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Trabajo de tesis

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Tema de tesis: *"An exploration into the  
development of writing skills in the EFL class"*

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*"Today, in fact, there is another form of property which is not less important than that of land: it is the property of knowledge and technology. The richness of industrialized nations is based much more upon such a kind of property than upon natural resources."*



*Pope John Paul II*

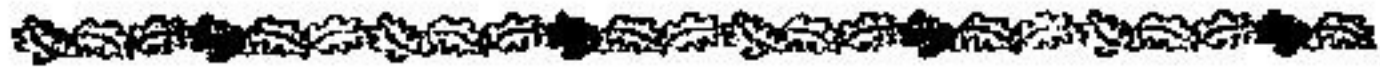


*- "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires"*



*William Arthur Ward*

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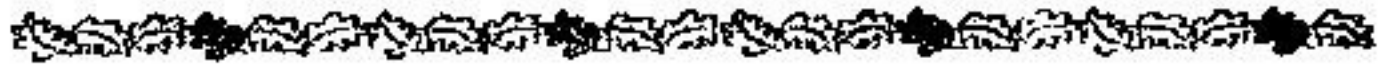
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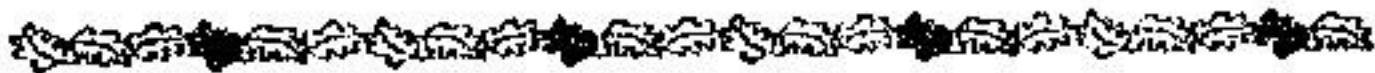
*efficiency and readiness to help.*

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*me in good times, in bad times.*

*May God bless all of them.*

*The author*



## Chapter 1



Education is not a matter of filling a pail but of  
lighting a fire.



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William Butler Yeats



## Introduction

*"If language teaching is to be a genuinely professional enterprise, it requires continual experimentation and evaluation on the part of practitioners whereby in seeking to be more effective in their pedagogy they provide at the same time- and as a corollary -for their own continuing education. It is our aim in this scheme to promote this dual*

*Prof. Christopher Candlin - Prof. Henry Widdowson*

Taking to heart the words quoted above, I have decided to carry out an exploration into the development of writing skills in the EFL class, and the work that follows means to be my modest and above all reflective contribution to the field.

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### Why writing out of the four skills?

To begin with, the purpose for the use of any language is communication. It is true that as listening and reading are receptive skills, I have had to decide between speaking and writing, the productive skills. Generally speaking, most students in the language class are more

concerned about the speaking skill (the means to communicate orally); they say it is "the most difficult one" - and at the same time the one with fewer opportunities to be practised outside the classroom. In this respect, one could say that they are unaware of the importance of the writing skill as an effective means to communicate through the written medium. The usual remark one gets from them is that writing is a language skill that is difficult to be acquired even in L1. It is our duty, then, to resort to every possible means to persuade them that having a try at writing might be worth the effort.

My experience with hundreds of students for the last twenty-five years confirms the belief voiced above: I have seen their commitment to the task if properly guided and motivated and if, above all, writing tasks are an answer to their needs.

### Questions to be answered to ensure a satisfactory writing program

We often ask ourselves such questions as "Why teach writing?", "How to teach it?", "What for?". These are questions I will try to answer as I go through this symbolic exploration into the field.

### Why teach writing?

It is a good starting point to admit the central role of writing in education and in life. At school, in every subject, pupils are asked to show their ability or knowledge through written tests or papers. Good writing always helps them pass written examinations, and it is this awareness that gradually makes them see that good, clear and coherent writing is a safe road to success.

To enlarge on this concept, Nunan (1991- page 84), lists a very comprehensive range of functions that written language performs in life inside and outside school.

These are the functions recognized by Nunan:

1. Primarily for action:

Public signs, recipes, menus, telephone directions, monitors and printouts

2. For social contact:

Personal correspondence, greeting cards, etc.

3. For information:

Newspapers, magazines, textbooks, pamphlets, medical reports, travel literature, etc.

4. For entertainment:

Light magazines, comics, fiction books, games, film subtitles, computer games, etc

To the above list, I would also add the extensive use of writing while using the computer either for academic, professional, social or personal reasons.

How to teach writing in the EFL class

To discuss this point, one needs to go through three considerations:

1. Writing: The skill to be developed.
2. Writing: The task to be performed.
3. Writing: The methodological choice to be made.

With reference to the first point, we have already said that writing is a productive skill. What we must add now is that writing is not a written version of speaking. What does this mean? It means that we must accept the fact that to be an effective writer one needs to develop a

- Use the grammatical system accurately enough to convey the intended meaning of a message.
- Use a wide range of vocabulary.
- Link ideas and information to contribute to topic development.
- Organize content at paragraph level and text level to ensure unity and coherence.
- Select an appropriate style for the audience. (i.e. the reader)
- Polish and revise drafts.

Adapted from Nunan, 1989

In writing classes, we often have to deal with two basic and recurrent problems: what to say and how to say it. So, to the two lists quoted above, I would like to add one more consideration:

- ✓ Class discussion of the topic in hand supported by research work and readings of a guided or free nature. The main aim here is twofold:

1. to help students gain familiarity with the topic in hand;