



ORIGINAL PAPER

The Relevance of Writing Practice

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Abstract:

Is writing practice still necessary in the current world of digitalization? The question is obvious since, whatever message is meant to be transmitted, is subdued to the autocorrect system of any computer software. The word settings are designed to provide the user with possibilities of correction in terms of spelling and grammar as well as replacements of misspelled words. Modern computerized systems detect and provide options which are intended to generate accurate messages at a fast pace. It is thus a constant “struggle” for the English teachers to enhance “writing” in classes and demand students to perform certain tasks connected to it since their tendency is to check it constantly on various devices. Taking into account the above-mentioned aspect, is the writing skill still important to be taught during English classes? Should the teacher focus on it to the same degree as reading, listening and speaking? Is it beneficial to devote time in order to perform writing activities or is it just a waste of time? Are students really involved in improving it when computational intelligence offers them free and immediate support?

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Writing in the era of AI

Teaching writing has become such a challenge for language teachers lately because most students make use of the recently appeared digital tools to solve written tasks. The evolution is obvious; the emphasis has shifted from using a pen and paper to typing on computer, from using books to selecting sites, from using imagination to finding support online. As a consequence, writing pedagogy has been subdued to major shifts and teachers have had no choice but to adapt and come up with other ways of engaging students in writing. The old writing practice style when the learner was guided through the use of various types of dictionaries, books which enhanced productive writing by extending short sentences into longer ones or using connectors and providing samples of writing types are mere “patterns” of the past. Just as Kavakli and Hanci-Azizoglu mention (2020:93), the intrusion of the digital world in the teachers’ lives made them change and adjust their methods and strategies of teaching. The authors pointed out the necessity to adapt to the various levels and needs of the students. In the past, the traditional way of teaching required all kinds of objects that can be found in a class from boards to books, from pens and pencils to printed or copied materials. Students used to write a lot and their focus relied mainly on the hard copies they had in front of them. At the opposite end, the digital era, the learning environment suffered a shift, facing the students with a large number of online tools which provided the new generation of learners with a “multicolored learning environment”. The adaptation period took a while in the case of teachers but for the current students was an amazing opportunity to discover new and interesting learning possibilities and to experience something new and attractive.

Technology has created a new path for language teaching relying on devices such as: computers, smartboards, tablets or phones. All of them provide helpful resources for improving the writing skills and for “skipping” plagiarism. They are eye catching and promise to turn the writing skill into a clear and easy process, in most cases free of charge. How can learners still be attracted to writing on a piece of paper when technology provides them with immediate support?

Digitalization is not something specific to the teaching process. It has expanded and has affected, in a positive or negative way, all the activity sectors. In terms of teaching, digitalization has brought significant changes to the learners who study at home for various reasons. It has widened the horizons for new opportunities which have diminished or even cancelled the barrier or the gap created between those who physically attend classes and those who don’t. At a certain point, almost all learners have been faced with online classes during the Covid period. The impact was enormous in the sense that many learners got accustomed to using online sites for improving their skills and for discovering new ones. Famous universities have become accessible to people of all ages from all over the world providing equal opportunities for everybody. Nehru (2021:59) highlights the great influence that digitalization had on most scientific fields from agriculture to banking to aviation and automobile industry. It has basically overwhelmed most activity sectors but for education it meant more than just a change, It revolutionized the teaching activity, “doing wonders” by permitting learners from all over the world to have full access to a wide range of classes and by offering the chance to join whatever courses they needed to attend, getting in touch with educators from top universities and experts in their related field of knowledge.

The Relevance of Writing Practice

Benefits and downsides of online writing sites

The number of online writing sites has increased at a fast pace offering free or paid educational support to all the learners interested in developing this skill. These sites are well-structured covering a wide range of vocabulary resources and grammar aspects as well as drafts meant to structure the ideas and conceive a pattern in your mind. Besides including solutions to exercises, videos, tutorials, materials and other resources, the sites are stimulating and eye-catching. Accessing them makes the learner feel more comfortable from many points of view. On the one hand there is the advantage of using them in the personal environment whenever it is necessary, on the other hand it is the lack of peers that can make the learner's experience free of anxiety. Yet, no matter the degree of positive stimulus these sites may generate in students, the teacher remains a constant source of inspiration and orientation. As Algbury (2025:230) mentioned in his book, "for academic writing development, platforms like Grammarly, Quill Bot, and AI powered writing assistants provide automated feedback on grammar, punctuation, cohesion and tone. However, these digital tools cannot really take the place of the teacher but they may be good for directing the learners towards spotting their own mistakes and may stimulate them to verify the studied texts by themselves; moreover, they can follow the structure of the sentences and see if some items keep repeating or are used in the wrong way. The immediate feedback is beneficial for their own correction and may give the learners a hint about the errors that keep appear; this way, "linguistic accuracy" develops and evolves.

Thus, such online sources add, improve and give the learner the option of getting a deeper understanding of the notions acquired during classes. They could be perceived as additional sources of inspiration and support meant to deepen or improve the efficiency of the learning process. They are however more commonly used as a method of self-teaching by those who have a high level of the English language than by students who are beginners. One reason may be the "fear" generated by the lack of proper language background, mistrust when it comes to selecting the right sites or simply a lack of "courage" to appeal to technology. Low-level English students may feel more comfortable when there is some emotional support from the part of the teacher or positive reinforcement which may take away the "fear" of making mistakes and trying new writing tasks. An elementary level student doesn't feel strong enough to be autonomous when learning because they consider they are not good enough and their success relies on the teacher's support and implication in the class. Basically, these students need to boost their confidence in performing activities on their own and identify sites which can provide them with the right feedback and knowledge. The language teacher should therefore suggest extra help with individual learning by using a mix of teaching tools: classical and modern ones and should point out the idea that technological advances are meant to add extra value to the in-class teaching process, not to replace it completely. Classroom interaction is preferable at all times due to the connection that is set between peers and with the teacher but getting independent study is valuable as well. The different perspective of various language learners on autonomy has also been observed by Barcena, Arus & Read (2013:27) who mentioned that the results are much more obvious in the case of learners that aim at achieving higher language levels. These students are prone to become independent learners due to their solid foundation and personal conviction that they master and understand the target language.

The principal target of the English teacher should be the students' progress by achieving the writing activities easily and without feeling the burden of a "heavy

workload". Whether a beginner, intermediate or advanced student, the "work" involved should be a "two-party" one: student-teacher, in-class materials- online ones, group work-pair work, independent study-collaborative one. The main idea is that teaching a foreign language nowadays has become a complex blending of group work, pair work, teacher-centered approach, learner-centered one, modern and traditional one. There is a constant shift and a constant cooperation, all based on the word "adapt": adapt materials to the level of the students, adapt the method of teaching to the students' desires and requirements, adapt the online degree of inclusion in the class, etc. Yang, Chang & Pei (2020:654) argue that the language teachers are the ones who decide on the selection of the materials to be taught in order to fulfil the various levels of the students and skim the data that is transferred to the learners in such a way as to direct them towards individual writing. A mix of "data technology" with traditional writing teaching bring a slight improvement to the teaching act by making it more "scientific" and enriching contributing to a real development of the writing skills. Thus, "English teachers can design writing tasks that are consistent with occupation competence and closely related to daily life bringing freshness to students' English writing."

The variety of materials and teaching techniques work well when learners encourage each other to perform the tasks. Pair work and group work ensure an easier acquisition of the information provided by the teacher and offer practical and emotional support to anxious students or to those who have a lower level of the English language. Mixed-level groups, mixed teaching techniques and tasks, turn the teaching process into an interactive and interesting one which facilitates and improves learning. As Ispas emphasized (2023:246) the "cooperative learning" is one of the most essential strategies when it comes to "development in academic teaching" because it adapts to a wide range of students, the degree of difficultness can vary and a large number of instruction modes can be used to suit the needs of learners from audio to visual ones, from individual to pair work or group work from traditional to technology supported activities, etc. This "can generate an inclusive and supportive learning environment in English courses".

Technology-based activities create a lovely learning environment especially for the young generation who is so accustomed to it. The numerous sites which offer writing guidance in English are well-designed, eye-catching and user friendly. Learners prefer them because they know there is no human being behind the screen to "judge" them so they don't feel any pressure to perform. The positive side is that learners can practise anytime they want and the feedback is spontaneous, concrete and short. Typing on computer is another plus as learners don't feel the "burden" of writing effectively on a piece of paper. It is done rapidly, without overthinking or overanalyzing the content. Nowadays students are more connected to technology and find handwriting tedious, time consuming and hard. As Barbuceanu (2020:242) mentioned, one of the most important characteristics of Information and Communication Technology is linked to the immediate response or "instant gratification" provided by "the real time access to content and online information" which creates a virtual bond among the worldwide users. All these technological advances have given birth to whole new system which is fed by fast access to information. To keep up with these economic and technological shifts, the educational sector should integrate technology to effectively direct and supervise the enormous flux of information.

However, the instant connection to the virtual world comes with "a price". The temptation is big and most of the time leads to plagiarism. It is extremely hard to avoid a "solution" that is fast and effective. Even conscious learners that need to perform a writing

The Relevance of Writing Practice

task may appeal to online sources when they come across difficulties in generating ideas or when being confused. What may start just as a “peek”, may turn into “copying” or “borrowing” ideas. Learners don’t allow themselves the time to process the task knowing they have something “handy”. Even if the real intention is not meant to rely on the knowledge generated by AI, once an article is read, it is absorbed unconsciously by the reader and transferred involuntarily on the paper. Thus, the first risk involved when using AI writing support is plagiarism. As Kimberlee (2025:7) points out, the widespread availability of AI powered writing tools generates amazing support for offering content which increases the danger of academic integrity by opening paths to plagiarism. Although these tools are undoubtedly useful in generating text, in brainstorming and creating drafts, there is a huge possibility to “fall” in the trap of unintentional plagiarism since AI generates output that replicates uncredited sources as well as intentional exploitation. Some users deliberately copy the work on purpose thus threatening undermining academic credibility and breaching basic ethical norms.

Teachers could make learners discover the pleasure of writing by making the process exciting and challenging. Small steps could be taken at the beginning to make it seem simpler and funnier. Transforming short sentences (in the case of beginners) into complex ones, complex sentences into paragraphs and paragraphs into short compositions will strongly contribute to developing essays that will gradually improve. Providing samples of compositions and a structure to respect can increase the chances of success. Moreover, adding extra materials related to the vocabulary items specific to the given topic facilitate the task and give learners a hint about what they really have to do. Working in pairs or in groups could increase personal confidence and provide further stimulus. Limiting the number of words and offering a correct period of time for achieving the writing activity are equally essential. Integrating technology when teaching writing in the English class should be regarded as a “stimulus” if learners are taught how to use it to their own benefit. Artificial intelligence could enhance a wider perspective of the topic and could stimulate creativity if used efficiently. If teachers draw learners’ attention on the fair use of AI, then, the entire writing experience could be a positive one. According to Behera (2026:32), the swift evolution of AI requires a constant debate related to the effort of harmonizing the “innovation” of technology with moral constraints. Educational institutions have to come up with concrete policies that set fixed boundaries to the use of AI to avoid compromising academic truthfulness. Explicit frameworks for the use of AI support and honest use of it and discourage academic dishonesty. Furthermore, integrating AI in the learning environment should not be perceived as a threat but should be embraced as an educational aid which improves learning and stimulates creating thinking. Mastering AI augmented learning is crucial and, if students learn how to “surf” AI responsibly by keeping academic integrity, then they may turn into “digital” champions.

What can a teacher do to encourage students to rely on their own “forces” when they feel helpless in creating compositions? Are there any possibilities to avoid the frequent appeal to technology?

One strategic aspect is to stimulate students with topics that are of great interest to them and a clear “direction” to follow under the direct supervision of the teacher. Reynolds and Teng (2021:73) emphasize that educators should “provide students with writing assignment guidelines so that students are able to structure their work more effectively and confidently”. When these parameters come from a reliable authority figure like an educator, students develop strong confidence when dealing with writing tasks. Students place great importance to the materials offered by the teacher and they generally

prefer this to online writing resources which are “prepared by a source they are not familiar with”. This way, learners save precious time that would otherwise be allocated to checking unknown online writing tools. Furthermore, proactive students can proceed to generating consultation sessions for receiving constructive feedback reports.

The drawbacks of using the technology in class can be diverse and therefore it is not advisable to rely mostly on it. Besides the tendency to “copy” the ideas found on internet, learners may rely on the easiness in finding information on-the-spot and may stop practising the writing skills. Writing, just like all the other skills, requires constant effort and involvement, otherwise it cannot be mastered successfully. Fast access to online support can lead to a lack of proper effort and involvement knowing that no person will analyse their work. Other negative aspects may include the long exposure to the screen of the computer which, in time, may affect the eyesight and the lack of encouragement which a teacher can offer while performing the task. The error correction is done while writing so the learner might get used to this without focusing on the way the words are written. Therefore, when asked to put pen to paper, the learner doesn’t pay enough attention to the spelling of the words and the essay may not be a qualitative one. Pytash (2013:4) underlines that typing on keyboards has lately replaced the old handwriting method taught in schools and this is majorly due to the technology “flood”. Instead of physically shaping each letter by hand, children are now stimulated to become proficient users of pre-rendered keys. This aspect is not exactly positive since writing is an activity connected to our brain so it is rather a mental exercise; the way we use our hands is strictly connected to the activity of the brain, helping to process information and developing our cognitive abilities and thus, our education.

Teachers’ Evolution in the Digital Era

Teachers should keep the pace with the rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence. Quite hard to do that since the free time is limited and the technology is under continuous modification. Personal study and research create room for improvement but institutions also play a role in ensuring AI training. Teachers need proper guidance about how to use technology in class, in a creative way, and what tools to use when teaching. Most of all teachers should draw learners’ attention on ethical writing. Originality should be maintained at all costs and should be the principal focus of a writing task. Azar S. (2026:201) concludes that the accelerating evolution of technology “foreces” the educator in ELT to become „experts” in mastering digital tools thus needing urgent specialised professional training. As artificial intelligence systems evolve, teacher need to understand how to navigate AI tools effectively when guiding students in developing language proficiency and writing practices.

AI can’t replace the presence of a teacher in the class because learners need various degrees of coordination and they have particular needs that have to be met. Each individual is different and the teacher has to identify the right means to make the learner perform and become a proficient user in writing. Still, smart technology cannot be ignored; it’s part of our lives now and should be integrated when teaching with great care and with a proper strategy to maintain the authenticity of the written paper.

Hints for improving writing

One of the main reasons students give up putting too much effort in developing proper writing skills is the amount of time they have to spend in order to achieve the task.

The Relevance of Writing Practice

Digitalisation has offered them fast access to information and makes everything seem simple and effective. That is the reason why most learners don't have the level of patience required to perform a writing activity which needs active involvement and longer time to process. The lack of proper vocabulary, the fear of making grammar mistakes or the imaginative side which differs from person to person form a barrier which hinders the learner. The temptation to abandon is high and if the task is part of a teacher's assignment, then the solution learners embrace is appealing to AI research tools such as Gemini or Chat GPT and others which provide them with immediate solutions. Proficient writing needs however constant practice and guidance. The learner has to be given instructions regarding the number of words and the time limit during which the writing activity has to be ready. It is nevertheless advisable to avoid imposing a strict time slot at the beginning because the learner doesn't possess the right abilities to produce a written task. Moreover, the learners should be encouraged to make up a "structure" of the composition before proceeding to real work. A "body" of the essay would be helpful in keeping the learner on the right track and not get sidetracked. The repetitions of some vocabulary patterns and grammar structures as well as getting used to connectors and sample essays may offer the learners a stimulus to try and remain interested in the topic. Williams (2018:52) notes that a major impediment to writing practice is that many learners are hesitant because it demands too much time; finding the right vocabulary expressions is slow but with constant effort and regular practice it becomes easier and easier. Furthermore, by creating a structured plan and selecting the key language in advance accelerated the writing process. Thus, the main secret is a core preparation before starting writing. An amazing trick before starting writing is to brainstorm some words and phrases instead of proceeding to full sentences. It's as simple and useful technique for producing high quality writing tasks.

The stress factor is also relevant. If the learner is not convinced that he/she can carry out the activity successfully, then the chances are low. Negative thoughts can hinder imagination and may lead to a mental blockage that can be hard to overcome. Fluency doesn't develop on a hesitant learner and needs reassurance that the result will be satisfactory. Creating short sentences, revising each paragraph and concentrating on the planned structure can generate writing confidence and enhance the learner to perform better in the following writing tasks. The key to success is consistency and the trust in the personal abilities that hard work pays off. Learners have to be aware that English is a flexible language so being strict is no use. Moreover, there are various styles of writing: formal or informal and general writing or business writing ask for different approaches. Written samples are useful for guiding the learner and directing him/her towards the right writing path. It is essential to understand the subject you are planning to write about and decide on a clear strategy and draft. Beginners should rather maintain a simple form of the composition until they get more familiarised with complex structures otherwise there is a risk of becoming confused and anxious which may generate a failure. The learner should be directed towards a clear goal and be encouraged to express personal ideas (if it is the case), come up with arguments (when necessary), follow the structure, choose a relevant opening and ending and pay attention to punctuation and other aspects which ensure a correct elaboration of a composition. Accuracy is one of the main components of the writing skill and learners need to be aware of its importance. Computer programs support the writing process by providing spelling and editing help in general. The good part is that, when a paper is finished, the learner has the certainty that it is correct. The downside is that this instant correction makes the learner distance mentally from the effort involved in completing a writing task. The only struggle would be keeping to the topic

and the structure. A paper-based writing task is thus more complex because the learner has in view all the components of the writing skill and doesn't rely on the computer back-up.

Conclusions

In a nutshell, I believe that AI and other online tools are amazing discoveries which could be used to turn the teaching process into an interactive and exciting experience. Writing may no longer be perceived as a tedious activity but as a stimulating one. Learners may "plunge into" the vast amount of information provided by internet to "land" onto useful tips and ideas that could guide the writing activity towards a positive output. Such tools are a wonderful source of support when used at home for personal improvement since correction is done instantly and the vocabulary items suggested are according to the language level required. The learner has to identify the right way to "navigate" through all these piles of data to identify his/her own original style in writing. Managing an online tool as a source of inspiration is quite difficult because, occasionally, notions are involuntarily remembered and the risk of being "copied" is high. Still, many "language learning institutions integrate ChatGPT for practising real-time dialogues, allowing students to engage in conversations that mimic native speakers. Quillbot is used by students to rephrase sentences and practise varying levels of language complexity, fostering better understanding and writing skills". (Asirvatham, 2025:47)

All these online technological innovations have their own benefits for the entire writing process. When accessed with a conscious behaviour, just as an informative source of assistance, they become beneficial tools for enhancing and producing the "narrative stream".

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The Relevance of Writing Practice

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