

WRITING AND LITERACY



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WRITING AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SLA) : SOME QUESTIONS

- How important is writing in SLA?
- Should writing be taught from the beginning?
- What does learning to write include?
- How does the acquisition of a "second literacy" differ from the first acquisition of writing?
- What techniques and strategies can help in learning and teaching writing in a second language?

"Every educated child in developed countries learns the rudiments of writing in his or her native language, but very few learn to express themselves clearly with logical, well-developed organization that accomplishes an intended purpose. And yet we expect second language learners to write coherent essays with artfully chosen rhetorical and discourse devices!"

(Brown 2004: 218)

RECALL: FUNCTIONAL LITERACY

"A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group." (Gray 1969: 24)

- Is this the same or different for a second language?
- Is functional literacy the (only) goal in learning/teaching writing in a second language?

LEARNING TO WRITE

1. Learning the technique of encoding language in writing – "becoming a scribe"
2. Learning to produce written texts – "becoming an author" (Barton)

Learning to write1 - First steps: another alphabet

Example: Korean for speakers of English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TE4epIsFSms>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqFGHMxWtYk>

MAIN POINTS OF THE FIRST VIDEO

- prior knowledge transferred from L1: what is an alphabet, letters, consonant and vowels;
- association with L1 for remembering
- visual cues for remembering
- immediate application (searching with GOOGLE) and success
- use of familiar words/names – no knowledge of Korean needed
- concentration on deciphering (reading), neglecting pronunciation

WRITING: MICROSCILLS

(EXAMPLE: ENGLISH; BROWN 2004: 221)

- Produce graphemes and orthographic patterns of English.
- Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.
- Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns.
- Use acceptable grammatical systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns, and rules.
- Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.
- Use cohesive devices in written discourse.

WRITING TO LEARN (A LANGUAGE): SOME CLASSROOM PRACTICES

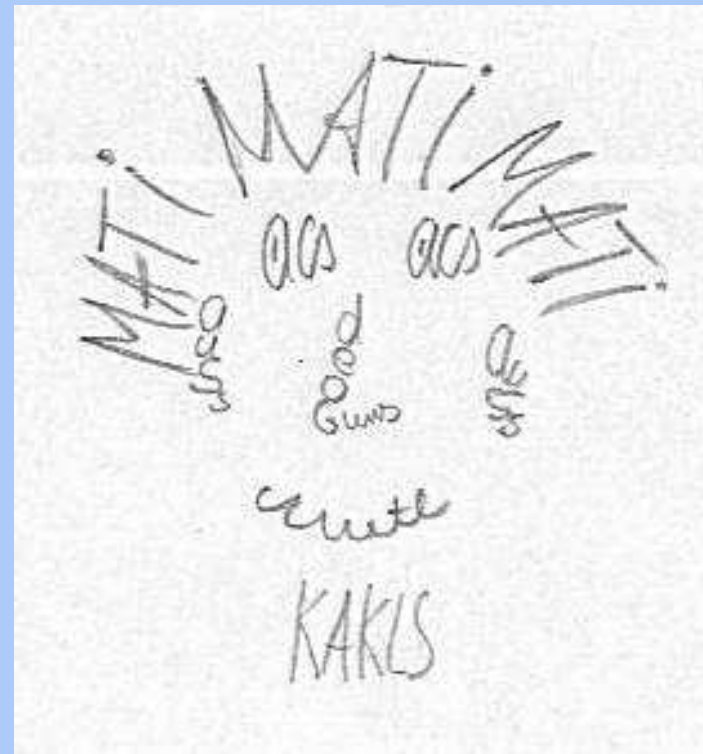
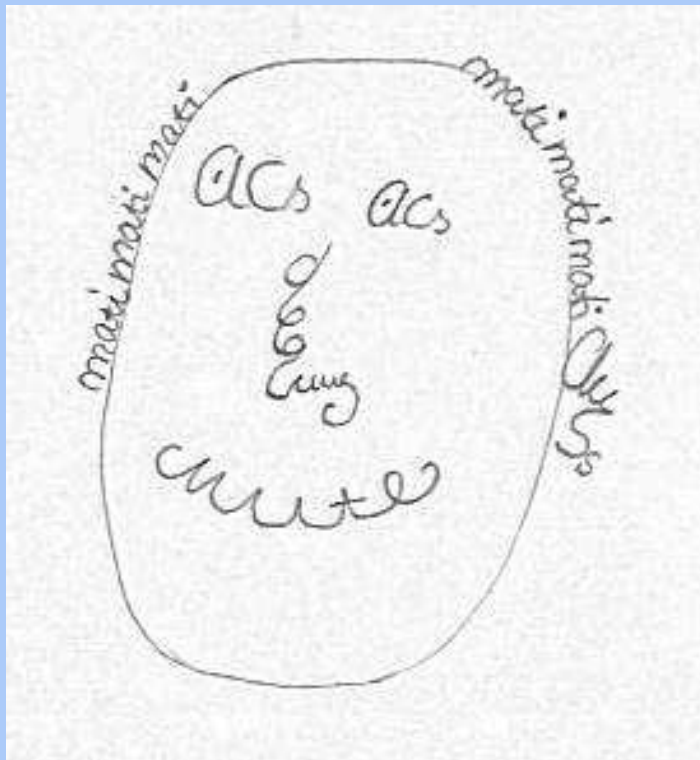
- teacher writes new words on the blackboard
- students copy text from the blackboard/book/...
- mind map
- write sentences with given words
- fill in words in exercises
- written tests
- ... [your examples!]

Example of a complex activity involving writing and many other skills: running dictation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMZrN5TKSHM>

WRITING TO LEARN (A LANGUAGE): INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES

- What are your strategies? How do you use writing to learn a language?



LEARNING TO WRITE2

BECOMING AN AUTHOR IN L2

- **Genre knowledge**
 - what do you already know from your first language /other languages?
 - what do you have to learn for the new language
 - which genres do you need in your L2?
 - how to learn/teach genres?
 - genres or literacy practices?

GENRE KNOWLEDGE SHOWN BY TWO LEARNERS OF POLISH

■ Description

tutaj jest pies xxx i żaba.

dziecie jest na drzewie i chce mied

Na zdiencie jest duże drew. To jest lis.

pies biega.

dziecie jest na gruntu.

■ Narration

chłopiec był na wakacjach i tak jechał do (wood)

i był na drzewie i aaa bummm dolu 😊

~~Pies~~ I mm jego pies aaauuu i spiechal do domu...

LEARNING TO WRITE² BECOMING AN AUTHOR IN L2

- Discourse community
 - learning to write is part of being socialized into a community (cf. Silva & Matsuda 2002)
 - writing for an imagined audience
 - finding one's "voice" (discourse identity)
 - cooperation with teachers, peers, editors
- Discussion: techniques for learning and teaching writing²

REFERENCES

- Barton, David. 2007. *Literacy*. Malden, Oxford.
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2004. *Language assessment*. New York.
- Gray, William S. 1969. *The teaching of reading and writing. An international survey*. Second edition. UNESCO.
- Silva, Tony & Paul Kei Matsuda. 2002. Writing. In: N. Schmitt, ed. *An introduction to applied linguistics*. London.

SOME IDEAS FOR FURTHER READING

- Yigitoglu, Nur & Reichelt, Melinda. 2012. Teaching Turkish and Turkish-language writing in the U.S.: A descriptive report. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 21 (2012) 71–75.
- Yon-Soo Kang & Danielle Ooyoung Pyun (2013) Mediation strategies in L2 writing processes: a case study of two Korean language learners, *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 26:1, 52-67,
- Yan Zhao (2014) L2 Creative Writers' Identities: Their Cognitive Writing Processes and Sense of Empowerment, *New Writing*, 11:3, 452-466,