Integrate or Disintegrate – Running Effective Writing Skills Lessons

Workshop Aims

To explore ways of making writing lessons

✓ simpler to prepare
✓ more effective
✓ more learner centred

Rationale

Writing lessons can be difficult to prepare because

● they focus on quite abstract aims, for example what makes a good piece of writing
● they can require a model text, which can be very hard to find or create
● it can be time consuming to find personalised material suitable to a particular group

Writing lessons can be less effective because

● the above factors make the lesson less engaging
● they can become overly focused on ideal versions or linguistic accuracy at the expense of the effectiveness of the message being communicated
● the oral communication that takes place in class doesn't directly contribute to the quality of the message being written

How?

These aims can be achieved by having

✓ lesson objectives that focus on what learners find difficult
✓ a lesson procedure which builds up, cumulatively addressing those difficulties
✓ framework materials which focus on learner produced emergent language as opposed to idealised models and imposed language

Workshop Materials

Please see this Prezi for the slides used in the workshop.

Below you can find documents related to two framework materials used in the session, including a blank version, one with instructions and one completed by a student as an example.
Relationship with the reader

Purpose in writing and desired or expected response

Idea 1

Idea 2

Idea 3
The opening: 2 exponents

Idea 1
2 exponents

Voice and purpose

Idea 2
2 exponents

Voice and purpose

Idea 3
2 exponents

Voice and purpose

The closing: 2 exponents
US:
AGENT (providing potential customer)

THEM:
SERVICE PROVIDERS (not our usual)

PURPOSE:
TO GET UPDATED INFORMATION TO BE PASSED ON TO THE POTENTIAL CLIENTS
EXPECTED RESPONSE:
UPDATED PROGRAMME + PRICE LIST

1. WHO WE ARE
2. INFORMATION WE NEED
3. WHEN DO WE NEED IT
Dear Sir or Madam,

Dear Mr/Ms "X"

To clarify the message:
- We would like to receive your updated programme.
- One of our clients is interested in your...

Establish a relationship:
- I'm writing to enquire about.
- We got your leaflet from one of your representatives.

You can contact me on...
- Please kindly send the details by...

To give a deadline:
- Looking forward to hearing from you...
- Kind regards...