

ENHANCING WRITING COMPETENCY THROUGH COMPETENCY-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (CBLT)

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Abstract. Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) is a skill-oriented approach that focuses on enhancing learners' language abilities for real-world applications. This article explores the implementation of CBLT in improving writing competencies, particularly in the context of formal letter writing for students preparing to enter international universities. A structured writing activity is presented, where students select a formal letter type, write independently, and engage in peer feedback through a guessing game. The activity not only enhances writing skills but also fosters collaboration, critical thinking, and time management under pressure. The justification for choosing CBLT as the teaching method is grounded in its focus on competency development, with supporting evidence from academic research on feedback and student motivation. The article concludes that CBLT, when paired with focused writing activities, offers a comprehensive framework for improving academic writing skills, ensuring students are better prepared for both academic and professional communication.

Keywords: Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT), Formal letter writing, Academic writing, Writing skills development, Peer feedback, Real-world language application, Student motivation, Writing competencies, Feedback in writing.

The CBLT Approach: A Focus on Real-Life Skills.

CBLT emphasizes the development of language competencies that students can directly apply in real-life scenarios. As Richards (2013) suggests, this method is inherently skill-based, focusing on expanding students' abilities to use language effectively in various contexts. For students aspiring to attend international universities, the ability to write formal letters such as letters of enquiry, order letters, complaint letters, and promotion letters is indispensable. These forms of written communication are often required in academic and professional settings, making it crucial for students to master them.

By adopting CBLT, educators create an environment where students can practice real-world tasks, reinforcing their understanding of writing conventions and expectations. The practical approach allows students to build confidence in their writing abilities and gain familiarity with the types of communication they will encounter in their academic and professional futures. Ultimately, CBLT provides learners with valuable skills that will benefit them in both their studies and careers.

Writing activity to enhance competency in formal letter writing.

The selected writing activity, rooted in the CBLT framework, is designed to help students develop specific competencies in formal letter writing. The task involves a series of steps that guide students through the writing process while also fostering critical thinking and peer interaction.

Activity steps:

Card selection (2 minutes): Students are called one by one and asked to pick a card. Each card contains a different type of formal letter that students will be tasked with writing. This step engages students in decision-making and introduces them to the range of formal letters they will be addressing.

Writing (15 minutes): Students independently write a piece of formal correspondence based on the letter type they selected. They are instructed not to show their card to others, ensuring that each student produces a unique piece of

writing. During this phase, students work individually, practicing their ability to compose clear, structured letters in English.

Peer guessing (10 minutes): Once the writing is completed, each student reads their letter aloud to the class. The other students listen carefully and try to guess the type of letter based on its content and structure. This step encourages active listening and enhances students' understanding of the different formats and conventions of formal letter writing.

Assessment and feedback (3 minutes): Students whose peers correctly identify the type of letter they wrote are rewarded with good marks. This step emphasizes the importance of writing in the correct format and offers a form of formative assessment that reinforces the value of accuracy in writing.

Justification for the teaching method and activity

The choice of the CBLT method for this activity is rooted in its emphasis on skill development and practical application of language. As students preparing for international universities, mastering formal writing is essential. Through this activity, students engage in a real-world task writing a formal letter which aligns with their future needs. By focusing on specific letter types, such as enquiry letters and complaint letters, students gain targeted skills that are directly applicable to future academic and professional contexts.

Research supports the effectiveness of CBLT in language acquisition. According to Maamujav, Krishnan, and Collins (2019), mastering academic writing is cognitively demanding and requires both domain knowledge and linguistic proficiency. CBLT allows students to focus on specific aspects of writing, helping them develop proficiency in a particular genre of writing that will be essential for their academic success.

Moreover, feedback plays a crucial role in the writing process. Studies (e.g., Ferris, 1995; Hyland, 1998) have shown that constructive feedback on writing helps students improve their work by identifying areas for improvement and encouraging

revision. The feedback given in this activity, coupled with the reward system for correctly formatted letters, motivates students to strive for accuracy and improvement. This aligns with Shin's (2011) argument that teachers should praise students for their continued efforts, fostering a positive learning environment.

By working under time pressure and receiving immediate feedback, students learn how to effectively manage writing tasks, maintain coherence and cohesion in their writing, and avoid deviating from the topic. These skills are not only essential for academic success but also valuable in real-life professional communication.

Conclusion

Competency-Based Language Teaching offers a robust framework for enhancing students' writing skills, particularly in academic contexts. By focusing on practical writing tasks like formal letters, students are better prepared for the challenges they will face in university and beyond. The structured writing activity discussed in this article encourages active learning, peer interaction, and feedback, all of which contribute to students' mastery of essential writing skills. Through CBLT, students can develop the competencies they need to communicate effectively in the real world, thus ensuring their success in both academic and professional environments.

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