Introduction

Generally, writing is a language skill, an everyday practice, a form of literacy, a communicative activity, and sometimes a means through which learners can be assessed, especially in the EFL context. As a method of communication, for example, writing can be used to establish and maintain contact with others, transmit information, express thoughts, feelings, and reactions, entertain, and persuade. As a personal or private activity, it can be a powerful tool for learning and remembering. It can be used to explore and refine ideas, organise thoughts, and record information. At school, learners are usually asked to use writing to display what they know, and thus, writing becomes the medium through which pupil learning is measured (Browne, 1999: p2).

**1. Why teach writing?**

**Reinforcement:**

Some students acquire language in an aural/oral way, but most of us benefit more when they see the language written down. Students often find it useful to write sentences using new language shortly after they have studied it.

**Language development:**

The mental process involved in the process of writing helps us to learn the language.

**Learning style:**

Some students are quick at picking up the language just by looking and listening. Some others need time to think things through and to produce language in a slower way. Writing is a quite reflective activity unlike the rush and bother of the face-to-face communication.

**Writing as a skill:**

The most important reason for teaching writing is that it is a basic skill, just as important as speaking, reading, and listening. Students need to know how to write letters, ads, reports, Emails, etc. they need also to know some of writing’s conventions (punctuation, paragraph writing, etc.).

**2. Reasons for writing:**

Therefore, people write for different reasons and in a wide range of contexts. They normally write in order to:  
- Get their message across;  
- Convey important information and facts to others;  
- Communicate their own intentions and purposes;  
- Help and support others;  
- Prove that they have mastered something;  
- Put ideas on paper so that they are not lost;  
 - Plan for doing something by creating a schedule or timetable;  
 - Guide and direct others;  
 - Succeed in life and pass tests

- Modify and re-draft something;  
- Make money and earn living;  
 - Express themselves;  
 - Socialise and participate in different events;  
 - Organise ideas and say what one cannot communicate orally;  
 - Share ideas and experiences with others;  
 - State reflections and jot down personal diaries;  
 - Teach/Train others and provide them with feedback;  
 - Learn and internalise some linguistic aspects (e.g., vocabulary and grammar); and  
 Simplify something.

3. **Stages of the Writing Process**3.1. **Prewriting:**

This is the planning phase of the writing process, when students brainstorm, research, gather and outline ideas, often using diagrams for mapping out their thoughts. Audience and purpose should be considered at this point, and for the advanced students, a working thesis statement needs to be started.  
**3. 2. Drafting:**

Students create their initial composition by writing down all their ideas in an organized way to convey a particular idea or present an argument. Audience and purpose need to be finalized.  
**3.3. Revising:**

Students review, modify, and reorganize their work by rearranging, adding, or deleting content, and by making the tone, style, and content appropriate for the intended audience. The goal of this phase of the writing process is to improve the draft.  
**3. 4. Editing:**

At this point in the writing process, writers proofread and correct errors in grammar and mechanics, and edit to improve style and clarity. Having another writer’s feedback in this stage is helpful.  
**3. 5. Publishing:**

In this last step of the writing process, the final writing is shared with the group.

**4. What kind of writing should students do?**

The type of writing students should do depends on the students’ **level, age, and interests**. We can get beginners to write simple paragraphs but not extended reports on town planning. When we set tasks for students, we should also make sure that students have enough language to complete the task. It is all about what language students have at their command and what they can do with that language.

Another factor which can determine our choice of writing task is the students writing **interests.** If everyone works in a bank, we may choose to get them to write bank reports. If they are all travel agents, we may get them to write ads for special deals. This, however, does not mean that we cannot use other types of writing with them.

When we have a mixed group, we should choose writing tasks that are generally useful but which, more importantly, are likely to enjoy doing.

**3. Ways of correcting students writing**

Most students will get disappointed if they get their piece of writing back and it is covered in red ink, underlining, and crossings-out. It is a statement that your English is terrible.

Some papers are, of course, full of mistakes, but even in those cases, overcorrection can have a demotivating effect. The teacher has to achieve a balance between accurate and truthful correction on the one hand and treating students sensitively and sympathetically on the other hand.

**3.1. Selective correction**

One way to avoid overcorrection is to tell students that we will focus on one aspect in their writing. We could correct only verb tenses or only punctuation, or focus instead exclusively on word order. We might only correct paragraph organisation or the use of appropriate levels of formality.

If we are going to employ a selective approach, students need to know about it. This will make students concentrate on that aspect and cuts down on correction.

A way of making selective correction effective is to discuss with students what the teacher will focus on. If they are part of the decision making process, they are likely to approach the task with more commitment and enthusiasm, and they will pay more attention to that area.

**3.2. Using marking scales:**

Teachers may want to give a mark for each aspect of writing (grammar, punctuation, vocabulary coherence, etc.). This means that though students may fail in one aspect, they can do well in another. Such marking scales can help students focus on the areas they need to improve.

**3.3. Using correction symbols:**

Another way is to give students a list of correction symbols. When the teacher finds a mistake, he writes the symbol next to it or in the margin. This makes correction less damaging.in order for students to benefit from the use of these symbols; they need to be trained in their use.

**3.4. Reformulation:**

Reformulation is a way of showing students how they could write something more correctly. Instead of asking them to find the mistake and correct it, the teacher shows how he would write the incorrect sentence. The student then learns by comparing the correct and incorrect versions.

**3.5. Referring students to a dictionary or a grammar book**

Sometimes teachers indicate that a mistake has been made then tell students to go and look the problem up in a dictionary or a grammar book. For example, if a student says, “I am not interested about” the teacher can say “have a look at interested in your dictionary”.

The advantage of doing this is to encourage them to look at the information with a purpose in mind.

**3.6. Ask me**

Sometimes it is difficult to explain the mistake on paper, or it is impossible to understand what the student meant. In such cases, teachers can ask students to ask them so that they sort out the problem face to face.

**3.7. Remedial teaching**

When teachers read students work and come across mistakes which many in the class are making, remedial teaching will then be necessary. In such cases, correction can be done by showing the whole class sentences produced by the students and asking them to correct them. The mistakes should be kept anonymous so that no individual students feels held up to redicule.

Regardless of the number of mistakes you may find in a piece of writing, it is always important to write a comment at the end of the paper-anything from “well done”, “this is a good story, but you must look again at your use of the past tense!”

Correcting can be time consuming and frustrating mainly when the teacher fails to know what the mistake is because it is unclear what the student is trying to say. Discussing this with students can be the solution. Moreover, correction is worthless if students just put their corrected papers away and never look at them again.