

Guidelines on Improving Student Writing

In his article, “Protean Elements to Meeting Requirements of the Audience,” Joseph Smith, Professor of English at the University of Utah, believes that writers need to change their writing in ways to fit their readers’ comprehension and interest. First, Smith points out that if the author does not care about the reader's understanding of the article, their articles are hard for people to follow. Usually, readers are more inclined to use the information they have to understand new ideas. In addition, if the author always considers their audience when they write, the author can change his or her words to be easier for readers to comprehend the article’s idea.

Second, Smith believes that a good writer should make the article to approach the reader’s expectation. For a good article, it needs to be interesting to readers and give them new ideas and knowledge. However, if the writers just use overly complicated language to point out a simple idea, it is not comfortable for people to read. The readers can be attracted by some related information which can help them understand the article. Also, Smith suggests that writers should avoid using difficult expressions. Furthermore, the writer can use rhetoric and explanation which makes these ideas easier to understand, rather than repeating the boring sentences. The reader can understand the article more deeply, if the writer uses these good ways to complete his narration.

In her article, “Improving Writing the Process Approach,” Mary Jones, freelance writing coach at the Communication Consortium of New York, argues that usually, an author can improving their writing skill by effective practice, and he lists some approaches. First, writers need to make their words clear, simple and easy to understand by modification by repeating reviewing them. Most of writers may not be satisfied with their first drafts. However, it is

necessary to complete it which includes wrong and unclear ideas because it contains the topic idea. This is an important part of the writing process. Then, writers need to do “prewriting, writing and editing”, rather than skipping any one of these. This process can make the articles more fluent, clear and accurate. Finally, Jones points out that writers always complete their good works by these three steps. .

Prewriting is an important step for the articles because writers can organize the introduction and prepare more background information about the content. Meanwhile, it is a basic step for the writers to consider the readers’ interests and requests. Writers need to think about prewriting and review which directions for writing and make an organization about their ideas. Considering the readers’ interests can provide a writing direction. Jones also states that excellent rhetoric can make the author express his views more clearly but this is also very difficult. Moreover, Jones suggests that writers should consider their own writing weaknesses and advantages. Editing is necessary for the final draft, writers need to correct their grammar and spelling, and make these articles fluent and easy to read. In the end, Jones proves that writers should repeat working on their articles because it can help to develop the writer’s own ideas which are attractive to readers.

In the article, “Improving the Writing Skills of College Students” by Professor Ronald T. Kellogg of Saint Louis University and Professor and Director Bascom A. Raulerson III of Knox College, they argue that cognitive thinking can help college students improve their writing skills. One important aspect of writing that the authors focus on is cognitive control. In order to improve writing ability, people need to take advantage of their memory, language, and thinking skills. The traditional ways of teaching children with heavy emphasis on grammar and spelling

do not represent what writing truly is. We must first teach children to concentrate on the text itself to make it complete and more fluent. After this step, we can teach them the essentials such as grammar and spelling for basic writing. Finally, writers must be able to explain their ideas in a way that readers can understand.

Another aspect of writing the people tend to overlook is practice and motivation. Students are only writing assignments to complete them, but they don't feel any connection to the writing. One trait that successful writers have in common is motivation and dedication to their piece. Teaching is very important at an early age where they find their love for writing. However, most authors don't reach their golden time until mid-thirties, where authors often publish their best works. That is because even though they had love, they lacked practice. The key to practice is not to write a big long piece month at a time, but small paragraphs as often as possible. The authors have included data that correlated with students who have continually taken writing intensive courses over the years versus students who did not. There was a sharp contrast between the two groups, with the students who continuously practice having much better writing ability.

Finally, institutions often make writing into a boring process with no reward for young writers, and there is a lack of peer review, editing, and feedback. Most academic students writing an academic paper is simply to get a good grade, not because they care about their subject. Throughout the years, English courses have been declining in popularity due to the fact that there is a lack of interest. On top of that, students may often be shocked by a low grade they have received on their paper. There is a lack of feedback given to students before they hand in their final draft, and teachers often neglect to teach the importance of peer review in the writing process. If this aspect of teaching is emphasized more and done more efficiently, then college students may have more interest in their English courses.

Overall, the authors emphasized the three important aspects of writing, what it takes to be a good writer, and what the college institutions can improve on to improve student performance.