

**Chapter Two**  
**Developing Writing Productivity**  
**Of Overly Perfectionistic Students:**  
**A Tapestry-based Approach**

The human race has always had an instinct to express their needs, feelings, and emotions in written forms as well as oral ones. Calkins (1989, p. 3) illustrates that human beings have a deep need to represent their experiences through writing. He mentions that ancient people were fond of writing stories, events, habits, or situations related to them on the walls of caves and temples. It could be said that it is a natural human desire and tendency toward drawing shapes and lines on some material's surfaces. One can observe that young children are driven to leave written marks with pens, pencils, markers, pieces of coal or even lipsticks on walls, furniture, or bathrooms.

Academically speaking, writing is one of the four major language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) that needs to be mastered by language learners. It is considered the

most complicated skill of all of them. Despite of its difficulties, writing is still considered an essential, useful, integral, and enjoyable part of any language syllabus (Scott and Ytreberg, 1994, p. 69). Because of its complexity, most approaches to language teaching delay the teaching of writing to later stages when the learners have acquired adequate amount of vocabulary, grammatical rules, and the required linguistic background; which the students learn throughout spoken language activities besides reading exercises. Cohen (1990, p. 103) says that some language teaching methods do not allow language learners to write in early stages, while others do not give students a chance to write extended prose, but the learners are required to write isolated sentences instead.

Kroll (1990) explains that writing in a foreign/second language (L2) is more complex since native speakers' writing problems are combined with the difficulties of using new codes of the other language. However, EFL students can not survive without a reasonable amount of mastering writing in the English language since they have to take final examinations in written forms. In addition, they are required

to submit several written assignments to their teachers. Less proficient students, logically, face problems when they write in English. Consequently, this shortage will affect their grade as well as their language proficiency.

EFL researchers, educators, and teachers have given attention toward improving L2 writings of less productive students (Brophy, 1989; Ferris, 1997; Leki and Carson, 1997; Pacht, 1984). Surprisingly, the present author observed that some good language learners, in language classes at all levels, were not good achievers in written examinations. Some of these learners had repeatedly complained to their teachers of certain problems which they had faced when they were writing in the foreign language. They mentioned that the first thing they think about is to avoid making mistakes, and to get a distinguished grade.

The previous information revealed to the present author that these students' care is excessively given to caution not to make mistakes. This care reaches a higher level of anxiety concerning teachers' comments, and/or grades on their

products. This type of learners spends a longer time thinking of avoiding making any mistakes. This kind of excessive idealism and perfectionism in L2 writing is likely to slow down, and probably impede, these students' writing productivity. Literature refers to these students as overly perfectionistic students who procrastinate and feel anxious about making no mistakes (Adderholt-Elliot, 1989; Brophy, 1989; Hewitt and Flett, 1991).

Logically, mistakes are inevitable in learning any foreign language. These mistakes may occur in written, as well as oral, forms of the target language. Even native speakers sometimes make, and ignore, mistakes when they write in their native language. A good example of that, is the messages they send to each other via e-mail. All they think of is to send, and receive, comprehensible messages. They may ignore spelling, and grammatical mistakes. Moreover, they do not give attention to punctuation marks. They only emphasize the intelligibility of their messages. The quality they send is what the present author calls *productive comprehensible English (PCE)*. This type of English stresses conveying the

meaning with opportunities to save time and to ignore non-effective mistakes. This kind of writing copes with the current world of speedy development in knowledge. In that knowledge society, time means money, success, and triumph.

## **L2 writing and Overly Perfectionistic Students**

Writing is a method of human inter-communication by means of arbitrary visual marks (Gelb and Whiting, 1993). The history of the teaching of L2 writing reveals that there have been two major approaches of teaching writing. The first one is called the product-focused approach which stresses the product that the students produce (Richards, 1992, p. 106). In this approach, the teachers provide the learners with rules of writing and expect from them to produce correct texts. This is why writing in a foreign language has been usually associated with error correction (Scott and Ytreberg, 1994, p. 68). In the second approach, the emphasis has moved from the language that the students produce to the processes, strategies, and cognitive activities that they use when they write (Zamel, 1987). Whereas the product-based approach deals with writing correct kinds of paragraphs and texts, the process-

based approach concentrates on the communicativeness of the written texts. Moreover, the process-based approach is a learner-centered, rather than a language-centered mode.

The process of L2 writing, as well as writing in the native language, involves three distinct stages followed by foreign language writers: (a) pre-writing, rehearsing, or the write-based phase, in which the ideas are gathered and generated; (b) drafting, or product-based phase in which the writer composes structures, and reconstructs ideas and (c) revision, or the reader-phase of revision (Leeds, 1996; Richards, 1992; Scholes and Comley, 1989).

Efforts done for the sake of developing the writing skill/sub-skills serve these three phases.

### **The Characteristics Overly perfectionistic students**

Perfectionistic students are those learners who strive for attaining high standards prescribed by others (Hewitt et al., 1989; Preusser et al., 1994). Because of their care to do a perfect job with no blemishes or weaknesses, perfectionists are often unduly anxious and fearful about the quality of their

work (Brophy, 1996, p. 108). This type of anxiety is related to achieving the highest personal goals as well as winning competitions against other learners.

Adderholt-Elliott (1989) assigns five characteristics of overly perfectionistic students that lead to under-achievement: procrastination, fear of failure, the all-or-nothing attitude, and paralyzed perfectionism. Pacht (1984) mentions additional characteristics of these perfectionists which can be listed as follows: they have impossible high and rigid performance standards; they tend to measure their performance in terms of all-or-nothing; they are not satisfied with the achieved success, when this success is merely what is expected; they procrastinate in getting started on work that will be judged; they continuously start tasks over again or take a long time to do them because the work must be perfect as one goes along; they have overly and catastrophic reactions to minor failures and they suffer from low productivity, or lower than their actual aptitudes, due to procrastination and/or excessive start-overs.

Hewitt and Flett (1991) demonstrate that perfectionism is composed of three dimensions: self-oriented perfectionism, other-oriented perfectionism, and socially prescribed perfectionism. These three dimensions differently affect students' performance.

Perfectionistic students are neither good nor not-so-good students. In his field study, Sielger (1988) describes these types of students in terms of problem knowledge, and learners' response. He illustrates them as follows: (a) perfectionists who have a good knowledge of problems and set high thresholds for stating retrieved answers; (b) good students who have a good knowledge of problems but set lower thresholds and (c) not-so-good students who have less knowledge of problems and set low thresholds.

### **Problems Related to Perfectionism**

Several problems have been mentioned to be related to perfectionism. Brophy (1996, p. 112) illustrates that there are serious problems associated with forms of perfectionism. He believes that some of these problems could be fear of failure,

blame, or rejection. These types of failure are said to be extremely destructive to achievement and motivation.

Perfectionism was proved in Preusser's (1994) study to be positively associated with depression. In a field study applied to (50) college students, Hewitt et al. (1990) found out that high standards of perfectionism in performing tasks could act as a predictor to depression. Another study conducted by Saddler and Sacks (1993) showed that all types of perfectionism (self, other, and socially prescribed) were positively correlated with depression.

As Brophy (1996, p. 108) says, perfectionists are unduly anxious about making mistakes. Applying Burns' Perfectionism Scale, among other measuring instruments, on a sample of 162 undergraduates, Flett et al. (1989) found out that perfectionism had a strong positive correlation with anxiety.

Another problem related to perfectionism is procrastination. In an experimental study, Flett et al. (1992) examined the relationship between individual differences in

perfectionism on one hand and procrastination on the other. The sample consisted of 131 undergraduates who completed measures of self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism, as well as measures of academic and general procrastination. Correlational analysis revealed that there were significant positive correlation between perfectionism and procrastination.

Ferrari (1992) conducted another field study on a sample of 307 college students. The sample completed a set of inventories on procrastination, perfectionism, self-presentation, self-awareness, and self-handicapping. Findings of the study indicated that procrastinators are motivated, by external and social expectations, toward performing perfect behaviors.

Moreover, perfectionists have a tendency to deny personally deviant behavior and to present oneself in the best possible light, as well as greater accuracy in visual search tasks (Slade et al., 1991). Research has proved that perfectionistic students' ideal-self functions as their schema (Hewitt and

Genest, 1990). These students are not satisfied with their actual-self. They have irrational beliefs of their performances. Findings of a field study revealed that there was a positive correlation between perfectionism and high self-expectations (Flett et al., 1991a). Another research, applied on a sample of (461) college students, found out that there was a negative relationship between perfectionism and self-actualization (Flett et al., 1991b).

Conclusively, the previously mentioned problem-syndrome of perfectionistic students affects the linguistic performance of such learners; consequently, level of language productivity decreases. Brophy (1996, p. 113) illustrates that low productivity problems of perfectionists are especially found in written tasks because of two main reasons: (a) writing creates a lasting product that seems to be more vulnerable to criticism than fleeting verbal responses and (b) writing process presents numerous opportunities to procrastinate by wondering about correct technicals of writing.

## **Instructing perfectionistic students**

Educational history suggests several instructing techniques for coping with perfectionistic students. These techniques aim at making perfectionists more self-satisfied and more accomplishing. Mostly, pedagogues' efforts focused on re-socialization, rational-emotive education, and cognitive-behavior modification of such students.

Halgin and Leahy (1989) propose that an integrative therapeutic approach is required for teaching perfectionistic college students. They recommend the use of Meichenbaum Restructuring Technique which follows three stages: teaching clients to become good observers of their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; making the process of self-observation the occasion for emitting adaptive cognition and behaviors and altering individuals' internal dialogues so that changes can be generalized.

Barrow and Moore (1983) made use of group interventions and developed strategies to cope with perfectionists. Their efforts aimed at: raising such students'

self-awareness; helping them to differentiate between main goals and secondary gains; assisting them to accept inevitable times in which goals may not be achieved; making students consider their self-worth apart from task performance and leading students to moderate their performance.

Brophy and Rohrkemper (1989) interviewed (98) experienced teachers in order to investigate their suggesting strategies for instructing perfectionistic students. Among other teaching devices, these teachers' responses included: (a) raising sayings such as "errors are normal, expected... and often necessary aspects of the learning process" or "everybody makes mistakes even teachers... this is why they put erasers on pencils; (b) allowing a certain number of mistakes in the given task; (c) changing the task to something easier and helping the students to set realistic goals.

## **The Tapestry Approach<sup>1</sup>**

It was Rebecca Oxford who created the term and the concept of the Tapestry Approach to Language Learning in 1990, in an academic discussion that took place during 1990's TESOL Conference held in San Francisco. She wanted to reach an effective ESL approach that combines communicative, thematic, task-based learning with a concern for student's individual differences (learning styles, learning strategies, motivation, age, and developmental needs). Then, Rebecca wrote with Robin Scarcella their Tapestry Approach of language learning: The individual in the communicative classroom in 1992. Later, a tapestry team, that consisted of Patricia Byrd, Darlene Larson, Sandra McKay, Robert Oprandy, Thomas Scovel, Marguerite Ann Snow, Merrill Swain, was the first group of textbook writers to develop tapestry instructional materials for ESL learners.

The Tapestry Approach considers language learning as

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the theory of the Tapestry Approach was mainly borrowed from Scarcella and Oxford (1992), and supported by related references.

the process of weaving a tapestry since both involve developmental processes. While weavers use sequential procedures in weaving colored yarns into shapes and patterns, language learners manipulate various threads (vocabulary, grammatical structure, and discourse features) to create proficiency in language skills.

Since the tapestries are used for several purposes, second/foreign languages are learnt to achieve several **communicative** goals that differ according to students' needs. The **tapestry learners**, as well as the weavers, are responsible for determining the shape, size, and the fashion of the final product. In other words, even though they both get assistance from others, the final product is still their own; they determine it, work it out, and finally get the benefits out of it.

The weaver is provided, by his/her mentor, patterns of interesting designs, ideas for blending colors, and suggestions for strengthening the tapestry. Meanwhile, the tapestry teacher acts the roles of information-gather, decision maker, motivator, facilitator, counselor, advisor, and provider of feedback. The

tapestry content should provide opportunities for communicative and authentic language use through thematic task-based instruction. The content's material has to accord with individual learners' differences such as their proficiency levels, learning styles, learning strategies, cultures, needs, interests, and goals.

There are four types of instruction used in the Tapestry Approach: (a) incidental learning; (b) student-centered planned indirect instruction; (c) teacher-centered direct instruction and (d) student self-directed study. The Tapestry Approach makes use of these four types according to certain factors such as the educational situation, learners' needs, nature of the material, and the available potentialities.

## **L2 writing in the Tapestry Approach**

The Tapestry Approach adapts Canale and Swain's (1980) framework of communicative competence when dealing with the teaching of writing. In that sense, good writers need to have a command of the four areas of knowledge and skills. These areas are: (a) grammatical

competence which refers to intelligible usage of grammar, vocabulary, and writing mechanics, such as spelling, punctuation, and hand writing; (b) socio-linguistic competence which enables the writers to diverse their writings and direct them to match various variables such as the topic, the audience, and the purpose; (c) discourse competence which leads the writers to write coherently and cohesively (whereas coherence refers to the overall semantic structure and the unity of the text, cohesion deals with the linking relationships that are explicitly expressed in the surface structure) (Halliday and Hassan, 1976) and (d) strategic competence which means using structures to facilitate writing processes at several stages such as brainstorming, drafting, or composing.

### **Factors affecting L2 writing development**

According the Tapestry Approach, there are several factors that influence the process of developing the writing skill of L2 learners. Some of these factors are needs and objectives, motivation, and authenticity.

## **Needs and objective**

In the Tapestry Approach, explicit instruction is required to serve students' needs and objectives. In his ethical study, Silva (1997, p. 361) mentions that explicit appropriate instruction should be directed to treat L2 learners as intelligent human beings and unique individuals with their own views, experiences, interests, and agendas. He argues that these students are not blank slates for teachers to inscribe their opinions, nor buckets to be filled with their teachers' wisdom. Silva believes that L2 writers need to be understood, placed in the suitable learning context, provided with appropriate instruction, and evaluated fairly.

## **Motivation**

The tapestry approach considers anxiety a main source of blocking successful communicative writing. Students should be given opportunities to choose their writing topics in order to lower their level of anxiety. Moreover, teachers' comments on students' writings play a crucial role in motivating these students. In her study, Ferris (1997) examined over 1,600 marginal and end comments written on

110 first drafts of papers by 47 advance University L2 students. She analyzed the influence of teachers' feedback on improving the sample's revisions of their papers. Among other results, the study revealed that longer comments caused more significant changes, than shorter ones. Longer feedback, in that study, acted as a detailed guideline, or a street map that helped the students to realize their errors and motivated them to follow the prolonged directions in order to improve their writing products. Thus, this type of feedback represented a clear reference which made the students feel more secure than those who received shorter feedback.

### **Authenticity**

Another factor that affects L2 writing improvement is the use of authentic messages and directing them to real audiences. Scarcella and Oxford (1992, p. 121), citing Chaudron's (1983), and Mittan's (1989) studies, illustrate that L2 university students who wrote to convey authentic messages to real audience gave emphasis to the content and organization of their essays as much as they focused on the linguistic forms. Bachman (1990) explains that there are two

approaches of testing authenticity of the students' performance in the target language. The first trend is called the real-life approach which requires adapting settings to resemble real life situations. The second mode is called interactional/ability approach which focuses on testing the interactional ability of language user.

### **Background knowledge**

L2 writers need to increase their background knowledge of the target language's cultural-thought patterns, and linguistic features. In that sense, acquiring adequate amount of conceptual knowledge helps in improving L2 writers' performance. Most educators agree that successful L2 writing involves knowledge of the conventions of the written discourse in that culture as well as grammatical patterns, vocabulary, and style of writing (Ommagio, 1993, p. 319). In addition, Leki and Carson's (1997) study reveals that one effective source of knowledge used for a writing task is information from the writers' personal experiences. Thus, it could be said that the more information the L2 writers know about the target language, the more effective they write in that

language.

### **Writing activities in the Tapestry Approach**

Scarcellia and Oxford (1992, p. 124-127) list a group of activities to be selected and administered, by the Tapestry teacher, in L2 classes according to the individual pedagogic situation. These activities are classified into five categories: (a) pre-writing stage (idea-gathering) in which the students are given various opportunities to generate ideas (it includes activities such as, journals, brainstorming, word mapping, cubing, strategic questioning, and quick-writing); (b) pre-writing stage (idea-gathering) which allows opportunities for the students to gather information related to the assigned writing task (it involves activities such as writing modules, interviews, and dialogues); (c) writing stage (drafting) in which the students start to compose and construct (activities involved in this phase include component writing, one-sitting writing, and leisurely writing); (d) revision stage in which the students revise their work and reconsider their product (it involves activities such as peer reviews and questions for revising) and (e) editing stage in which the students revise

their product to look for linguistic inaccuracies (it includes activities such as error corrections, checklists, and rewriting exercises).

### **Assessment in the Tapestry Approach**

Assessment in the Tapestry Approach is considered a form of language assistance. In this approach, test-taking is a learning technique. Hence, successful teachers are those who manage to make their students enjoy test-taking.

Students' positive attitudes toward teachers' assessment and feedback on their written tasks are highly related to teachers' techniques of error correction. Different students respond variously to the way teachers evaluate their work. Reiken's (1991) study reveals that correction strategies could be more effective when used carefully to match students' personality traits.

When scoring students' L2 writings, the teachers need to identify which type of scoring they will generally use with their class, and which specific scoring technique(s) they are to

use with particular individual cases. Perkins (1983) identifies three principal types of scoring used in evaluating L2 writing. These types include: (a) holistic scoring in which the scorer gives an overall estimation of the written text (the given grade is based on: the clarity of the thesis; the effectiveness of raising and treating the issue; the sufficiency of the support offered to the readers; meeting the readers' needs; the writers' linguistic performance and the use of rhetorical devices); (b) analytic scoring which makes use of separating the writing sub-skills into components for scoring purposes ( in this type, grades are given according to assigned norms and a pre-determined scoring-rate scheme and the teachers find it easier to give feedback on students' writings) and (c) primary trait scoring in which the written text is holistically evaluated based on one assigned feature of writing (for example, the scorer may holistically score a text with emphasis on the grammatical structure, vocabulary, or organization of the text).

Being a learner-centered mode, the Tapestry Approach allows for any additional type of correction. For example, peer- or self-editing of L2 writing could be used with certain

students who might feel more relaxed and secure when they receive feedback from sources other than the authority represented by the teacher.

Finally, the general characteristics of L2 writing in the Tapestry Approach could be summarized as: "writing is viewed as a collaborative, social process where the students assist one another in composing texts; writing topics are student-controlled; writing shapes and refines thought and the students create meaning through writing; students write for real audiences, errors are considered natural and are corrected in the final stages of the writing process; grammar is taught in the context of writing for communication; feedback is given throughout the writing process and the students are evaluated on the basis of the quality of their total writing process" (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992, p. 123).

### **A Suggested treatment**

The proposed program is mainly constructed (see appendices) in order to decrease the students' level of perfectionism and increase their L2 writing productivity.

Constructing this program aims to: (a) eliminate irrational beliefs of mistakes that lead students to have writing problems; (b) raise the students' awareness of their problems and their solutions and (c) train the students on writing comprehensible productive English.

This program is to be taught to intermediate level students. It is constructed on the basis of the principles of the Tapestry Approach of language learning which focuses on individual learner's needs, interests, characteristics, and personality traits. It consists of 12 sessions. Each session has to take place within two hours weekly (Could be covered in two or three periods). The program ends up with a conclusive debriefing session. Mostly, all the sessions, except the concluding sessions numbered 11, and 12, includes four steps: warming up activities, presentation and discussion, practice, and homework writing assignments. The content of this program mainly provides the students with techniques to improve their writing productivity and information about the problem of being overly perfectionistic, and solutions to it.

Types of instruction used in the program includes: incidental learning, direct teacher-centered instruction, planned indirect student-centered instruction, and student self-directed study. Activities used in the program includes: individual, pair, and group work. The Tapestry writing activities, used in the program, mainly deals with: pre-writing (concerning with both idea-gathering, and information-gathering), drafting, revision, and editing tasks. For more detail, see appendices.

## **Conclusion**

Foreign language specialists are encouraged to give a greater care to the productivity of comprehensible written English. The teacher's traditional mentality of dealing with mistakes needs to be changed since new communicative Tapestry language rules tolerate for non-effective mistakes. It is time to get rid of the old fashioned error correction techniques that do not fit with the globalism of the world. The recent need of English as a universal tongue requires a reasonable amount of error acceptance. These errors are inevitable since the size of non-native English speakers continuously increase. Hence, a special treatment should be

given to foreign language learners concerning errors and error correction. In everyday life, both native and non-native speakers of English are required to accept the possibility of making errors. In addition, teachers of English have to set their objectives making use of the following questions: (a) what are the errors they will correct immediately? (b) what are the errors that can be ignored? (c) what are the errors that need delayed correction? (d) what is the appropriate time to correct a certain errors? and (e) how can they make their students accept the fact of the inevitability of errors?

In addition, educators are recommended to give more attention to the problems of good language learners as well as those of the slow learners. Unfortunately, educators usually think that problems are only related to slow learners. However, non-slow learners do have their own learning problems that affect their general achievement, and linguistic performance. The problems of the non-slow learners need to be considered since the improvement of such learners is a moral request. For example, literature refers to overly perfectionistic students as those who know a good amount of

knowledge, as well as the good learners, but they set higher goals. This problem makes them procrastinate, and affect their performance. Some teachers may not give any interest to the problem of these students just because they are not slow-learners. Nevertheless, teachers are morally required to take care of their non-slower learners who have problems that affect their achievement and performance.

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**Appendix I**  
**The Overly Perfectionistic Students**  
**Checklist (OPSC)**

Category	0	1	2	3
<p><b>A. Viewing Success</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After I finish a task I feel that I could have done it better.</li> <li>2. When I complete any task I always think that it lacks something.</li> <li>3. I feel frustrated when I make a minor mistake.</li> <li>4. I hate to make any mistakes.</li> <li>5. I want to reach the highest level of success.</li> <li>6. My real joy is to get the highest grade in the class.</li> <li>7. I am satisfied only when I get the full mark.</li> <li>8. The need to excel motivates me more than the fear of failure:</li> <li>9. I consider passing the exam a normal achievement.</li> <li>10. I participate in class activities only when I am quite sure of the right answer.</li> <li>11. I think that real success means being the best student in class.</li> </ol>				

\* (0) Never true of me

(1) Sometimes true of me

(2) Most of the time true of me

(3) Always true of me

## Appendix I continued

Category	0	1	2	3
<p><b>B. Writing Tasks</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I feel ashamed of myself when I make a spelling mistake of an easy word.</li><li>2. I feel frustrated when the teacher asks me to re-write a task.</li><li>3. I like to present my homework in an attractive and organized manner.</li><li>4. I turn in the required papers on time.</li><li>5. I write down several rough drafts of every written task before I turn it in, in order to be sure of making no mistakes.</li><li>6. I re-write sentences until I feel that I have written the accurate expression.</li><li>7. When I write an essay I consider several times of the appropriateness of the vocabulary that I am using.</li><li>8. It takes me a long time to be sure of the correctness of the tenses that I have used during the written task.</li><li>9. In any written task, I frequently review punctuation marks.</li></ol>				

## Appendix I Continued

Category	0	1	2	3
<p><b>C. Tests</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. During exams, I make several revisions before I turn in my paper.</li><li>2. In exams, I leave the testing room at the last minute so that I can use all the time possible for corrections.</li><li>3. When I answer, in tests, I try to write down model answers and not just ordinary answers.</li><li>4. During exams, I wish I could know how other good students are answering.</li><li>5. After finishing the test, I feel anxious until hearing of the results.</li></ol>				

## **Appendix II**

### **The Proposed Tapestry-Based Writing Program**

#### **A Teacher's Guide**

1. Abbreviations used in the program are:

*T. Teacher*

*S. Individual students*

*Ss students*

*BB Blackboard*

*HW Home work*

2. The program consists of (12) sessions. Each session takes place within two hours.

3. Each session, except concluding sessions (11 & 12), consists of four steps:

Step I includes a warm up activity. The purpose of each activity is mentioned between brackets at the end of the step.

**Step II** deals with teacher's presentations of important information. In addition, the teacher, in this step, provides the students with general comments on homework errors done by these students. The teacher is not recommended to mention the name of the student(s) who makes the error.

**Step III** focuses on students' practice on the information presented on step II. The students are asked to do some activities the purpose of which is mentioned between brackets at the end of the step.

**Step IV** involves the assigned writing tasks to be accomplished at home.

**4. Error correction takes place in four phases:**

- a. General comments that the teacher gives in step II in order to avoid students' embarrassment and depression,**
- b. Comments given by the teacher in person outside the class,**

c. Peer correction, and

d. Public comments that the teacher and colleagues give to the students at later stages of the program.

5. The teacher allows the students to make a limited number of mistakes. This number is to be announced by the teacher before starting the task.

6. Activities involved in the program require individual, pair, and group work. The teacher is encouraged to direct the students to select whatever suits their learning preferences.

7. Types of instruction used in the program are those of the Tapestry Approach:

a. Incidental learning where the process of learning takes place as a natural step. In this type, the learners use authentic writings. This type of instruction could be found in students' performance of some tasks,

b. Direct, teacher-centered instruction in which the teachers explicitly teach students certain rules of writing as in Step

II,

- c. Planned, indirect student-centered instruction. In this type, the teacher engages the learners in meaningful communicative situations. The tasks that the students perform in the program involve this type of instruction, and
- d. Student self-directed study which allows the students to expand their writing skill on their own. In this type, opportunities are given to the students to select topics, text structures, and further written tasks to perform.

## The Sessions

### Session 1

#### Step I

The students are asked to write down a brief solution to the following situation:

*You are in your way to an important job interview. On your way, you fall down in the mud. There is no time to go back home to change your clothes, because you will be interviewed within five minutes. What are you going to do?*

**(Purpose: to help Ss to write freely and use imagination)**

### **Step II**

T. Presents the six sides of the cube adapted from Hughy, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Jacobs, cited in Scarcella & Oxford, (1992:125). These six sides are:

1. Decide by using one's senses to examine color, size, shape; to feel; to smell; to touch; and to hear.
2. Compare what it is like or unlike.
3. Associate it with whatever it brings to mind, similar or un-similar.
4. Analyze how it is composed, what it is part of, and what is part of it.
5. Apply it in whatever way it can be used or applied.
6. Argue for it or argue against it, and give reasons for taking that position.

### **Step III**

T. specifies a certain topic, and Ss spend about five minutes writing on each side of the cube.

**(Purpose: to help Ss to identify the writing focus)**

## **Step IV**

For HW, Ss list problems they face when they write in the foreign language.

## **Session 2**

### **Step I**

T. writes on the BB any eight English letters with a space after each letter. Each S. tries to fill in the spaces making up a meaningful sentence(s). Each word, in that sentence, has to begin with the letter that T. wrote on BB. Ss are required to follow the order of the letters that the T wrote.

#### *Example*

L . H R A . B . F P D

*Let him read and buy food. Please, do.*

(Purpose: to help Ss focus on vocabulary usage and easiness of production, despite the expected non-meaningfulness of the produced messages)

### **Step II**

T. explains to the Ss the two different purposes of L2 writing :

1. Institutional writing which is produced for professional purpose.

*Examples*

*a. Ss write to teacher essays, exams, and homework, and*

*b. Ss write for themselves notes, academic diaries, and summaries.*

2. Personal writing which deal with personal relationships.

*Examples*

*a. Personal letters, and*

*b. Creative writing like writing a poem or a short story.*

**Step III**

Ss write and exchange journals, amongst themselves, about types of L2 writing they actually use.

(Purpose: to help Ss write without being threatened by T's comments on their writing.

**Step IV**

For HW, Ss write a paragraph about the best topic they like to write about, and to mention reasons.

## **Session 3**

### **Step I**

**T. writes down a situation on small pieces of paper. Each sentence is to be written on a separate paper. Each S. picks up, at random, a piece of paper. Then, Ss stand up in a circle and each one reads aloud his/her sentence. Ss have to compose the right order of the situation.**

**(Purpose: to help Ss to recognize the importance of logic order in writing)**

### **Step II**

**T. explains text structure of solving a problem showing that each text needs to be organized to include:**

- 1. Introduction that directs the readers' attention to the problem and shows the writer's relationship to this situation,**
- 2. Background which implies the nature, history, and causes of the problem, and its relevance to the writer's problems, desires and interests,**
- 3. Argument which includes major, then minor, information necessary to make the text clear and accepted, and**

4. Conclusion that presents implications of the arguments, and comprehensive summary.

(Adapted from Hoey, cited in Richards, 1992: 104).

### **Step III**

1. Ss brain storm written ideas on the importance of learning a foreign language while T. writes Ss' ideas on BB,
2. Ss working in groups, pairs or individually list these ideas under main titles,
3. Each individual writes a paragraph on the same topic making use of the available ideas.

(Purpose: to help Ss generate and expand ideas)

### **Step IV**

For HW, Ss rewrite the paragraph again using the first try as a draft, and make modifications.

## **Session 4**

### **Step I**

Individual Ss select to draw a semantic map of key words

related to one topic of the following: nightmares, food, or famous a character.

(Purpose: to help Ss organize main ideas and understand where supporting details are needed)

### **Step II**

T. discusses with Ss norms and standards that teachers use to grade Ss' writing products.

### **Step III**

T. dictates Ss a beginning paragraph about a story. Based on this introduction, Ss have to complete writing this story.

(Purpose: to help Ss develop logical incidents)

### **Step IV**

For HW, Ss select to write an essay about the topic they made a semantic map for in Step I.

## **Session 5**

### **Step I**

T. asks Ss to write on a piece of paper as many ideas as possible about freedom (within ten minutes).

(Purposes: to help Ss to write quickly without editing and to focus only on ideas)

### **Step II**

T. explains the four types of self in order to help Ss make careful observations about their writing skill. These four types are:

1. The open self which refers to information about teacher's behaviors known to the teacher and to others,
2. The secret self which refers to information known to the teacher but not to others,
3. The blind self which refers to information about the teacher known to others but not to the teacher, and
4. The hidden self which refers to information about a teacher's behavior unknown to both the teacher and to others.

### **Step III**

Ss write an essay describing their four types of self as L2 writers.

(Purpose: to bring their individual writing problems into their consciousness as a step for recovery)

### **Step IV**

For HW, Ss rewrite the previously mentioned essay to be presented in front of the class next session.

## **Session 6**

### **Step I**

Ss working in groups, pairs, or individually design a written advertisement about a product they sell, and present it in front of the class.

(Purpose: to guide Ss to use short phrases/sentences in order to reveal facts and persuade others)

### **Step II**

T. defines and describes perfectionism explaining the

characteristics of perfectionistic Ss who are anxious about their linguistic products, feel depressed when they make minor mistakes, think of making mistakes as sinning, have an all-or-nothing attitude and set goals higher than normal ones. Discussions are to be held on the advantages and disadvantages of being a perfectionist.

### Step III

Ss present their essays on their self types in front of the class

(Purpose: to help Ss bring their problems into their consciousness)

### Step IV

For HW, each S writes an essay on the advantages and disadvantages of being a perfectionist.

## **Session 7**

### Step I

Each S. selects to write an introduction of an essay about a

topic they like to write about. This essay is to be completed at home.

(Purpose: to give Ss a chance to enjoy writing about topics they prefer to write)

### **Step II**

T. discusses the issue of making mistakes with Ss focusing on the following ideas:

- a. Everybody makes mistakes even native speakers,
- b. Mistakes should be looked at as learning experiences, and
- c. Sometimes quick writing is required.

### **Step III**

Ss present and discuss their essays on the advantages and the disadvantages of being a perfectionistic student.

(Purpose: to bring Ss' problem into their consciousness)

### **Step IV**

For HW, Ss complete the essay they started in Step I.

## **Session 8**

### **Step I**

Ss write a paragraph about something they hate most.

(Purpose: to assist Ss to have their emotions evoked)

### **Step II**

T. presents and discusses with Ss some writing strategies that make writing easier, faster, more effective, and more enjoyable.

*Examples: using keywords, using formulas and patterns, using resources for sending messages, approximating the message, summarizing, using circumlocutions, organizing, setting goals and objectives, planning for a written task, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, taking risks, asking for correction, and cooperating with peers.*

### **Step III**

Ss prepare a lecture on chemistry, within twenty minutes, to be presented in front of the class.

(Purpose: to give Ss a chance to use writing strategies)

### **Step IV**

For HW, Ss write about a famous character they admire.

## **Session 9**

### **Step I**

Each S. writes down five words that describe him/her and present them in class.

(Purpose: to help Ss use the appropriate words that refer to detailed information)

### **Step II**

T. explains an academic topic (related to methodology) asking Ss to take notes.

### **Step III**

Ss are asked to write a summary on the given lecture and to submit it to the teacher for correction.

(Purpose: to help Ss to focus on the main ideas of lectures and to write effective academic summaries)

### **Step IV**

For HW, Ss write a script of a short story making use of drawings and pictures.

## **Session 10**

### **Step I**

T. tells Ss: You are working on your computer. You are on line with an institute which is looking for teachers to heir. You have only two minutes to apply for this job. Write down, within two minutes, what you are going to write.

(Purpose: to write the main ideas quickly)

### **Step II**

Ss present their short stories. T. discusses with them creative writing.

### **Step III**

T. asks a volunteer(s) to write down about a topic of his/her preferences. This volunteer is required to think aloud while

writing. Both T. and Ss take notes about the student's thinking aloud processes to be discussed after he/she finishes writing.  
(Purpose: to help Ss observe others when they write)

#### **Step IV**

For HW, Ss write a descriptive essay about a place they visited before. Ss are encouraged to use their imagination.

### **Session 11**

#### **Step I**

Ss, working in groups, compose a piece of a literary work of their own (poetry, prose, or verse).  
(Purpose: to help Ss to write creatively)

#### **Step II**

T. directs and comments on Ss' discussion of their HW.  
(Purpose: to establish situations for Ss to enrich their imagination)

### **Step III**

For HW, Ss write an essay about their experience with the present program.

## **Session 12**

### **Step I**

Ss write an invitation to other Ss to attend their class with them.

(Purpose: to help them use personal as well as institutional writing. Ss ' brief perspectives on the present program could also be elicited in this activity)

### **Step II**

Ss discuss their HW.

### **Step III**

Ss write a conclusion for the present program and suggest recommendations for further work. Each S is required to read his/her conclusion in front of the class.