional activity, Freedman and Sperling maintain that the conference has "at least the appearance of being spontaneous and personal behind its often planned ........and pedagogic nature.48 They explain that teachers and students "operate at different levels - the conversational as

well as the pedagogical - which may, ultimately, reinforce one another". 49

The conferencing activity is composed of such activities as planning, text creation, revising and evaluation. Writers are aided in identifying weaknesses in the text and decisions as to the nature of the changes required are made more explicit. It is held that such evaluation from an objective source as well as from the writer enables the development of more autonomous cognitive processes.

2. **Group/Peer discussion**

Murray 50 advocates a methodology whereby writing is shared "orally" after it is produced. The advantages he enumerates are the ability to listen to the writing of classmates without the interference of problems in mechanics, spelling and penmanship. Some of the effects of this procedure are described when he says "The piece of writing speaks with its own voice of its own concerns, direction, meaning. The student writer hears that voice from the piece convey intensity, drive, energy and more - anger, pleasure, happiness, sadness, caring, frustration, understanding, explaining". 51 This interaction, he


50. Murray, "Writing as Process : How Writing Finds its own meaning".

51. Ibid., p.15.
explains, makes the community of writers "want to help the writer help the piece of writing find its own meaning."

Describing the teacher's role here, Murray states that in his discussions with groups of students he encouraged writers to speak about the paper and how it evolved. The learners spoke about their starting points and some of the problems they indentified. While they each spoke about their writing processes Murray went on to emphasize these aspects to the class - "I underline, extend, reinforce and teach what atleast some of them have already done so that they know what they've done and may be able to apply it other writing tasks."

At the same time, he emphasizes the need for objectivity and impartiality for the teacher must avoid trying "to supply the student with the teacher's information, to make the teacher's connection, to use the teacher's language to read what the teacher sees in the text. The teacher must remember in workshop and in conference, to stand back and give the student room so that the student can give the writing room to find its own meaning".

Murray here expresses the sensitivity the teacher must accord to the learner's evolving writing character. Though the learner is encouraged to ask necessary questions, and is given information by the teacher, the latter

53. Ibid., 16-17.
54. Ibid., p.17.
has to employ tactics to maintain neutrality and yet encourage the writer to establish the correct priorities.

Elsewhere in writing research, strategies used by teachers amongst writing groups are noted. Krashen\(^5^5\) citing research done, reports of approaches where the teacher focuses on one aspect of writing beginning with having enough concrete information, then aspects of organization and finally to mechanics. Gere and Stevens\(^5^6\) report on the work done in the writing group often referred to as 'peer response groups', 'writing circle' or 'helping circle'. They consist of four to six students who meet regularly to read and respond to each other's writing. The teachers encourage writers to read out their writing twice - the first for 'strong - impression - response' from the group and the second for the group members to make more detailed comments. Individual teachers altered strategies - providing the group with specific features to observe, or not allow negative comments.

In the second language situation, the tactics the teacher employs will vary from group to group. With more experienced groups of writers the implications of the teacher's observations and suggestions are


56. Gere and Stevens, "The Language of Writing Groups: How Oral Response shapes Revision".
immediately perceived and attended to. With other groups the teacher is more often required to encourage students through focussing and questioning tactics to make their responses clearer by providing reasons, specific details and illustrations. Some of the problems that have elsewhere in research studies been noted with regard to conferencing are that students at the undergraduate level do not have the spoken negotiation skills to make such conferencing effective. In the actual classroom situation a fluent speaker who is proficient at generating ideas would soon become demotivated when placed alongside one with weak skills and the latter may become more inhibited. It is observed, moreover, that conferencing and collaborating may be burdensome on the creative process. Again, if writing is regarded as a process that is developed more individually, writers may interfere with each others plans and judgements when they collaborate—thereby making the act more complex rather than simple. Researchers also state that more indepth knowledge is required about the processes involved in collaboration to explain why certain pairs of collaborators operate more efficiently.

Inspite of the difficulties noted above, group work is essential in writing development in the second language situation. Pertinent here are the views of
Lindemann\textsuperscript{57} who states that "Students must also have a role in evaluating their work"\textsuperscript{58} "not only to write for themselves and others but also to gain responses to their work from audiences other than the teacher".\textsuperscript{59} Writing, besides, is a very individual activity and students, in explaining their decisions to other students, learn how to solve writing problems. Finally, as students require independence and confidence as writers, they need to have frequent practice in discussions as it provides for constructive criticism, close reading and rewriting. Control of their own decisions with regard to their writing growth results in them formulating their own criteria for writing. The activity benefits teachers also as they perceive how students perceive the composing process and the sort of strategies they devise in creating meaning.

57. Lindeman, \textit{A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers}.

58. Ibid., p.280.

59. Ibid.
The Role of the teacher

From the preceding work it is observed that the teacher's role in writing assumes great importance in the light of present thinking and research. The writing teacher has many duties to perform. He or she has to investigate learners' writing requirements, formulate and direct course design or create environments for writing, and act as motivator, source person and guide in the writing process. This results in the writing teacher having the following roles:

A. The teacher as investigator
B. The teacher as decision maker
C. The teacher as collaborator
D. The teacher as writer.

A. The teacher as investigator.

Theoretical and empirical investigation in different aspects of students writing focuses the teacher's attention on deeper sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic processes that pattern students writing growth. The teacher is able to provide linguistic explanations for students writing plans and behaviour and understand strategies the learner employs in developing discourse.

With the aid of discourse analysis, the teacher is able to observe the nature of students writing,
determine the tasks to be offered to the learner and formulate writing exercises more suitable to the learner's requirements which differ, greatly from traditional writing exercises.

Such investigation also enables the teacher to observe the factors that can aid or hinder the pedagogic approach. Some of the aspects that can be considered, for example, is the amount of propositional support that should be provided. For some groups of learners less detailed propositional support could result in reduced coherence and weak 'theme' structure. Further with studies in discourse analysis, attention in a writing course is directed not just to what is written but how it is written. The information and functional units in a text assume importance and the teacher's attention is directed not only to individual words and phrases but to the illocutionary or referential act being performed. Through implicit means, in the form of guided exercises, analysing model reading passages or developing one's own writing and evaluating it, the teacher goes on to direct attention to relationships such as 'consequence', 'qualification', 'exemplification', 'elaboration', 'generalization', clarification' or 'formulation' et cetera.

The teacher is provided with the means to aid the learner to produce and elaborate a text, employ the interpersonal features of writing, laying stress on
'reader awareness', and 'negotiation'. The importance of 'directionality' in discourse is stressed and the teacher is able to guide the student to develop discourse on more individual lines. Guided by the frameworks offered by discourse analysis the teacher can reveal to the student the interrelatedness of discourse structure and variations and patterns that are possible. The teacher can help the writer, for instance, in conceptualizing the role relationship between the writer and the reader - thereby avoiding over-textualizing and prolixity in writing, on the one hand, or undertexualization and obscurity on the other.

The teacher is provided with the means of perceiving the writers discourse and meaning from different analytical viewpoints. Observation of the variables in writing performance - the manner in which individual writers build up discourse, directions that can be utilised in teaching methodology and some of the constraints are understood in great depth. The teacher is also able to classify the features of the writing of different groups of performers and the characteristics of different types of writing - appropriate, inappropriate, effective, ineffective - for pedagogic purposes.

Using procedures detailed above, teaching becomes an educational process that incorporates the features of writing growth and evaluation.
B. The teacher as decision maker

Course construction and direction also involves decision making with regard to the writing programme that has to be created - whether this should conform to a predecided, preplanned curriculum by course designers outside the classroom or whether it should be developed and formulated by individual teacher and the particular group of students in the writing course.

In syllabi planning, it is necessary to begin with cooperative work between teacher and learner and evolve through it - from a perspective of needs, requirements and given abilities of sets of learners and the abilities of teachers to discuss and cater to such needs. A.P.R. Howatt seemed to propose this when he stated that

"The first point is that writing a language teaching course is a pedagogic problem. Although it is obviously sensible to seek help and advice from specialists in linguistics, psychology and so on, the choices and decisions that we make are our own responsibility as teachers, and the wisdom or otherwise of these decisions can be seen only in the results we obtain from our pupils."

Howatt goes on to expand this view when he states that the body of method that the classroom teacher uses is derived:

"in part from his practical experience and in part from a more formal study of psychology. Taken together, the results of study and experience constitute a body of method which can be put into effect by developing teaching techniques to suit the special circumstances of a particular teaching situation". 61

In the implementation of a pre-planned course, the teacher's duties would include devising writing exercises according to the specific nature of the syllabus advocated, arranging for reading and other supportive materials as well as frequency of practice. Prescribed courses of such a nature could follow given plans that enable the learner to become proficient in writing of a definite nature. Such courses may deal solely with 'occupational writing', 'institutional writing' or 'academic writing' - each of which involves practice in particularized tasks.

On the other hand, in writing pedagogy, that aims at heightening learner awareness, the teacher is not regarded as one who implements standardized programmes but one who having an indepth knowledge of theoretical principles goes on to investigate students learning intentions and provide scope for these in an instructional situation. In such an approach the teacher does not distance himself from his learners but interacts with

them offering options available. The teacher is thus not the sole framer and evaluator of the writing course. As guide and as one who offers some resources, the teacher encourages learners to express their requirements and suggestions. He then provides a context for the written work that has to be done, motivates, provides or encourages learners to obtain resources for their written work and this re-thinking of the teacher-student relationship lays emphasis on the range of responses teachers can make to support student writing and the range of purposes to which writing can be directed. According to the needs and requirements students express and delineate, the teacher may then focus on 'real world' tasks which involve writing of a less restricted, less context-dependent nature which allows greater scope for the individual writer. In the latter curriculum, the teacher would concentrate on 'motivating' and 'support' activities. 'Motivating' activities would involve the teacher in offering and providing for the learner a sufficient stimulus in writing while 'support' activities would be collaborative in nature.

C. **The teacher as Collaborator**

Collaboration is a very important shaping process in writing. As writing cannot be taught as a subject, the teacher's role as a collaborator is to bring understanding of the writing process, its purposes, intentions
and what is achieved. Collaboration activities involve teacher and student in discovering and developing a theme. The dialoguing and discussion that takes place is factual, expressive, analytical and evaluative. Students, through the discussions become more aware of what they want to do when they write while the teacher during these interactions takes an advisory rather than judgemental role.

In the teaching of writing, the teacher is concerned with creating "a productive writing environment" built up of the inter-related skills of reading, writing and conversing. But whereas, in the teaching of reading, Smith states, the teacher begins by reading to children, then with them and then the children read independently, the same procedure cannot be adopted with writing. Teachers have to develop "a sense of when to offer help, when to intervene and when to stand back" which he refers to as "accessibility". In doing all this, the teacher provides for sensitive individual instruction.

Smith supports this view by stating that there are three interrelated conditions necessary in the teaching of the written skill - "demonstrations", "engagement"

63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
and "sensitivity". 65 There are "demonstrations of how writing is done" which refer to instances, examples and models of writing activity as well as "demonstrations of what can be done" where children see others write or experience the activity themselves. "Engagement" refers to the involvement or 'learning hooks' that connect learner and demonstration. It requires "a reaching towards the learning opportunity not in the sense of strain or effort but in the sense of an openness that is synonymous with interest. Sensitivity, finally, is described as being "not something apart from learning; rather it delineates what the brain will learn." 67 Some of these conditions, he states, have to be brought by the teacher into the procedures he designs for collaborative ventures.

Earlier approaches for teaching writing have concentrated on 'knowledge telling' techniques based on selection and ordering of facts and ideas. But the strategies involved in collaborative procedures are more analytical in nature, and more elaborative. Bereiter and Scardamalia 68 who make distinctions between the 'low road' and the 'high road' of writing state that

66. Ibid. p. 175.
67. Ibid., p. 176.
68. Bereiter and Scardamalia, "Does learning to write have to be so difficult?"
conferencing brings about transference from the 'low road' to the 'high road'. Conversation and dialoguing generates thought and allows negotiation. The learner participates in a sort of "problem reformulation"[^69] which is the mark of 'high road mental activity', and this requires also that teachers are on the 'high road themselves'.

D. **The teacher as writer**

A theory of writing, as Murray[^70] maintains, should be practised by its teachers as well - else it requires reconsideration. Teachers must show how the theory can be put into practice and delineate ways in which students can experience the process. A teacher who writes is aware that the writing teacher does not teach content but performance. As Murray points out, lectures on the processes of composition, on rhetoric, linguistics and grammar would have harmful effects, because students may believe that "writers know the form before they know the content".[^71] He points out, moreover, that such a teacher is also more aware of how the stages in the writing process work and how the forces within interact.

[^69]: Bereiter and Scardamalia, "Does learning to write have to be so difficult?" p.32.
[^70]: Murray, "Writing as Process : How writing finds its own meaning".
[^71]: Ibid., p.13.
Murray states that "traditionally-trained teachers" do not believe that students can write without instruction from the teacher or without exercises and assignments. In his view however, it is more important for the teacher of writing to stand away from the learner, aid him/her in creating meaning but at the same time, "not inhibit the students from finding their own subjects, their own forms and their own language." 72

Bereiter and Scardamalia also emphasize the need for the writing teacher being a writer himself when they differentiate between 'low road writing' and 'high road writing' and advocate that teachers be on the 'high road' themselves.

"Low road writing", they state, "is used to communicate thoughts and knowledge but it serves at most a clerical role in the development of thought and knowledge. High-road writing, on the other hand, plays a central role in mental life. Because it is such a massive integrative process and because its dimensions reflect the dimensionality of intellect itself, writing becomes for many people the organizing force in their mental development." 73.


73. Bereiter and Scardamalia, "Does learning to write have to be so difficult?", p.31.