Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta pedagogická

Katedra anglického jazyka

Diplomová práce

SLABÉ A SILNÉ STRÁNKY STUDENTŮ PŘI PŘÍPRAVĚ K MATURUTĚ: DIDAKTIKA PSANÍ

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Plzeň 2013

University of West Bohemia

Faculty of Education

Department of English

Thesis

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS' STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES TO THE LOWER LEVEL OF MATURITA: DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS

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Plzeň 2013

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V Plzni dne 18. dubna 2013   …………………………….

                                                                                Soňa Krausová

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

Bc.Krausová, Soňa. University of West Bohemia. April, 2013. Identifying students' strengths and weaknesses to the lower level of maturita: developing writing skills. Supervisor: Mgr. Gabriela Klečková, Ph.D.

This thesis deals with the methods how to teach writing. The two approaches to teaching writing, the process approach and the product approach, are compared. The results of my research show that the process approach is a useful tool for effective teaching of the writing skills.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on teaching writing. The four skills learner of a language needs to acquire for complete communication are: speaking, reading, listening and writing. In teaching a language, all of these four skills have to be addressed. Writing skill sometimes seems to be neglected and the last one to be taught. However, writing plays an essential role in the learning process, and it is necessary to develop it. The question is how to teach writing effectively. This thesis addresses this very question by examining the two basic approaches to teaching writing: the product approach and the process approach.

Personally, I have chosen this topic because writing in English is my students' weakest skill. I have been teaching at the secondary school of transport [1] since 2005 and from my experience I know that students find writing extremely difficult. The school year 2009/2010 has brought many changes to our teaching procedures. In the school year 2009/2010, the new State Maturita was launched. In my opinion the new State Maturita has brought many benefits to teaching English. Before the implementation of the new State Maturita, the majority of teachers at our school paid more attention to practice other skills such as speaking, reading and listening. On the basis of this fact, I decided to take a closer look at teaching writing, particularly at the teaching methods which help my students to improve their writing skills.

The chapter Theoretical Background targets the theory of teaching writing. Opinions and different views of renowned educators are presented here. Special attention is paid to the description of teaching writing by the process approach, and how this method helps students to improve their writing skills.

The research consists of two parts. The first and at the same time the principal part of my research focuses on comparing the results of my students' essays. Two different approaches are applied: the product approach and the process approach. My expectations are that teaching by process approach will produce better results because students are led through the writing process step by step and feedback is given after each stage of the writing process.

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[1] SPŠD, Karlovarská 99, Plzeň

The second part of my research analyses the data from the questionnaires. The data has been collected from students immediately after finishing their essays; one amount of data after using the product approach and, the other group of data after teaching by the process approach. The data are analyzed and commented on. I expect that the results of this survey reveal which method is more preferred by students and whether teaching by process approach helps them to overcome the difficulties with writing.

In the chapter Results and Commentaries the outcomes of the findings are presented and commented. In the final chapter, the merits of the process approach are described, and recommendations for teaching are made.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter of the thesis covers an overview of some theoretical issues of teaching writing. It is divided into seven parts. Each part discusses writing skills from another point of view. At the beginning of this chapter, I describe the role of writing in English classes. In the next part, I mention the structure of writing activities. I take a closer look at teaching writing through the process approach. The detailed description of the process approach is essential for my thesis because I use this teaching approach in my research. In the subsequent part, I mention the types of writing tasks. The further part points out the problems that arise when teaching writing. The next two parts discuss teachers' and the peers' role in the writing process. The final part of the theoretical background covers the topic of assessing writing.

The role of writing in English classes

The role of writing in English classes plays an important role. Writing is one of the four language skills and the teaching time should be divided equally among these skills unless the curriculum requires development of specific language skills. Harmer (1991) states that it is a pity that writing is frequently associated mainly with homework. He thinks that writing should play a valuable part in the class. Ur (1996) claims that the role of writing in English classes varies according to needs of students. Different classes need different approaches. There are classes where writing is essential; for example classes of Business English. On the other hand, there are classes where teachers can spend only minimal time on teaching writing. Ur (1996) points out that the key moment is to set clear objectives. Teachers have to know the main reasons students need writing for.

There are three main reasons students at our school[2] need writing for. Firstly poor writing, such as making spelling mistakes, shows the lack of education. It lessens their chance to succeed in entry exams for university studies or in a job interview where knowledge of written English is expected. Nowadays good spoken and written knowledge of English is a passport to the world. Secondly students' ability to formulate an idea in English on the paper is useful for everyday life. The third reason is that writing is a part of the Maturita Exam. Students have to be able to express their ideas using good grammar and

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[2] SPŠD, Karlovarská 99, Plzeň

suitable vocabulary. All of these facts motivate students to put energy into their writing. The teacher's role is to help students to build the writing habit.

Hedge (2005) studies the role of writing in classes in detail. She made a research study to investigate the reasons for writing in the classroom. She asked a group of teachers around the world about their opinions, and they provided an interesting set of purposes for writing. The most weighty points are:

- Pedagogical purposes - to help students learn the system of language
- Assessment purposes - to measure the progress or proficiency
- Humanistic purposes - to allow quieter students to show their strengths
- Creative purposes - to develop creativity
- Classroom management purposes - as a calming activity which settles students down. (p.9)

Scrivener (2005) supports this view and lists three areas where written work is very important. These are "academic study, examination preparation and Business English"(p. 235). Moreover, Scrivener (2005) compares writing skill to speaking skill and adds that writing is beneficial "because it involves a different kind of mental process" (p.241). It helps students to fix the language knowledge.

The role of writing in English classes has changed over the recent decades. Different methodologists offer different explanations. Brown (2007) explains that the trend in teaching writing follows the trend in teaching speaking. The trend in speaking is to concentrate more on fluency, not just accuracy. The same trend is also applied to teaching of writing. Teachers emphasize more the content of the written work, and they do not concentrate just on language accuracy as it was few decades ago. Scrivener (2005) observes another influence on teaching writing. He claims that there is a massive increase of new ways of communicating such as short email messages, text messages, web forums. On the other hand, the longer formal written work seems to have lessened over the past years. This new trend has to be reflected in the teaching strategies. The conclusion is that the teacher has to select useful and practical written activities for students. This view is

also supported by Harmer (2007) who writes that the role of writing in the classroom is to build the writing habit by giving students engaging and enjoyable tasks to do.

The conclusion is that the writing plays an essential role in the learning process. Students have to be aware of the fact that to become a good writer takes a long time. Students need to practice writing regularly and need to be supported by their teachers.

Judging by the situation at our school writing has been neglected in English classes. Teachers have always paid more attention to practice other skills such as speaking, reading and listening. Writing activities focused mainly on practicing and testing grammar. Writing was practiced primarily on the level of sentences. Students scarcely created the whole texts. This situation changed in the school year 2009/2010, when the new system of Maturita Exam was launched. Writing became part of Maturita Exam. Thus, teaching writing started to play a significant role in English classes at secondary schools.

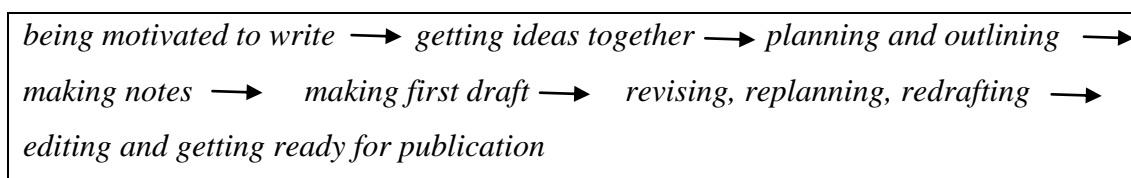**Structure of Writing Activities**

The structure of writing activities has gone through many changes over the past 30 years. Three decades ago teachers were mainly concerned with the final product of writing. In the product approach, the role of accurate grammar, vocabulary use and correct spelling is overemphasized. Brown (2007) asserts that there is nothing wrong with the attention to those criteria. However, the current trend in teaching writing is to focus more on the process rather than the product. All of the authors mentioned in this thesis support the view that the best way to teach writing is through the process approach. The process approach focuses more on the various classroom activities which help students to overcome the difficulties with writing.

The writing process has got four main stages. These are prewriting, drafting, revising and the final version. In prewriting students think about the topic and they organize their ideas. Useful techniques used in this stage are for instance: brainstorming, clustering or freewriting. In drafting, students use the ideas they have generated in prewriting stage and they write their first draft. The first draft is never perfect and students have to find ways how to improve it. This stage is called revising. In this stage students

improve what they have written. In the final stage the text is produced and is ready to be dispatched to the audience.

Hedge (2005) defines the writing process more in detail as it is apparent from the following figure:

Figure 1: Process of writing, adapted from Hedge (2005, p. 51)

being motivated to write → *getting ideas together* → *planning and outlining* → *making notes* → *making first draft* → *revising, replanning, redrafting* → *editing and getting ready for publication*

Hedge (2005) highlights that the writing process is the most effective when all steps of the writing process are linked. It is essential that feedback comes after each step to make sure that students understand the activity and that they are aware of the fact that this particular activity is a part of the whole writing process.

Stages of writing process

Stage 1. Being motivated to write. At this stage teachers introduce the topic, explain the purpose of writing and tell students who the audience of their written product is. Hedge (2005) suggests activities that stimulate students to start thinking about the topic. There are several possibilities how to do it. For instance teachers can start a discussion by giving students questions to think about. Another kind of stimulation is to provide students with a list of statements about the topic and let students express their opinions about it. Teachers can as well use visuals to introduce the topic. Students can for example elicit ideas from a picture.

Stage 2. Getting ideas together. There is a variety of activities which can be done at this stage. The most frequent techniques are brainstorming and clustering.

Brainstorming. Brainstorming is an activity which aims to help students with getting ideas together. It is used especially when dealt with more imaginative topics, which many writers find difficult. Students are given the topic and asked to jot down everything

they associate with this topic. At this stage students should not worry about language or even the clarity but write down as much as they can.

Clustering or making mind maps. Making a mind map is a strategy for making notes before writing. It helps to organize the ideas. Teachers suggest a topic. Students jot down all the things associated with this topic. After a couple of minutes teachers start eliciting ideas from students and draw a mind map on the board. This is very valuable practice where students get many ideas what to write about. Moreover they learn a lot of new words associated with this topic. Once students learn how to use mind maps, they can benefit from it before any writing task.

Hedge (2005) lists other techniques that can be used for generating ideas.

Using a diagram of ideas. Teachers' role is to choose a controversial topic. Example of such a controversial issue is 'The best shopping is in hypermarket'. Students work in small groups and each group is asked to provide 'for' and 'against' arguments. Teachers then elicit arguments from each group and elaborate a diagram. This technique is also useful for 'advantages and disadvantages' types of essays.

Making linear notes. This activity aims to help students organize ideas in more formal writing. This activity is suitable for topics which involves description and can be sorted into sections. A suitable topic is for example 'My home town'. In the first step, students make a list of points, anything that they associate with their town. In the second step, students select and organize ideas.

Freewriting. The main feature of this activity is to write as quickly as possible without stopping. Students concentrate on the content rather than on the language form. The aim of freewriting is to overcome the problem of having no idea what to write about. It is an experimental technique which might or might not be suitable for everybody.

Using visuals to focus descriptions. Using a picture to write a description is a valuable technique. Student must strive to describe the picture so that the reader can easily reconstruct the true image of it. The writer has to decide what to focus on first and how to relate the objects.

Using opinionnaires. Each student gets an opinionnaire which is a sheet of paper with a list of controversial statements about one topic. The following is an example of opinionnaire on the topic "My view of television" (Hedge, 2005, p.75).

Opinionnaire – View of television				
	You		Your partner	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
1. I believe TV makes people passive.				
2. The documentaries are so educational.				
3. There is too much violence.				

After discussing the controversial statements with peers, each student should have enough ideas for writing their own composition on this topic.

Ron White and Valerie Arndt (1991) in their book *Process Writing* list other sources of prewriting activities such as:

Completing maps and plans. Incomplete maps and plans provide a wide opportunity for creativity. Students work in pairs. One student is given a map or a plan which lacks detailed information. The other student is given a map or a plan with detailed information and describes the details of the picture to the partner.

Using role play / simulation. Role play and simulations are widely used techniques where students take on roles of different characters. For example: a football player, a famous actor or a homeless person. It stimulates behavior, language and ideas. Role play can be used as stimuli for many different types of writing.

Using picture sequences. Picture sequences is a useful tool for generating ideas and a vocabulary stimulus. It is very fruitful activity because pictures can be interpreted in many different ways.

To summarize this stage, all the activities above are very useful because they help students to develop ideas and they are effective techniques for pre-teaching key vocabulary. Students thereby develop a range of vocabulary they need for writing their piece of work.

Stage 3. Planning and outlining. Before students start writing their own outlines, it is useful to show them what the final text looks like. Teachers bring samples of text to class and analyze them with students. Analyzing texts will help them to understand a number of things:

- The features that students need to produce when they write;
- How one form differs from another;
- How one form of writing can vary in organization and development of ideas according to its specific purpose, whether it is to describe a process, discuss and issue, compare two systems, etc. (Hedge, 2005, p.81)

Teachers draw students' attention to the form of the text, discourse organization and show them practical examples of cohesive devices. Different types of writing have different layouts. It is beneficial to show students the typical forms of the genre they are going to write. On the subject of discourse organization, teachers have to emphasize that before writing it is necessary to organize their thoughts. The text should be fluent and easy to follow for the reader. It is also necessary to teach students paragraphing. Different texts have different organizational structures. For example the first paragraph is an introduction; the middle paragraph contains the main idea, and the last paragraph is a conclusion. It is particularly useful to show students examples of cohesive devices, such as: in addition, in fact, also, firstly, secondly, thirdly, on the other hand, in conclusion, etc. Cohesive devices signalize the relationship between ideas. It is important to teach students to use the cohesive devices effectively. The only way how to do it is through a lot of practice. After going through these activities students start writing their own plans.

Stage 4. Making notes. After finishing their plans students can work collaboratively and discuss the points they have written in groups. Students evaluate each other's plans, give opinions and make suggestions for improvement. The aim of this

activity is to make sure that their plans are reasonably well formed. Students jot down the peers' comments and they can modify their plans.

Stage 5. Making first draft. At this stage students start writing.

Stage 6. Revisiting, replanning, redrafting. After writing the first draft students can present their work either to the teacher or to their peers. Feedback from the teacher can have a form of written or spoken comment. At this stage of writing teachers make sure that

    a. The purpose of writing is clear;

    b. That the structure fits the type of writing;

    c. That the style fits the intended readers. (Hedge, 2005)

Another way how to give students feedback is by conferencing. Conferencing gives students opportunity to talk about their writing. One student is going to read his/her draft in front of the class. The rest of the class is going to listen, evaluate, give opinions and make suggestions for improvement. This activity helps writers to make sure that the purpose of their writing is clear. After this activity is done the student tries to improve the draft according to teacher's or other students' comments.

Stage 7. Editing. Editing is a post-writing stage which consists of reading through and checking for language accuracy. The attention is turn to spelling, punctuation, word order and grammar. There are many ways how to do editing. It can be done by the teacher, by the peers or the writer himself/herself. Hedge (2005) suggests letting students edit their peer's work. Students are given the editing code and the teacher explains them how to work with it. Then students exchange their own drafts in pairs and they try to locate the errors. Editing can also be practiced apart from the writing process. Students are given a text with mistakes and their task is to find the mistakes.

In addition to the topic of the writing process Hedge (2005) points out that it is not a linear process it is rather a "recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising, with stages of replanning in between" (p.52) as it is demonstrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Process of writing, adapted from Hedge (2005, p. 52)
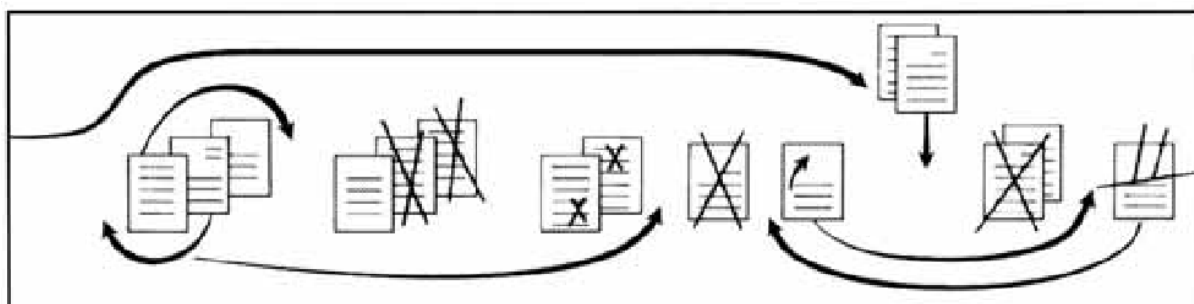
According to Ur (1996) there are many writing procedures and there is no one right system of writing that teachers could recommend. Teacher's role is to suggest a possible writing procedure, provide the example of it, encourage the individual to experiment and find his or her own individual writing approach. It means that some students need re-drafting and re-editing as Harmer (2007) suggests and other students are able to gather ideas in their heads and just put these ideas on paper. However, it is obvious that students learn to write through regular practice from their own experience. The conclusion of it is that each student has to find his or her own individual writing approach.

Brown (2007) on the other hand warns that here is a danger of overemphasizing the process over the product. Brown (2007) mentions that, "As in most language-teaching approaches, it is quite possible to go to an extreme in emphasizing process to the extent that the final product diminishes the importance" (p.393). The main goal remains the product. The product is the reason why we prewrite, draft and revise. Brown (2007) concludes, "Process is not the end; it is the means to end"(p.393).

Harmer (2007) admits that to create a text by process approach is very time consuming. However, he says that the teacher's role is to encourage students to plan, draft and re-draft and re-plan in order to write a good piece of work. And if students learn this writing procedure well, it will be useful for them during their final exam, when they have to make quick decisions.

Types of writing tasks

In her textbook, Ur (1996) suggests many different writing tasks teachers can choose from. She emphasizes that before teachers start selecting activities they have to ask the following questions.

1. Would my students find the activity motivating, stimulating and interesting to do?
2. Is it of an appropriate level of them?
3. Is the kind of writing relevant to their needs?
4. In general, do I like this activity? (p.164)

These questions help teachers to decide which activity is the most useful for their students. Ur (1996) emphasizes the importance of the right choice of the topic. She claims that if students have a topic about which they have something worthwhile and interesting to say, they enjoy the process of writing.

Scrivener (2005) divides writing in the classroom in five categories according to how much help and control is offered. It is demonstrated in the following chart.

Chart 1: Writing in the classroom, adapted from Scrivener (2005, p. 235)

1	Copying	Student practice forming letter shapes in a handwriting book, note down substitution tables from the board, copy examples from the textbook, etc.
2	Doing exercises	Students write single words phrases, sentences, etc in response to very tightly focused tasks with limited options and limited opportunities for creativity or getting things wrong.
3	Guided writing	You guide students to write longer texts in quite restricted or controlled tasks by offering samples, models, possibly useful language items, advice, organizational frameworks, etc.
4	Process writing	Students write what they want to, with help, encouragement and feedback from you and other throughout the process of choosing a

		topic, gathering ideas, organizing thoughts, drafting, etc.
5	Unguided writing	Students write freely without overt guidance, assistance or feedback during the writing process, though a title or task may be set, and work may be 'marked' later.

Brown (2007) classifies writing very similarly to Scrivener. He lists five categories which differ in names, however the description of these five categories resembles the Scrivener's ones.

Hedge (2005) lists six categories of writing tasks: personal writing, public writing, creative writing, social writing, study writing, institutional writing (p.87). Hedge points out that teachers have to select the writing task according to the needs of students. The most useful writing activities for secondary school students are tasks from the category "study writing", "public writing" and "social writing". The category "study writing" covers writing for educational purposes such as writing essays, reports and reviews. The category "public writing" includes writing informal letters, applications, form-filling etc. The last mentioned category "social writing" contains activities such as writing personal letters, invitations, phone text messages, personal e-mails, etc.

Another significant point is that the types of writing tasks should correspond with the objectives teachers want to reach during the four-year-period students spend at the secondary school. One of the main objectives for secondary school teachers is to prepare students for their Maturita Exam. In the written part of the exam, there are tasks such as writing formal and informal letters, writing complains, writing explanation, giving directions, writing invitations etc. Teachers should practice with students these types of tasks so that students can manage them easily. Clearly there is a vast variety of writing tasks that can be practiced with secondary school students. It is dependent mainly on the creativity of teachers and how successful they are they in motivating their students.

Challenges when teaching writing

The problems can be classified into two main groups: students' problems and teachers' problems.

Students' problems. Hedge (1991) thinks that the problems students have with writing have partly to do with the nature of writing itself. The question is to what extent the difficulty in writing in a foreign language is caused by poor language knowledge or by writing itself. Without doubt, a large number of adults never reach a high level of writing skills in their first language. To write in a foreign language is even more difficult. Writing is also much more difficult in comparison to the other productive skill, speaking. Speakers have a wide range of expressive possibilities such as the tone of the voice, pausing, face expressions, gestures, etc. when communicating. Furthermore, they can see the reaction of the listener. Writers on the contrary only have their words for expressing ideas, and there is no one to react immediately to these ideas. Hedge (1991) emphasizes the difficulties writers have to deal with and claims the following:

> Effective writing requires a number of things: a high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information; a high degree of accuracy so that there is no ambiguity of meaning; the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns and sentence structures (p.5).

To sum it up writing in the foreign language is extremely difficult and it causes students a lot of problems. Students often do not have enough ideas to write about. Possible solution is to prepare such activities that help students to generate ideas. Scrivener (2005) suggests using methods such as brainstorming, text-starts and fast-writing. Through brainstorming students are given the topic and are asked to jot down everything they associate with this topic. Text-starts mean that students get a resource material which provides a support for the writer (for instance information about a holiday location). Fast-writing is a similar technique to brainstorming. Students start writing whatever comes to their head. It helps them to get ideas for their writing. Harmer (2007) agrees with Scrivener that generating ideas causes students many problems and states that:

There is always a danger that students may find writing imaginatively difficult. Having nothing to say, they may find writing a painful and demotivating experience, associated in their minds with a sense of frustration and failure (p.328).

Another method how to help students with generating ideas is to let them work collaboratively. The topic of the collaborative work is further discussed in the section 'The role of peers'. It is also necessary to provide students with motivating tasks that catch their attention. When teachers let students choose topics according to their interests, students will have fewer difficulties with generating ideas.

On the contrary, there are students who are creative and who have clear ideas what to write about, but somehow they find it extremely difficult to express their ideas with the range of vocabulary they have and they also struggle with grammar and spelling. According to Harmer (2007) spelling is a threat of the majority of students. He claims that: "One of the reasons that the spelling is difficult for students of English is that the correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelled is not always obvious" (p. 324).

Punctuation is another issue which causes problems to many students. English language has different punctuation conventions and students are often confused whether to use commas or not. This is an exceedingly broad issue and students at the secondary school should not be burdened with details of punctuation differences. On the other hand, English teachers at secondary schools have to provide basic rules for using punctuation in English. The layout of the writing piece is also noteworthy. Teachers should emphasize the importance of layout conventions in communications such as letters, reports and publicity material (Harmer, 2007). Teachers have to bring samples of letters and other written materials to class which will serve students as a model for their own writing. Students at the secondary school have to write two short pieces of writing at their Maturita exam where they have to show complex knowledge of English language, including knowledge of punctuation and layout conventions. Harmer (2007) mentions that the violation of well-established conventions makes a piece of writing look awkward.

Teachers' problems. According to Ur (1996), "one of the problems in teaching writing is to maintain a fair balance between content and form when defining the

requirements and assessing" (p.163). By content Ur means the message to the reader, which is the purpose of writing. On the other hand, the form such as spelling, punctuation, grammar also plays an important role. The fair balance is dependent on the specific teaching situation and opinion. Each class and each situation needs a different approach.

Another point is how much should teachers interfere in the process of writing. If teachers ask students to write freely, there will be a lot of language mistakes. The question is whether teacher should let them write freely or correct their mistakes? This problem is further discussed bellow.

The Teacher's Role in the Writing Process

The main role of teacher is to help students to overcome the difficulties they experience in the process of writing. Scrivener (2005) claims that for many teachers teaching writing is just setting a writing task and collecting it and marking it. Students have to do the whole writing task alone and the teacher does nothing to help students to improve. Scrivener (2005) suggests that between the setting and collecting task there can be many additional steps that will help students to become a better writer. For instance teachers could help students to get ideas, to sequence ideas, make diagrams to help to organize ideas, to get feedback on content, to get feedback on language use, make alternation, etc.

According to Scrivener (2005), the teachers' role is to provide the purpose of writing and the audience. Concerning the purpose of writing, students are motivated if they see real sense in their work. If they write only 'to please the teacher', their motivation is low. For instance beginners can write a Christmas postcard to their parents and then send it by post. Because the purpose and the audience are given, students are highly motivated and it is fun for them. This simple example demonstrates how important it is for students to know who the reader will be and what the reader expects. Hedge (1991) explains the importance of context and audience on another example. Students' task is to describe place they know well. Before the students start writing they have to know who the reader will be. Hedge (1991) demonstrates that the piece of work describing place can be written in many ways. On the one hand it can be a formal description of the place, the one which can be found in the travel brochure, on the other hand it can be a jolly narrative written to a pen

friend. There is one more thing teachers have to do. Teachers have to provide examples of models of different writing styles and show students that each model suits different purposes and audiences.

Harmer (2007) describes three main teacher's roles: a motivator, a resource and feedback provider. A motivator encourages students to write and persuades them of the usefulness of the activity. Teachers as a resource provider are ready to supply information and language where necessary. Further teacher introduces students to sources of help such as dictionaries and advices them how to use them effectively. The feedback provider is very important role; he or she should respond positively and encouragingly to what students have written.

Brown (2007) summarizes all the teacher's roles into one term. Because the teachers' role is to facilitate the student's writing process, Brown calls them facilitators. Brown (2007) highlights that teachers help student to engage in thinking process but always respect students' opinions. Teachers should never impose their thoughts on their students' writing. One of the problems is how much teachers should intervene if the written work is full of language mistakes. Ur (1996) suggests correcting only the most serious mistakes in order not to discourage students. She emphasizes the importance of positive constructive feedback. It means to draw student's attention to things they have done right as well as things they have done wrong. According to Ur (1996), "writing with mistakes is not something to be ashamed of but rather a helpful and important stage in learning (p. 169)".

Brown (2007) supports this idea of not commenting all the imperfections the written work contains, but he points out that some teachers have gone too far with their laissez-faire approach. He explains that giving students only positive feedback without reflecting their mistakes will not help students to improve. Brown (2007) admits that it is difficult but teachers have to find ways to offer students optimal feedback.

The Role of Peers in the Writing Process

According to Ur (1996) it is a useful technique to let peers correct each other's writing. It is an effective technique from which both teachers and peers profit. Teachers

save time. Readers have a valuable exercise what the content and language accuracy concerns. And writers can profit from their peers' reactions. Ur (1996) admits that this technique is not probably suitable in the class with bad class atmosphere. In such cases, students would not accept criticism from each other.

Brown (2007) thinks that peers should be a part of the writing process in earlier stage than Ur (1996) suggests. The classmates can cooperate even in the first stage of the writing process. For example the classmates who decided to write on the same topic can help each other to generate ideas. The advantage of it is that students who have no idea what to write about will get some tips and on the other hand the students who have head full of ideas will be directed to what ideas to realize. Brown (2007) also suggests that it is very useful to let the peers edit each other's work after the first draft. Brown emphasizes that sharing what they have written with their peers will show them how successful they were in formulating their ideas. This way they discover the impact of their words on the peers. After getting such feedback, the writers can make changes in order to make their ideas clearer and more convincing.

The same view is supported by Hedge (2005) who writes that students can collaborate at each stage of the writing process; beginning with brainstorming ideas, going together through the whole writing process and ending with evaluating each other's works. The advantage of collaborative work is that students learn from each other's strengths and thus encourage the effective writing process.

Assessing Writing

Ur (1996) lists three main areas on which teachers concentrate when giving feedback. These are content, organization and language. Ur (1996) considers content and organization to be the most important things which should be assessed. Although many teachers know how important content and organization are, still they relate mainly to language forms in their feedback. Ur (1996) offers an explanation for it:

1. Mistakes in spelling or grammar catch the eye and seem to demand to be corrected; they are very difficult to ignore.
2. Students also want their language mistakes to be corrected.

3. Language mistakes are far more easily and quickly diagnosed and corrected than ones of content and organization. (p.170)

Ur's advice is to correct the language mistakes but teachers should explain students that it is not the only basis for evaluation of a piece of writing, that teacher's assessment covers content, organization and language. Another problem arises here. Should teachers correct all mistakes? She suggests that to correct every mistake can be discouraging and demoralizing. Ur (1996) proposes some kind of compromise and states: "In principle, it would seem reasonable to say that language mistakes should be ignored if there is a danger that to correct them would hinder learning more than help it" (p.171). This view is also supported by Scrivener (2005) who wrote:" it is inappropriate to point out every error" (p. 245); it discourages the student. Teachers have to decide which errors are the most important or useful for students to work on.

Brown (2007) opens another problem. What form should the assessment have? Brown (2007) thinks that the key moment is that students understand teachers' assessment. They understand that it is a form of feedback they benefit from. According to Brown (2007), "The final evaluation on one composition simply creates input to the learner for the next composition" (p.414). The best form of evaluation is the teacher's written comment. Thus teachers can judge students' work very sensitively and on the other hand students get an explanation of the mistakes they have made. When teachers need to assign a single grade, Brown (2007) suggests using a rating grid. The rating grid consists of six categories: content, organization, discourse, syntax, vocabulary and mechanics. However Brown (2007) points out that each category has a different weight. Brown constructed the following weighting scale:

Chart 2: Weighting scale, adapted from Brown (2007, p. 414)

Content	0 -24
Organization	0-20
Discourse	0-20
Syntax	0 -12
Vocabulary	0-12
Mechanics	0-12
TOTAL	100

Thereby Brown emphasizes the importance of content and organization over the language. This six grade grid is very useful and it can be used as well for basis of the written comment.

Here is another important point which is necessary to mention. According to Scrivener (2005) feedback on writing when the entire text is fully completed is useless. When students finish their writing they want a complimentary comment. Constructive feedback has to come as the writing is evolving. The same view is supported by Hedge (2005) who writes that student should get as much feedback as possible at different stages of the writing process.

To conclude this topic, feedback on students' writing whether received through a grading system, through the teacher's written or spoken comments should be always non-threatening and should help students to see their strengths and weaknesses.

Conclusion

All of the authors mentioned in this thesis support the view that the best way to teach writing is through the process approach. The process approach focuses on the various classroom activities and helps students to overcome the difficulties with writing. At the same time all of the authors emphasize the importance of building the writing habit. Students have to practice writing regularly and have to be supported by their teachers. The selection of the writing activities is very important. When the activities are enjoyable and interesting, it motivates students to write. Another method how to help students with writing is to let them work collaboratively. The advantage of collaborative work is that students learn from each other's strengths and thus encourage the effective writing process. In the following chapter, the research carried out to explore the outcomes of the two basic approaches to teaching writing is described.

III. METHODS

The main aim of this chapter is to outline the research carried out in relation to two possible approaches to teaching writing. This chapter consists of three parts. The first part of this chapter describes two different approaches to writing compositions. The methods applied are: teaching through the product approach and teaching through the process approach. The second part of this chapter focuses on the description of the method used for evaluating students' compositions. In the third part of this chapter, I illustrate the technique I used for gathering data concerning students' opinions about writing in English language.

I did the research at Střední průmyslová škola dopravní, Karlovarská 99, Plzeň. I have been teaching at this school for 8 years, so it was easy for me to collect all the data for this thesis. The subjects of my research were second year students of the class PLG2. The whole class is divided into two groups according to what language they learn. The English group of PLG2 consists of 16 students (7 males, 9 females) at the age of 17 years. All of the students started learning English at the basic school. Now they have been studying English for 6 years. I have been teaching in this class for almost two years, and I know what I can expect from them. Deliberately I have chosen the class with a very friendly class atmosphere. The first reason is that they are willing to cooperate with me. The second reason is that they are used to working collaboratively and that they will accept each other's comments.

Description of applied methods

The two described methods are: teaching writing through the product approach and teaching writing through the process approach. Students wrote two compositions. The topic of the first composition was My Home Town, and the applied method was the product approach. The title of the second composition was My Ideal Partner, and the applied method was the process writing. In order to obtain valid results, which I can use for the comparison, I tried to create the same conditions for both compositions. That means:

- Both of the compositions are of the same genre. The chosen genre is a description.

- The topics of the two compositions require very similar language proficiency. Someone can say that it is very difficult to judge because it is dependent on the students' preferences. However, personally, I do not find the one more challenging than the other.
- The length of both compositions was the same. It was 120 – 150 words.
- In both cases, students could use dictionaries.
- Both of the compositions were assessed with the same assessment criteria.
- Both of the compositions were assessed/scored by me.
- Both of the compositions were written in the time period of 1 month. The improvement of language knowledge cannot be taken in consideration in such a short time.
- Both of the compositions were handwritten. Students were not allowed to use computers.

The only two big differences can be found in the procedures used and consequentially the time students spent on writing.

The first method – traditional product approach

At the time of testing, there were fourteen students in the class, so I got fourteen samples for my research. Students wrote the composition the 13th of March 2013. The teaching method was very simple. At the beginning of the lesson students were told the instructions. The topic of their composition was My Home Town. Students had 45 minutes for writing. The length was 120 - 150 words.

In this approach students were given the topic and they wrote on their own without any interference of the teacher or help of the peers. They were left alone to generate ideas, to organize ideas, write them on paper and check them for the language accuracy.

The second method – process approach

The writing process consisted of four lessons. The complete teaching plans of these lessons are in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. In the first lesson, (Monday April the 8th 2013) the topic of the composition was introduced, and two prewriting activities were done (see Lesson plan 1 in Appendix 1). The aim of these activities was to expand the students'

vocabulary and to help them gather some ideas for writing. In the second lesson (Tuesday April the 9th 2013) students did one more prewriting activity and in the second part of the lesson they wrote an outline of their composition (see Lesson plan 2 in Appendix 2). In the third lesson (Wednesday April the 10th 2013) students wrote their first drafts. After that, I collected their papers and I provided feedback on them. I gave them feedback on the content, organization, vocabulary and grammar. The feedback for the content and organization had a form of written comments. It consisted of a few sentences, where I recommended to students what to change, and I commented on what was done well and what should be done better. The extent of my comment differed significantly from student to student. For giving feedback for vocabulary and grammar, I used the symbols from the editing code (see Appendix 3). I did not use all of the symbols because it would be confusing for my students. I used just the most frequent ones, which I am sure students are acquainted with and understand their meaning. In the fourth lesson (Thursday April the 11th 2013) students got back the evaluated work. Their task in this lesson was to improve their compositions according to my feedback and produce the final version of their composition. Before writing the final version, I let students to form groups according to their preference and collectively they made improvements to each others' writings. My role as a teacher was just to monitor them. After writing the final version, papers were collected. My task was to evaluate them; I used the evaluation criteria I describe bellow. There were thirteen students, who were present at all four teaching lessons. It means I got thirteen samples for my research.

In the process approach, students went with my guidance through several stages of the writing process. There were activities which helped them with their writing. Students were given feedback at each stage of the writing process and at the same time they had an opportunity to collaborate with their peers.

Method for evaluating

The criteria I used for the evaluation of students' written work are the criteria for evaluating the written part of Maturita Exam. These criteria were set by Cermat and are described in the *Methodical Material for the New Maturita Exam training*. The testing is based on the analytic assessment. It allows assessing students' work from different standpoints. The four assessment standpoints are:

I   Task completion and Content

II   Coherence and Cohesion

III   Vocabulary and Spelling

IV   Grammar

Each of the criteria contains two subcategories:

Adapted from *Methodical Material for the New Maturita Exam training,* 2006, p.35.

	I Task completion and Content	II Coherence and Cohesion	III Vocabulary and Spelling	IV Grammar
A	**Task achievement** length of the text, text type	**Organization of the text** paragraphs, layout	**Accuracy** spelling, wrong usage	**Accuracy** grammar mistakes, tenses, word order
B	**Quality of the text** originality, final effect on the reader	**Cohesion** linking words, simple/ complex sentences, punctuation	**Range** synonyms, mother tongue influence	**Range** variability of tenses, active/passive voice, mother tongue influence

The result of the assessment is entered into a chart.

Example of the chart: (*Methodical Material for the New Maturita Exam training,* 2006, p.19)

	I	II	III	IV	Total points
A					
B					24
Σ					

The detailed description of the criteria assessment in the Czech language can be found in Appendix 4.

Both of the compositions were assessed with the criteria above. From the theoretical background I know that it is not motivating for students to comment on all the imperfections of the composition. On the account of that, I decided to comment only on the mistakes from the range of knowledge students should already have. Through my feedback, they should realize the mistakes they have made and have to be able to correct themselves or with the help of the peers.

Method for gathering data on students' opinions

I prepared two questionnaires for my students. I wanted to have three outputs from the questionnaires. Firstly, I wanted to know my students' opinion about writing in English, how easy or difficult they find it. Secondly, I wanted to know how easy or difficult it was for them to write the first composition (product approach), hich language category they found the most demanding, and whether they could observe any improvements in the same language categories in the second composition (process approach). Thirdly I was curious how students perceive writing in the Czech language, whether they consider it easier than writing in the English language. Both of the questionnaires are written in the Czech language.

The first questionnaire (see Appendix 5) was given to students immediately after they finished the writing of the first composition. The questionnaire consisted of six questions. The first question concerned students' opinions about writing in English. The following four questions were more specific, and each of the questions was related to one language category. The language categories asked about corresponded with the categories from the assessment criteria.

I   Task completion and Content,

II   Coherence and Cohesion

III   Vocabulary and Spelling

IV   Grammar

In the last question, I wanted to find out students' opinion about writing in the Czech language. In all the answers students were asked to divide 100 % between easy and difficult.

The second questionnaire (see Appendix 6) was given to students after they finished the final version of the second composition. The questionnaire consisted of six questions. In the first question, I ask my students whether the process approach helped them to overcome the difficulties with writing. In the second question, I ask how easy or difficult writing of this composition was. The next four questions were related again to the language categories mentioned above. In all the answers students were asked to divide 100 % between easy and difficult. The exception was the first question, where students were asked to answer yes or no.

This chapter describes two different teaching approaches applied to writing two compositions with my students. Further the criteria for evaluating these compositions are mentioned. The last part of this chapter introduces the method used for gathering data of students' opinions. In the next chapter, the results of my findings are presented. The results are analyzed and commented on.

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARY

In this chapter, the results of my findings are presented and commented on. This chapter is divided into two parts. The main subject of my research is covered in the first part. It contains the results of the two compositions my students wrote and my comments on them. In the second part, I analyze the opinions of my students concerning writing.

Part 1

In this part, I compare the results my students achieved in the first composition taught through the product approach and the second composition taught through the process approach. The results are presented in graphs; one graph for each student. My aim is not to demonstrate the total amount of points every student achieved. My intention is to show the results of each language category separately and thus be able to see what changes the process approach brings to each category. In each category students can achieve the maximum of six points. Each graph is accompanied by a commentary. There were thirteen students who wrote both compositions, so I have got thirteen samples to compare. As a conclusion to the first part, I have produced a figure, which shows the average results of all students in the four separated categories and I summarize my findings.

Figure 1: Results of Student 1
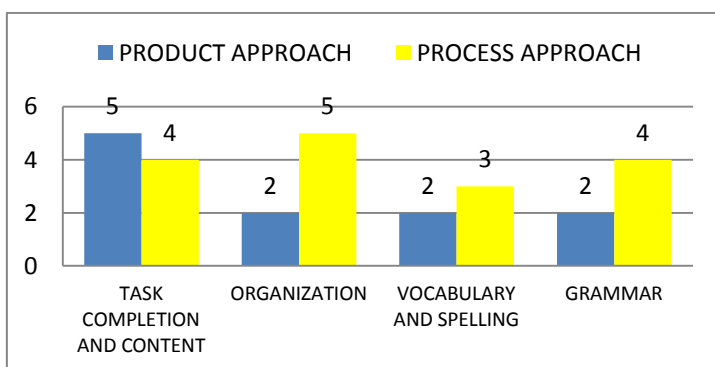
Comment: As can be seen from the chart above, student's results improved in three language categories. The most significant improvement can be observed in the organization of the text. The process approach, especially the activity for planning the text helped Student 1 to divide the text into paragraphs and to sequence the thoughts logically. Another progress can be seen in vocabulary. After going through the prewriting activities,

Student 1 was able to use a wider range of vocabulary. Quite significant is the advancement in grammar. Through my feedback, Student 1 managed to correct some of the grammatical mistakes he had made. As it is apparent from the chart there is a decrease in "Task completion". I do not know the reason why. There are several possible explanations for this decline. Perhaps it was caused by the difference in the topics themselves. Student 1 might have found the second topic more demanding. There are, however, other possible explanations: bad mood, health problems, bad day etc.

Figure 2: Results of Student 2
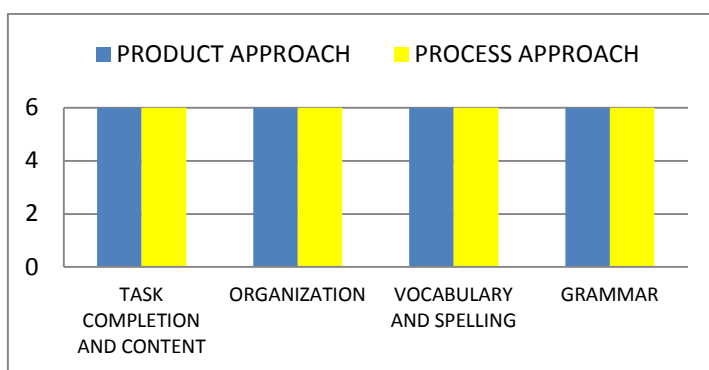
Comment: As Figure 2 shows, no increase in the results was detected. That means the process approach did not help Student 2 to improve the writing skills. Student 2 is an exceptional student who has significantly higher knowledge of the English language compared to other peers. As we went through the prewriting activities, Student 2 generated the best ideas and knew all of the words I put into the working sheets. For Student 2 the prewriting activities were more or less a repetition. His abilities were utilized mainly in the cooperative work, where he served as an advisor to the others. This result shows me that next time I should differentiate the tasks for the talented students.

Figure 3: Results of Student 3
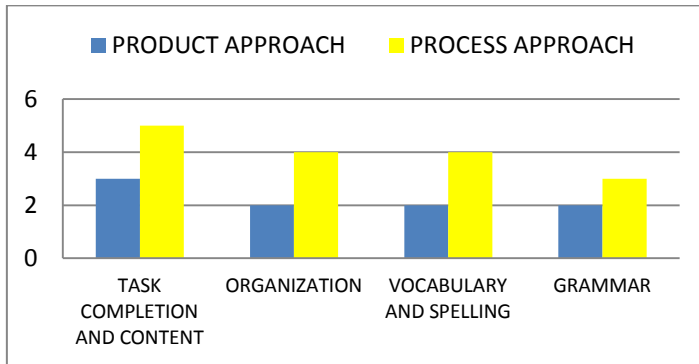
Comment: From the graph above we can see that there is a positive increase in all the categories. Student 3 belongs to the weakest students in the class. Through the activities in the writing process I helped Student 3 to generate ideas, to organize the text, to broaden vocabulary and to correct the grammatical mistakes. In the second composition, Student 3 still uses a very simple sentence structure and there are a lot of things to be improved. However, I am satisfied with the results. The results show that the process approach definitely facilitated Student 3 the work on the composition.

Figure 4: Results of Student 4
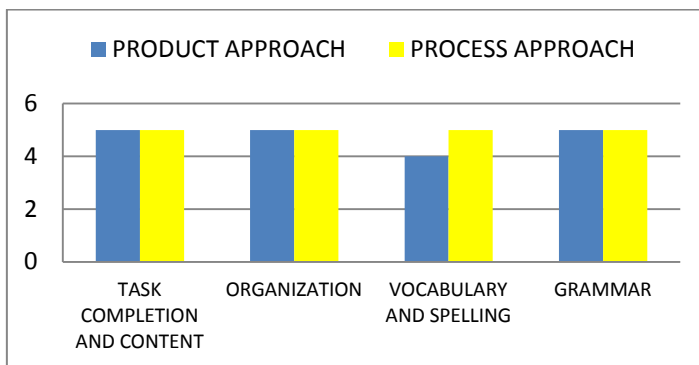
Comment: The results, as shown in table 4, indicate that the only improvement can be observed in the category "Vocabulary". The progress in vocabulary demonstrates that the prewriting activities were useful for Student 4. One thing is interesting to mention. I noticed that Student 4 used in her composition literary the same phrases as were in the working sheet. To demonstrate it in an example, Student 4 wrote: *My ideal partner loves me unconditionally without trying to make me into somebody I am not*. I did not expect students to copy my sentences. I just wanted to help them to generate ideas. The other three

categories stagnate. It signalizes that Student 4 would probably need to practice writing in different types of activities. It is natural, each student is different.

Figure 5: Results of Student 5
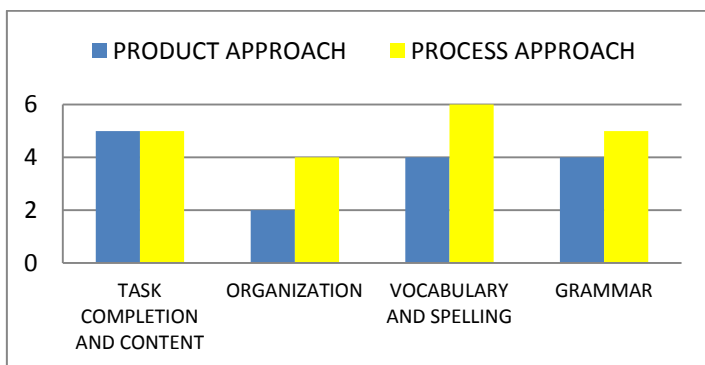
Comment: Figure 5 reveals the increase of results in three categories: Organization, Vocabulary and Grammar. Student 5 had a very bad text organization of composition 1; there were no paragraphs at all. Composition 2 was much better organized. The range of vocabulary and grammar developed significantly through the writing process. The above table indicates no progress in the category "Task completion", which can be caused by many factors.

Figure 6: Results of student 6
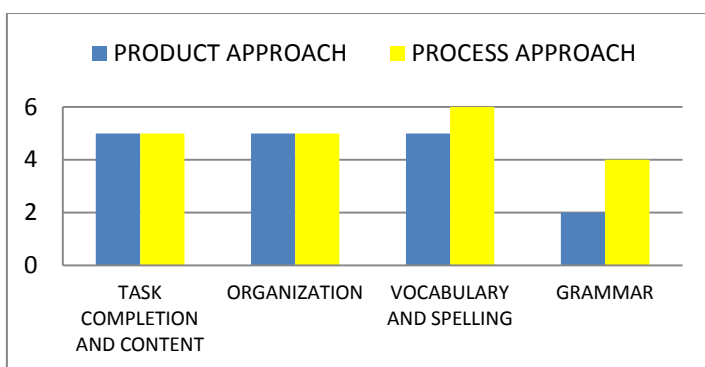
Comment: As shown in Figure 6 stagnation can be seen in the two categories: Task Completion and Organization. The results of both of the categories are quite high. Concerning the organization, both of the texts were good and logically organized. Concerning the content, Student 6 showed to have enough good ideas what to write about in both cases and help was not needed. The main increase in results can be measured in the

category "Grammar". I am pleased that my feedback and at the same time the cooperation with the peers helped Student 6 to get the grammar better.

Figure 7: Results of Student 7
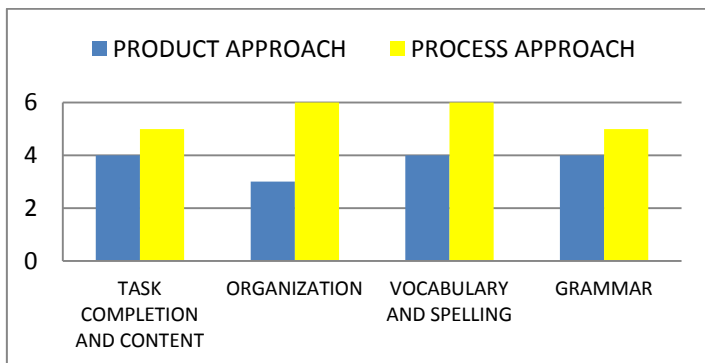
Comment: Figure 7 illustrates a positive development in all the language categories. However, the most significant increase can be indicated in the category "Organization". It shows that the activity for planning the text and organizing the ideas was helpful. The second major development can be seen in the category "Vocabulary". Student 7 received the maximum of possible 6 points in this category. I could see that Student 7 tried to apply a lot new words she had learnt. Her vocabulary in composition 2 is considerably broader compared to composition 1.

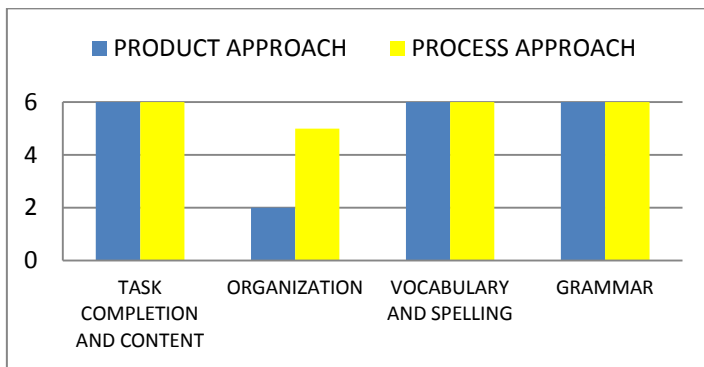Figure 8: Results of Student 8
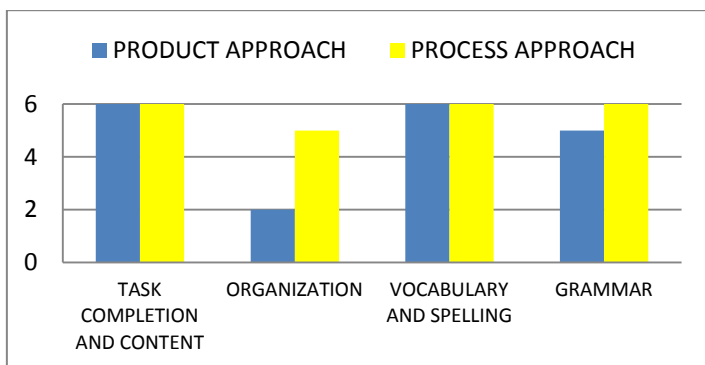
Figure 9: Results of Student 9

Comment: The results in Figure 8 and Figure 9 show very similar outcomes. Both of them demonstrate no changes of scores in "Task Completion" and "Vocabulary". The only difference is that Figure 8 shows a little increase of points in "Grammar". Both of these charts indicate that these students have very good writing skill and that the activities we had gone through did not influence their writing much. This is the same case as I described with Student 2. I should have differentiated the tasks and prepare more challenging activities for such talented students. As it is apparent from Figures 8 and 9, both students benefited from doing the activity for text organization.

Figure 10: Results of Student 10
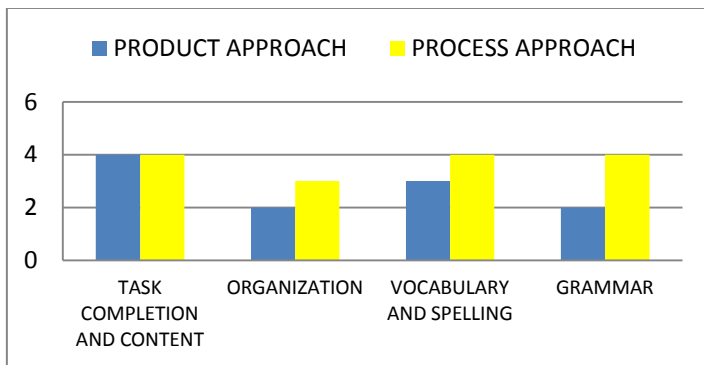
Comment: Student 10 is a weak student and I am pleased that the writing process helped this student to better results. As Figure 10 indicates, there is advancement in three categories. The strong point of this student is that he is very creative and has very inventive ideas. Both of his compositions were enjoyable and I think this student does not need help with generating ideas. However, the support for organization, vocabulary and grammar is needed.

Figure 11: Results of Student 11
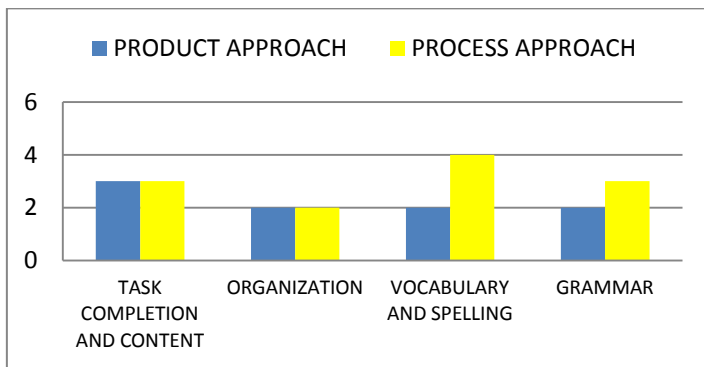
Comment: The graph in Figure 11 demonstrates quite low results in all the language skills. Student 11 is a student with poor knowledge of English. Her problem is that she is quite slow and in both of compositions she was not able to write the 120 words in the given time limit. No improvement in "Task Completion" and "Organization" can be observed. I am very happy about the increase in the categories "Vocabulary" and "Grammar". It means that the activities in the writing process were useful for her.
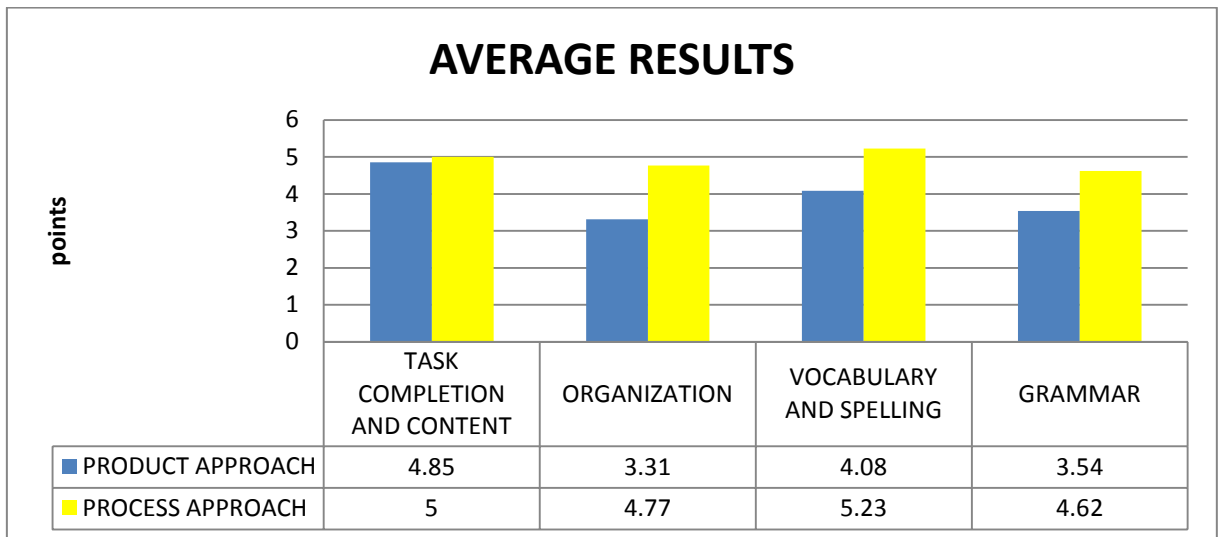
Figure 12: Results of Student 12
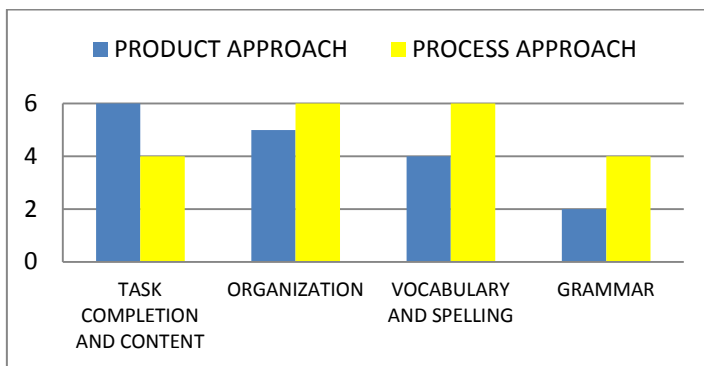
Comment: From the graph above we can see significant improvement in three categories: Organization, Vocabulary and Grammar. It shows that Student 12 profited from the activities and the feedback given in the writing process. The decline in results which can be observed in "Task Completion" was influenced by the fact that the student's second composition was shorter than 120 words. In my opinion he did not like the topic. He told me there was nothing more to write about.

Figure 13: Results of Student 13
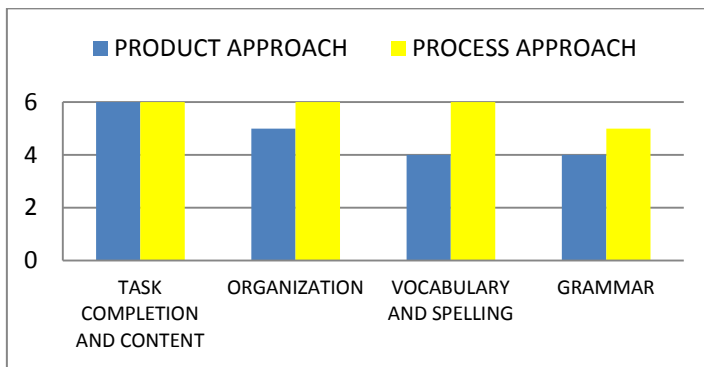
Comment: As can be observed from Figure 13, student benefited from the process approach. The results indicate improvement of the writing skills. An increase can be observed in three language categories. The results in the category "Task Completion" remained the same, which shows that Student 13 is capable of generating ideas himself without any help of teacher or peers.

Figure 14: Comparison of average results of all students

	TASK COMPLETION AND CONTENT	ORGANIZATION	VOCABULARY AND SPELLING	GRAMMAR
■ PRODUCT APPROACH	4.85	3.31	4.08	3.54
■ PROCESS APPROACH	5	4.77	5.23	4.62

As it is apparent from Figure 14, there is considerable progress in all the categories. These findings prove that the process approach helped students to improve their writing. These findings at the same time confirm my expectation that teaching writing through the process approach is more effective than teaching writing through the product approach.

However, there is one unanticipated finding which is necessary to highlight. No improvement was observed in the case of the best students. It means that the process approach had a positive effect only on the weak and the average students in the class. It signalizes that something was wrong. My mistake was that all the students had the same tasks. Next time I should differentiate the activities so that students of all levels could profit from them.

Part 2

In this part, I analyze the opinions of my students, which results from the two completed questionnaires. Firstly I was interested in their opinions on writing in the English language, and I was curious how my students consider writing in their native language. Secondly I wanted them to express their points of view of writing through these two different approaches.

The first question in this research was to find out how easy or difficult students consider writing in English. The majority of my students wrote that they found it very difficult. When they were asked what exactly causes them the problems, their answers were that the most troublesome in writing was to gather ideas what to write about. However, the most surprising finding was that 90% of my students find writing in the Czech language more demanding than writing in the English language. In the later on discussion students explained to me that the demands on writing in the Czech language are much higher. Their argument was that the Czech language is richer and far more complicated than the English language. Other students' arguments were that the Czech grammar is more difficult than the English grammar. When they were asked about generating ideas and organizing the text when writing in Czech, all of them answered that they found it very hard. To conclude this issue: There is a positive correlation between the problems with writing in both languages. It means that the base for students' poor writing in English initiates somewhere else. The difficulties probably originate from the basic school, where the writing habit in the Czech language has not been developed properly. If students had the writing habit in the native language, they would undoubtedly profit from it in the foreign language, too.

All the students answered that writing through the process approach made writing easier for them. However, the analysis of individual answers in the four language categories brought a noteworthy finding. Although I thought that my help was distributed proportionally to all the categories, the impressions of my students were different. My students noticed the greatest help in the two following categories: Organization and Vocabulary. I was very surprised to find out that students did not consider my feedback on grammar as effective as I thought. I should bear this information in mind and next time I practice writing with my students I should apply another method of giving feedback on grammar.

Summary of my findings

The results of my research show that teaching writing through the process approach is a useful device which helps students to improve their writing. The results of the first composition done through the product approach were significantly lower. Students were left alone to generate ideas, organize the text and check for accuracy themselves. The feedback came after the composition was completed. Through this approach, students learnt nothing new and were assessed for the language knowledge they already have. The results of the second composition taught by the process approach brought overall improvements. Students were guided by the teacher; they were helped by their peers with generating ideas, organizing the text and were given feedback for accuracy in the writing process. The most significant finding of this thesis is that students learnt through the process writing something new. It is my belief that if writing is practiced regularly through the process approach, it can have a tremendous effect on developing the writing skill. The results of the questionnaires were also positive because they showed that students consider the process approach helpful.

In this chapter results of my findings were presented and commented on. In the subsequent chapter, I provide advice for teachers based on the results of my research, flows of the research and possible research questions.

V. IMPLICATIONS

This chapter consists of three parts. In the first part, I provide recommendations for teachers resulting from my research. In the second part, I describe the limitations of my research. In the third part, I make suggestions for further research.

Implications for teaching

The research I carried out supports the idea that the process approach is a useful tool and that it facilitates students' writing. In this part, I would like to make recommendations to teachers who encountered the same problem like me and who are trying to find the ways how to help students to improve their poor writing skills. I have created a list of recommendations where I summarize the main rules for effective teaching writing through the process approach. I learnt all of the rules in the theory I studied for this thesis and a majority of them I applied in teaching my students when we went together through the writing process.

My list of my recommendations

1. Remember that writing in a foreign language is extremely difficult. Tell your students that you will guide them through the writing process and that there is nothing to be afraid of.
2. Before they start writing, tell them who their audience will be. Being provided with the information about the reader will help students to decide how to write.
3. Do not forget to explain to your students clearly the purpose of their writing. When they understand the context, their work will be easier.
4. Tell your students that in the learning process it is natural to make mistakes. Teach them to learn from their own mistakes.
5. Teach writing regularly. The more writing practice students get the better writers they become. After the several years of regular practice through the process writing each student will acquire their own individual system of writing, from which they will profit.
6. Show them that writing can be fun. Prepare enjoyable activities. There is a variety of activities which can be implemented into the writing process. Try out all the

different techniques such as brainstorming, clustering, freewriting, peer-editing, using visuals, etc. Find out what suits your students the best.

7. Be creative. Integrate all language skills into the writing procedure. Writing cannot be taught separately from the other language skills. The activities in the prewriting stage can be of various kinds. Students can be motivated to write by a reading activity or a listening activity can be used as a stimulus for writing or a variety of speaking activities can be applied.

8. Expose them to a variety of different texts. Bring a lot of samples to class and show students how these texts differ in structure and style.

9. Practice the writing skill on a variety of different genres.

10. Teach them to be autonomous learners. Consider with care each intervention to students' work. However, when your intervention is necessary, try to find just the right level of it. Be careful not impose your ideas on students. Support them to realize their own ideas.

11. Let students cooperate with their peers at any stage of the writing process. They will learn from each others' strengths and thus encourage the writing process.

12. Remember that each student in the class has a different level of language knowledge. Do not forget to differentiate the tasks so as to all the students benefit from the prepared activities.

13. Remember that each writer is different, each writer needs a different writing approach, the teachers' role is to suggest possible writing procedure and encourage the student to experiment with it.

14. Teach them how to use the cohesive devises effectively.

15. Remember that giving feedback when the text is completed is useless. Give them feedback after each stage of the writing process.

16. Your feedback should have the form of written or spoken comments, rather than giving a single grade. From your comments, they will learn more about their mistakes.

17. Give encouraging and constructive feedback. Decide very carefully what form of feedback to give in order to motivate students. It is a subject of differentiation; each student has to be treated differently in order to achieve the best output. However, remember that your feedback has to be always non-threatening.

18. Explain to them the editing code you use for giving feedback. When they see what kinds of mistakes they have made, and they will more easily be able to correct them by themselves.

19. When assessing the composition, do not to overemphasize the accuracy, concentrate on the message of the written text.

20. Explain to your students that the basic for your evaluation of their compositions is not only the accuracy. That you evaluate content and organization as well. Explain to your students the rules for assessing their work. When they understand it, they benefit from it.

Apart from the list of recommendations I have compiled, there is one more thing I would like to mention. I have carried out this research with secondary school students. My advice is to apply this method of teaching writing also to basic school children. This method will help them to build the writing habit and the sooner they start the better for them.

Further on, I want to highlight that this method of teaching writing can be applied to any language lesson. My recommendation is to use it not only for teaching writing in a foreign language but to implement this method also to teaching writing in the Czech language. According to the opinions of my students from the questionnaires, they would certainly profit from it. Going through the activities for generating ideas, organizing the text and feedback for accuracy would certainly help them to become better writers.

In my thesis, I describe numerous advantages of the process approach; logically there are also disadvantages. One of the disadvantages is that the process writing takes a lot of time. I can imagine that some students find it tedious. Especially when they are asked to re-draft, re-write or re-edit. My recommendation for teachers is to prepare the writing lesson as varied as possible. The success of the writing lesson is dependent on the activities teachers prepare. If the applied activities are not interesting and enjoyable, students might find the process writing boring. The second disadvantage I want to point out is that it is very time-consuming for preparation. To prepare activities that exactly correspond with the needs of your students and to bear in mind the differentiation when preparing a lesson takes a lot of time.

Limitations of the research

It is clear that the research of this thesis has its limitations, which are necessary to take it into consideration. At first I would like to mention that it was my first time to teach through the process approach. I studied the process approach from many materials, and I did my best to prepare useful activities, which help my students with the writing process. However, when you are doing something for the first time, it is a trial and error procedure. My crucial mistake was that I did not differentiate the tasks. In the result of that, the best students did not learn much new; for them it was a kind of repetition. It is probable that they would get the same results even if they did not go through the writing process with me. It is my belief that, through a lot of teaching practice, I will always find the best alternative how to help my students with writing.

The second issue, which has to be taken in consideration, is it was my students' first time to practice writing through the process approach. Even though, they are used to cooperative work, this procedure what new for them and it could possibly influence the results.

Another limitation was that my students wrote only two compositions, both of them in the period of one month. To be able to generalize the results of my research and to be able to proof the effectiveness of teaching through the writing process, it would be necessary to carry out research in a much longer period and to practice writing with students through the process approach on a regular basis.

What the assessment concerns, I wanted two independent scorers to assess the compositions, in order to get objective results. However, I did not succeed to find any experienced scorers, who would do that for me. In consequence of this fact, the compositions were assessed only by me. I have to admit that I am not an experienced scorer, and it was my first time to use the evaluation criteria of Cermat. Even though, I did my best to evaluate the compositions objectively, it could have influenced the results.

Suggestions for further research

It would be interesting to extend my research for a longer period of time, in order to see the development of the improvement of the students' the writing skills. The research of

my thesis has shown considerable progress of results. I am eager to know how the progress would evolve in a longer period of time. Let's take an assumption that students would practice process writing regularly for a period of four years. I presume that, at the beginning of this period, the increase in the results would be enormous. Further on, I presume that, after one year of regular practice, the progress would slow down. However, at the end of these four years the writing process would become part of their writing habit. They would be able to apply the writing procedure by themselves without any guidance of a teacher. And I am sure they would profit from it at the times of written exams. Although it is just my presumption, I believe that such a long time research would bring similar results and would show how effective method of process writing is. In the next chapter, I conclude everything I have done in this thesis.

IV. CONCLUSION

This thesis focused on the methods how to teach writing. The two approaches being compared were the process approach and the product approach. The main aim of this thesis was to examine how the process approach can be an effective tool for teaching a writing skill.

In the theoretical part, I presented the opinions of renowned educators concerning writing. The main aim of this part was to summarize their concepts, to highlight where their opinions consent and where they differ. One thing is necessary to mention. In the last decades, teaching writing has gone through an enormous development. I could observe the development in the books I explored. The older books, published 20 years ago, concentrated rather on the product of writing. All of the up-to-date books emphasize the effectiveness of teaching through the process approach. For me, personally, the theory is very closely connected with the practice. As I was reading through the theory, I have always tried to imagine how it would work in practice. Some of the recommendations of the educators were useful; some of them would not be applicable to the students at secondary school I teach at. One thing is certain; going through the theory helped me a lot to expand my knowledge.

In the practical part, I applied the theory I learnt into practice. Following the recommendations of the educators, I prepared the teaching plans, and I went step by step through the writing process with my students. Then I compared the results of it with the results of the traditional product approach. The results of my research showed that the process approach is much more effective. The findings of my questionnaires also proved that students consider the process approach particularly helpful. The practical part brought me one more finding. Students like trying new methods and they are always ready to experiment. From their reactions, I could see that they enjoyed learning through the process approach. However, this method was not new only for my students; it was also new for me. With interest, I was anticipating how the lessons of teaching through the process approach would flow and of course I was curious about the results. The results were positive, and my expectations were fulfilled. However, I have also learnt that next time I have to put more effort into differentiation of the tasks.

In the part called "Implication" I tried to generalize the findings from both the theoretical and the practical part of my thesis. I wrote a list of recommendations for teachers how to help students to improve their writing skill. These recommendations are applicable not only to learners of foreign languages; they can be successfully applied to students learning to write in their native language too.

To conclude this thesis, I am very happy that I have chosen this topic. The theoretical and the practical part broadened my knowledge of how to teach writing. From the results and the students' reactions I can see that writing through the process approach is an effective method of teaching. I will use this teaching method with my students regularly. Moreover, I will do my best to spread this method of teaching writing to my colleagues.

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Appendix 1 - Lesson plan 1:

Teacher tells students that they are going to write an essay. The topic of the essay is: My ideal partner.

Activity 1: Prewriting - getting ideas together: Mind map

The first activity is to make a mind map. Making a mind map is a strategy for making notes before writing. It helps to organize the ideas.

Students are going to work in groups of three. Each group gets one subtopic. Their task is to jot down all the words associated with this topic.

For example: Group 1: Write as many positive personal characteristics as you can.

After a couple of minutes I start eliciting ideas from students and draw a complete mind map on the board.
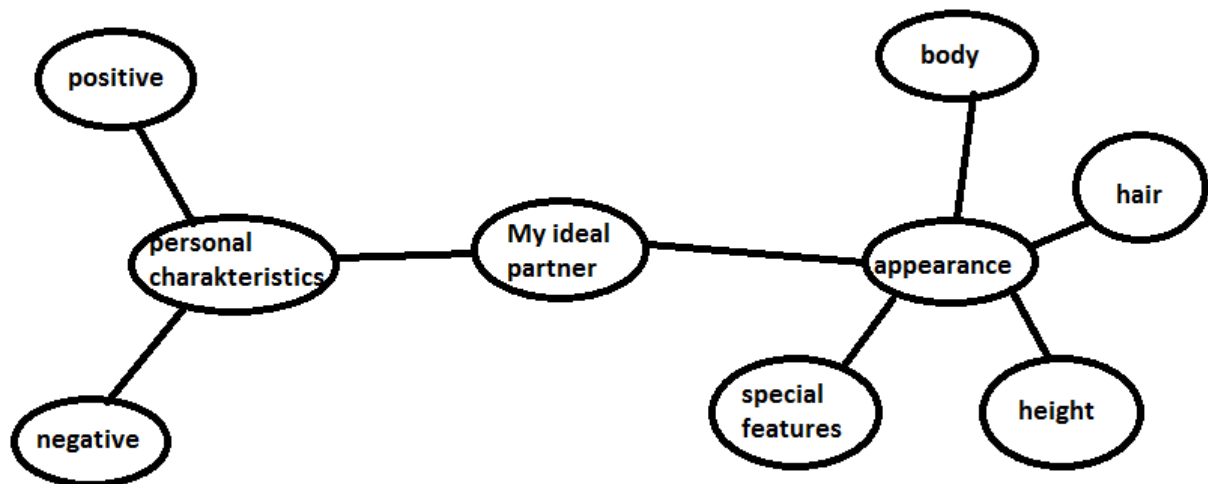
This is very valuable practice where students get many ideas what to write about. Moreover it helps them to develop a range of vocabulary associated with this topic. Once students learn how to use mind maps, they can profit from it before each writing.

Activity 2: Prewriting – getting ideas together – personality tests

Students are going to work in pairs.

Personality Tests

Look at the following words used to describe personality and character. Which words have positive meaning and which have negative meaning? Put them into a correct column.

+	-	+/-

patient   critical   rude   romantic   shy   serious

aggressive   practical   careful   self-centered

nosy   kind   modest   honest   curious

shallow   friendly   hard-working   impatient

lazy   clever   greedy   self-confident

sensitive   passionate   active   unfriendly   polite

Choose five words that you think describe your partner.

Ask your partner to guess which words you have chosen.

Activity 3: Revision at the end of the lesson. Students are asked to think about following questions:

What is your best quality?

What is your worst quality?

Appendix 2 - Lesson plan 2

Activity 1 - Prewriting - Being motivated to write: List of statements

As stimulation for the writing each student gets a list of statements about the topic. Firstly students are going to work individually and his/her task is to choose three statements which they find important. Then students are going to work in pairs, they tell each other the statements they have chosen and explain why.

My ideal partner

☐   My ideal partner is honest and reliable.
☐   My ideal partner is sensitive to my wants and feelings.
☐   My ideal partner has a sense of humor.
☐   My ideal partner is attractive.
☐   My ideal partner is educated and has good manners.
☐   My ideal partner likes to be adventurous.
☐   My ideal partner loves me unconditionally without trying to make me into somebody I am not.
☐   My ideal partner gives me space when I need it.
☐   My ideal partner is financially independent.
☐   My ideal partner has similar interests and ideas about life.

This activity motivates students and help them to order their priorities.

<u>Activity 2 - Planning and outlining</u>

At this stage students have already enough ideas what to write about. The teacher's role at this moment is to emphasize the purpose of this piece of writing. Students have to know why they write. And the second important point is for whom they write it, students have to know who their audience will be. Knowing that their peers are going be the readers helps them to decide how to write.

At this stage, students are asked to write an outline of their work. The outline can vary from student to student. One student may jot down only a few points, another student make have more detailed notes. An example of such a plan is:

1. Introducing the ideal partner
2. Personal characteristics of the ideal partner
3. Appearance
4. Conclusion -explanation why I would choose exactly this person

After finishing their plans students are going to work in pairs. The aim of this activity is to make sure that their plans are reasonably well formed and it also helps students to divide their text into paragraphs. They will exchange their plans and discuss the different points they have written. After the discussion with the friend they will have time to alter their plans, if necessary.

Appendix 3 - Editing code

<u>Editing code adapted from *Teaching English through English* (1992, p. 172)</u>

∧= something is missing

Sp= wrong spelling

WW = wrong word

WO= wrong word order

P= wrong punctuation

V= wrong verb form

T= wrong tense

Appendix 4 – Assessment Criteria

Kritéria hodnocení 1. část PP

	I – Zpracování zadání/obsah		II – Organizace a koheze textu		III – Slovní zásoba a pravopis		IV – Mluvnické prostředky	
	A – Zadání	**B – Rozsah, obsah**	**A – Organizace, koherence**	**B – Koheze, prostředky textové návaznosti**	**A – Přesnost**	**B – Rozsah**	**A – Přesnost**	**B – Rozsah**
3	• Požadovaná charakteristika textu¹ je dodržena. • Všechny body zadání jsou jasně a srozumitelně zmíněny. • Délka textu odpovídá požadovanému rozsahu.	• Body zadání jsou rozpracovány vhodně/účelně a v odpovídající míře podrobnosti. • V textu je jasně vyvážená podstata myšlenky nebo problému. • Text neobsahuje nadbytečné/irelevantní informace a myšlenky.	• Text je souvislý s lineárním sledem myšlenek. • Text je vhodně členěný/organizovaný.	• Chyby v PTN nebrání porozumění textu/části textu. • Rozsah PTN je široký. • PTN jsou téměř vždy použity správně a vhodně.	• Chyby ve slovní zásobě a pravopise nebrání porozumění textu. • Slovní zásoba a pravopis jsou téměř vždy použity správně (0–5 chyb).	• Slovní zásoba je široká (vzhledem k míře rozpracování bodů zadání).	• Chyby v mluvnických prostředcích nebrání porozumění textu.² • Mluvnické prostředky jsou téměř vždy použity správně (0–5 chyb).	• Rozsah mluvnických prostředků je široký (vzhledem k míře rozpracování bodů zadání).
2	• Požadovaná charakteristika textu¹ je většinou dodržena. • Většina bodů zadání je jasně a srozumitelně zmíněna. • Délka textu ne zcela odpovídá požadovanému rozsahu (text je o 1 interval kratší/delší).	• Body zadání jsou většinou rozpracovány vhodně/účelně a v odpovídající míře podrobnosti. • V textu je většinou jasně vyvážená podstata myšlenky nebo problému. • Text ojediněle obsahuje nadbytečné/irelevantní informace a myšlenky.	• Text je většinou souvislý s lineárním sledem myšlenek. • Text je většinou vhodně členěný/organizovaný.	• Chyby v PTN jen v malé míře brání porozumění textu/části textu. • Rozsah PTN je většinou široký. • PTN jsou většinou použity správně a vhodné.	• Chyby ve slovní zásobě a pravopise většinou nebrání porozumění textu. • Slovní zásoba a pravopis jsou většinou použity správně (6–11 chyb). • Text je o 1 interval kratší;	• Slovní zásoba je většinou široká (vzhledem k míře rozpracování bodů zadání).	• Chyby v mluvnických prostředcích většinou nebrání porozumění textu.² • Mluvnické prostředky jsou většinou použity správně (6–11 chyb). • Text je o 1 interval kratší.	• Rozsah mluvnických prostředků je většinou široký (vzhledem k míře rozpracování bodů zadání).
1	• Požadovaná charakteristika textu¹ není ve větší míře dodržena. • Většina bodů zadání není jasně a srozumitelně zmíněna. • Délka textu ve větší míře neodpovídá požadovanému rozsahu (text je o 2 intervaly kratší/delší).	• Body zadání jsou jen ojediněle rozpracovány vhodně/účelně a v odpovídající míře podrobnosti. • V textu není ve větší míře vyvážená podstata myšlenky nebo problému. • Text ve větší míře obsahuje nadbytečné/irelevantní informace a myšlenky.	• Text není ve větší míře souvislý a lineárním sledem myšlenek. • Text není ve větší míře vhodně členěný/organizovaný.	• Chyby v PTN ve větší míře brání porozumění textu/části textu. • Rozsah PTN je ve větší míře omezený. • PTN nejsou ve větší míře použity správně a vhodné.	• Chyby ve slovní zásobě a pravopise ve větší míře brání porozumění textu. • Slovní zásoba a pravopis nejsou ve větší míře použity správně (12–17 chyb). • Text je o 2 intervaly kratší.	• Slovní zásoba je ve větší míře omezená (vzhledem k míře rozpracování bodů zadání).	• Chyby v mluvnických prostředcích ve větší míře brání porozumění textu.² • Mluvnické prostředky nejsou ve větší míře použity správně (12–17 chyb). • Text je o 2 intervaly kratší.	• Rozsah mluvnických prostředků je ve větší míře omezený (vzhledem k míře rozpracování bodů zadání).
0	• Požadovaná charakteristika textu¹ není dodržena. • Body zadání nejsou (jasně) zmíněny. • Délka textu neodpovídá požadovanému rozsahu (text je o 3 a více intervalů kratší/delší) a/nebo není dostatek (srozumitelného) textu pro hodnocení.	• Body zadání nejsou rozpracovány.	• Text není souvislý a neobsahuje lineární sled myšlenek. • Text není vhodně členěný/organizovaný.	• PTN jsou použity nevhodné a/nebo v nedostatečném rozsahu.	• Chyby ve slovní zásobě a pravopise ve větší míře brání porozumění (většině) textu. • Slovní zásoba a pravopis jsou ve většině textu použity nesprávně (18+ chyb). • Text je o 3 a více intervalů kratší.	• Slovní zásoba je omezená a/nebo v nedostatečném rozsahu (vzhledem k míře rozpracování bodů zadání).	• Chyby v mluvnických prostředcích brání porozumění (většině) textu.² • Mluvnické prostředky jsou ve většině textu použity nesprávně (18+ chyb). • Text je o 3 a více intervalů kratší.	• Rozsah mluvnických prostředků je omezený a/nebo mluvnické prostředky jsou v nedostatečném rozsahu (vzhledem k míře rozpracování bodů zadání).

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¹ Charakteristika zahrnuje jak typ textu a jeho formální náležitosti, tak téma zpracované v souladu a komunikační funkcí a ve vztahu k příjemci textu.

² Deskriptor zahrnuje i chyby pod požadovanou úroveň obtížnosti.

Appendix 5

Jméno studenta:_____

1. **Zdá se vám tento způsob psaní lepší? Usnadnil vám práci?**   ANO   NE

2. **Psaní této slohové práce pro mě bylo:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadné

obtížné

3. **Při této slohové práci vymyslet o čem budu psát bylo pro mě:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadné

obtížné

4. **Zorganizovat text tak, aby byl souvislý a rozdělit ho na odstavce bylo pro mě:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadné

obtížné

5. **Při psaní této slohové práce slovní zásoba a pravopis byly pro mě:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadné

obtížné

6. **Při psaní této slohové práce byla pro mě gramatika:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadné

obtížné

X

Appendix 6

Názor studenta na obtížnost psaní slohu v angličtině

Jméno studenta:_____ **Věk studenta:**_____ **Angličtinu studuji** _____ **let:**

Následující otázky se týkají pouze angličtiny

1. **Psaní slohové práce v angličtině je pro mě:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadné

obtížné

2. **Vymyslet o čem budu psát je pro mě:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadné

obtížné

3. **Zorganizovat text tak, aby byl souvislý a rozdělit ho na odstavce je pro mě:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadné

obtížné

4. **Slovní zásoba a pravopis jsou pro mě:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadné

obtížné

5. **Gramatika (například správné použití slovesných časů) je pro mě:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadná

obtížná

Poslední otázka se týká českého jazyka

6. **Psaní slohové práce v češtině je pro mě:**

Rozdělte 100 bodů

snadné

obtížné

xi

SHRNUTÍ

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá didaktikou psaní v hodinách anglického jazyka. Praktická část této diplomové práce porovnává výsledky slohových prací studentů dosažené dvěma odlišnými metodami výuky psaní. Můj výzkum dokazuje, že procesní psaní je efektivní výukovou metodou.