

Improving EFL writing through the process approach

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Module 1:

Language Teaching Methodology; Classroom Research and Research Methods

Final Assignment Task #LT/09/09

Collect a small number of samples of your students' writing (5-6 short pieces, preferably of different types). Discuss the difficulties they appear to have writing in English, and discuss how a process approach to writing might help them.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The learning of a second foreign language is a process that requires exhaustive work for both teachers and students. Teachers need to combine their teaching skills and techniques to provide comprehensible and meaningful input that will allow students to obtain communicative competence (Hodge, 2000). Students on their behalf need to process the intake of information and transform it into output. That is, producing the target language with the help of all the information they obtain from their instructor, other students and other resources available (Hodge, 2000).

Furthermore, the four main communication skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing, play a key role in providing individuals with the necessary tools to obtain communicative competence. According to Hymes, a speaker is a competent communicator when messages are delivered and interpreted while their meaning is being negotiated (in Brown, 2000). The communication of ideas and reaching communicative competence is, as Savignon adds, a 'dynamic interpersonal construct that can be examined only by means of the overt performance of two or more individuals in the process of communication' (in Brown, 2000:246).

However, language learners assimilate and produce the language according to their inter-language system (Hodge, 2000): they may not understand everything they hear or read thus impacting how they speak or write. The interactive characteristic that languages carry links listening with speaking and reading with writing. On one side, as Brown & Yule (1983) and Slade (1986) mention conversations are "listener-or-person oriented" (cited in Tsang & Wong, 2002). That is, what is spoken depends on what is listened to just as reading and writing are linked and depend on one another. Richards & Renandya add that reading texts may enhance students' exposure to good written models (2002). Writing is a complex process (Bell & Burnaby, 1984 in Nunan, 1989), which is far from being spontaneous or easy (Hodge, 2000: 302).

This paper provides a brief description of the process approach to writing and the various stages that may enhance students' writing skills. Five samples are provided accompanied by a brief analysis of how planning, drafting and revising may help writers improve their

specific flaws. Five different text types written by low intermediate and intermediate EFL learners were considered for this paper. The first sample, text 1 (appendix A) is a descriptive text, text 2 (appendix B) an informal letter, text 3 (appendix C) an opinion essay, text 4 (appendix D) a descriptive essay and finally text 5 (appendix F) a problem/solving essay.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A difficult writing context to cope with.

Written language cannot be acquired by being part of a specific environment or by observing others such as speaking is developed. Instead, specific instruction is required (Daniels, 2003; Brown, 2007). However, the teaching of writing in many contexts is limited to asking students to answer essay questions as homework. Instructors tend to put aside the importance of writing due to time constraints especially if they need to cover a syllabus over a short period of time. Students are required to perform specific skills such as organization of information and manipulation of linguistic skills that may be difficult to master. They need to anticipate their readers' 'general knowledge, cultural and literary schemata, specific subject-matter knowledge, and how their choice of language will be interpreted' (Brown, 2007: 398). Writing requires composers to carry out a series of activities that involve not only writing ideas but also establishing goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making drafts, reading and reviewing then revising and editing them (Hedge, 2000: 302). These processes become even harder for students when they are weak L1 writers and low-proficient users of the target language (Richards & Ibarandya, 2002: 303).

As teachers, our main functions, when teaching written language, is conceptualizing, planning and delivering courses (Hyland, 2003: 1) combined with our teaching experience and any theoretical background acquired. We can organize our writing lessons around different approaches and methods such as genre, process or creative writing. However, it is feasible to combine methods and approaches according to our teaching situations and students' needs (Hyland, 2003: 2). Although it is a difficult context to cope with, teachers

need to keep in mind that we are the most important guides to learning and that the main purpose of language teaching is leading our students to reach communicative competence allowing them to interact with society (Hodge, 2000).

2.2 Product approach to writing.

In the 1950's and 1960's, writing teachers focused their lessons on a specific product: a story, an essay, a report, and expected it to 1) demonstrate mastery of English rhetorical style, 2) demonstrate the writer was a proficient language user, 3) and be organized and conventional to the audience's views (Brown, 2007). To achieve these goals teachers focused on a specific model which would guide students in the creation of their own compositions. According to Pincas (1982b), product writing focuses on students' ability to use vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices in their written outcomes (cited in Badger & White, 2000). The teacher's main objective was to lead students to produce, a 'well structured, coherent, rich content, grammatical essay' (Shannon, 1994:3) by providing them with models and examples of the target product.

2.2.1 Classroom activities for product writing.

Once students are familiar with the target writing style, they move from controlled to guided and finally to free practice (Badger & White, 2000). For example, a product-focused lesson would consist of:

- a) Familiarization: Introduce students to the classroom and its different components such as desks, teacher, students, whiteboard etc.
- b) Controlled Writing: Students are encouraged to write sentences using the devices just learned.
- c) Guided Writing: Students are asked to produce a piece of written work with an example to follow given by the teacher.
- d) Free Writing: Students are encouraged to write a composition including the lexical and grammatical devices just learned.

Li Wai Shing (1992) considers product writing to be a grammar exercise in a controlled context. Language accuracy is of major importance and the teacher focuses attention on the final outcome: that it is readable, grammatically accurate and that it follows the written conventions needed (Nunan, 1989). The teacher's role is only that of a grammatical error pointer and a supporter of those grammatical points.

2.2.2 The benefits and constraints in product writing.

It is considered that product instruction guides students in their writing by providing them with examples to follow, writing exercises that move from controlled to free practice and language accuracy practice. One of the main benefits I believe this approach may provide is that model texts can provide students with a clear idea of what is expected of them and how they can structure their texts. However, it may be questionable how students are producing their own texts or if they are merely imitating the model text. Additionally, a focus on language and vocabulary accuracy may ignore other important writing characteristics, such as organization, coherence, or audience awareness. Students' creativity and capability to learn through writing may be forgotten.

2.3 Process Writing

In 1983, Zamel (cited in Hedge, 2000:303-304) studied six advanced ESL students who participated in a college writing class and found that:

- a) Planning not only took place at the beginning of their writing process, but also again and again while composing.
- b) They had individual strategies to trigger writing: some took notes while others simply started to write.
- c) Their writing process was "recursive and generative": they reviewed, re-read, reacted and modified their work to improve it. Poor writers reviewed at a sentence level, while more advanced writers would re-read complete paragraphs.

- d) They revised their texts by writing something new, eliminated information, reorganized, etc.
- e) Linguistic problems, such as vocabulary doubts, were left aside when writing. Instead, some students wrote the word in their L1 to avoid losing the sequence of ideas when writing.
- f) Writers edited their text once finished.

Raines in 1985 added to Zamel's findings that when writing composers would:

'... consider purpose and audience. They consult their own background knowledge. They let ideas incubate. They plan. As they write, they read back over what they have written. Contrary to what many textbooks advise, writers do not follow a neat sequence of planning, organizing writing and then revising. For while a writer's product-the finished essay, story or novel- is presented in lines, the process that produces it is not linear at all' (cited in Hodge, 2000:304).

If research has found that writers undergo different processes at different points during their writing experience, it seems rather unnecessary to focus on a written product if the processes students undergo can be improved through the use of a non-linear approach that allows them to produce a quality product (Hodge, 2000).

Process writing was born in L1 contexts in North American universities (Hyland & Hyland, 2006) when composition teachers realized that their students needed another type of attention and instruction. It emphasized the importance of developing students' ability to plan, identify issues and analyze and implement possible solutions (Hyland, 2003: 10). The process approach to writing, rather than banning the final product from instruction, seeks to create a process-oriented approach that can positively influence writers' performance (Seow, 2002). In other words, teachers train students to become self-aware and reflect on the activities and strategies they carry out while they write (Hyland, 2003). It is seen as a process of discovery and thinking (Hodges, 2000) in which students' purpose for writing and audience are of major importance (Silva, 1987). Teachers who follow this approach are no longer authorities or evaluators; instead, they are facilitators of knowledge, consultants, assistants and co-participants of students learning (Li Wai Shing, 1992).

In this process, the writer is the center of attention and is involved in a 'positive, encouraging, collaborative environment, within which students with ample time and minimum interference, can work through their composing processes' (Silva, 1987:8). According to Brown (2007: 392), process writing encourages the following principles:

1. Emphasizes the process writers undergo to produce a final written outcome.
2. Encourages students to analyze and understand their writing processes.
3. Allows a student to identify strategies to plan, draft, and rewrite.
4. Provides enough time to write and rewrite.
5. Emphasizes the revision process.
6. Enables students to discover what they want to express through writing.
7. Provides students feedback at any point of the writing process to meet their writing intentions.
8. Gives opportunities for peer and teacher feedback.
9. Encourages teacher-student conferences throughout the composition process.

2.3.1 Classroom activities for process writing.

In the classroom, teaching process writing means that students will engage in activities such as (figure 1):

- a) **Planning.** Writers may focus on the gist and the overall organization they wish to give to their texts (Hedge, 2000). The main purpose of planning or pre-writing activities, as Brown (2007) names them, is to aid students in generating ideas and in encouraging them to write (Brown, 2007; Seow, 2002) by activating any prior knowledge that can guide them in developing their written piece. Planning also motivates students to consider the purpose of their text and to focus on who is going to read the written outcome (sense of audience). Brainstorming, mind-mapping or group discussions are common activities used to trigger students' planning skills.
- b) **Composing/drafting.** Once students have gathered the information they need in the pre-writing activities, they go on to produce their first draft. During this phase, students should focus on producing fluent texts rather than worrying about language accuracy (Seow, 2002: 317). Multiple drafts encourage writing without the pressure

of having to get it right the first time. However, drafting requires time, patience, and specific training (Brown, 2007) that a student may find difficult to cope with. Therefore, it is necessary to train and encourage them to perform drafting activities. A tool used to encourage multiple drafting activities, is feedback. According to Hyland & Hyland (2006:15) feedback is an important component of teaching writing because it assists students in obtaining a better understanding of their compositions, their readers, and their writing processes contributing to awareness of written language. Peer feedback, an example of the different types of delivery modes supports process writing with a focus on drafting and revision (Liu & Hansen, 2002). Rather than just focusing on receiving information, peer feedback activities encourage students to develop analytical skills and take up an active role in their learning (Liu & Hansen, 2002).

- c) **Revising/Editing.** Drafting, revising and editing go hand by hand in process writing. Once students revise a text they are engaging in drafting activities. According to Seow revising is not only checking for grammatical discrepancies, it also involves reviewing the global meaning of the text and the organization of ideas the writer intends to communicate (2002). For teachers, it means to encourage students to review their work and to avoid recopying by asking them for rewrites (Beck, 1986 in Seow, 2002: 318). Encouraging students to review their work can be emphasized with different feedback techniques, as mentioned in the previous section. For instance, Hedge (2002) considers conferencing feedback sessions allow the teacher to provide support for obtaining ideas, organizing information and finding the appropriate language to express them. Additionally, it allows the teacher to be more explicit in the recommendations given and encourage opportunities for meaningful communication.

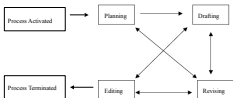


Figure 1: The writing process (Sene, 2002: 315)

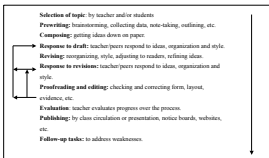


Figure 2: A process model of writing instruction (Hyland, 2003:11)

As figure 2 illustrates, when students write they do not follow a straight procedure. Instead, they can go back and forth in the stages allowing them to revise and edit even when the text has not been completed, engaging in 'a non-linear, exploratory, and generative process' (Flower and Hayes, 1989 in Hyland, 2003).

2.3.2 Some benefits and issues of process writing.

While the product approach focuses on language forms and the final draft (Liu & Hansen, 2002), a process oriented approach focuses on how writers compose in a non-linear way and how they manage to get meaning across to their reader. If writers wish to communicate their ideas fluently, process writing allows teachers to focus their attention on improving students' writing activities to assure a meaningful and communicative final product. Despite these learning advantages, some believe the process approach has its constraints. Researchers believe that a process approach fails to address important individual factors such as language proficiency, level of cognitive development and finally differences between first and second language that students carry while writing (Silva, 1987). Others believe that it does not prepare students for academic writing due to its focus on classroom context (Silva, 1987). According to Horowitz (1986), process teaching gives students the wrong impression of how they will be taught and evaluated in academic contexts (Silva, 1987:9).

3. THE TEACHING CONTEXT

The writing samples in this paper belong to two different contexts: 1) Samples 1- 3 are written by low intermediate teenage students that took EFL lessons as part of their course program. Their university programs required studying English as part of a core course. The 25-student class was enrolled in a private university and took 45 minutes of English instruction on a daily basis. Therefore, by the end of the semester, students had completed a total of 105 hours of instruction; 2) Samples 4 and 5 were written by intermediate adult EFL students preparing themselves for the TOEFL test in a language institute part of a public university. These students attended their lessons with personal and specific goals in mind: studying abroad or obtaining a higher privileged job. English as a Foreign Language

was instructed to a class of 10 students on a daily basis for a period of 120 minutes summing up a total of 100 hours of instruction.

As their instructor, I perceived that all the students had the same basic need: to express fluent and cohesive written language. Even though they had different goals and purposes in mind, their writing was part of different genres and as so it should reflect certain written and organizational characteristics. In the following sections, I intend to analyze these characteristics and describe how composers performed them.

4. ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN SAMPLES.

4.1 Problems with planning a text: Case One.

As mentioned in section 2.2.1 of this paper, planning is of major importance and has the purpose of triggering students' background knowledge (schemata) and use it to organize what they intend to write. However, writers need to revise their plan and they may fail to do so. As Fitzgerald (1989) mentions 'revision means making any change at any point in the writing process' (cited in Hayes, 2004). Such is the case of sample text 1 (appendix A), a family description.

It seems this student has not revised her organization plan. In paragraph two, she describes in what situations her parents are 'easy-going' (lines 4 and 5) and finishes the paragraph (lines 5-7) by mentioning who takes decisions in her home. However, she continues paragraph three by giving more details and an example of when parents are more flexible at home on lines 8-10. It would be advisable to give these details and examples in paragraph two. The student finishes her description on lines 12 and 13 by mentioning an example of family rules. However, the description seems incomplete. The student tries to give additional examples of family rules, but the text lacks details that develop the main idea of this paragraph.

4.1.1 Possible solutions to case one: Brainstorming and Group Work

According to Hedge, it is the teachers' responsibility to help students organize and produce their ideas (2000: 308). In the previous case mentioned, the student could have benefited from brainstorming for producing ideas and mind mapping as a note taking strategy. The

teacher could elicit information or initiate a discussion to set the context of the task thus helping students produce their ideas. Brainstorming ideas is a powerful tool that could provide students the opportunity to reflect individually on what they plan to write (Hodge, 2000). It would also be useful to combine planning activities such as brainstorming ideas with group or pair work. Once writers have a rough draft of the plan to follow, pairs could help each other to revise their plan, adding or eliminating information.

4.2. Problems with planning a text: Case Two.

Such activities mentioned could also benefit sample text 3 (appendix C'). This opinion essay, discusses the writer's opinion about Internet and its influence on young peoples' lives.

This paper lacks the writer's creativity to develop the topic and exploit it. Despite the fact that Internet and its influence on society is a very attractive topic to write about, it seems this student limited written development to answer the question rather than giving a development of ideas. Furthermore, lines 2- 4 of the introduction mention information that is not linked to the main idea of the paragraph: *... in the past people use books, encyclopedia, newspapers tv news and other things to get informed.-*

Paragraph 1 omits the statement topic and, as read on line 1, limits itself to give an opinion. It would seem the writer believes the reader is well aware of the topic being developed. A misconception of audience is influencing this student's writing style. Keeping a specific audience in mind is a crucial task. As pointed out in section 2.1, writers need to be able to predict how their written outcome will be interpreted (Brown, 2007: 398).

The paper concludes in lines 8 to 13. However, it appears the writer did not give much thought to the opinion being developed in the paper. The use of the word 'laziness' in the task question implies a negative meaning. However, this writer concludes the essay in lines 8 to 10 by giving an advantage of using Internet as a student rather than agreeing that it contributes to society's laziness as is stated in line 1 in the introductory paragraph.

4.2.1 Possible solutions to case two: Group Brainstorming.

Text 3 could benefit from planning activities in the classroom that seek trigger the student's ideas and possible working plan for the task. A group discussion or group brainstorming

could aid this writer. A group discussion or group brainstorming is characterized by spontaneity, ideas are discussed but there is never a right or wrong answer (Scow, 2002) giving students the confidence to participate and to add to their writing plan. Internet is a topic that can relate to the class's own specific context giving meaning and purpose to the task. Further practice with keeping a specific audience in mind could also benefit the paper. It is important to provide students the opportunity to feel that they are writing to and for somebody (Byrne, 1991) not only for the teacher or for teacher's benefit. Having them write to the school director or to their state government, and constantly reminding students who will read and interpret their writing will allow writing to be realistic, relevant and authentic (Byrne, 1991).

4.3. Problems with audience awareness: Case Three

Another sample text that shows difficulty in maintaining an audience present while writing, is sample text 2 (appendix B), an informal letter. An informal letter is characterized by its familiarity with the audience and its lack of formal conventions as the writer of this letter demonstrates with the phrase in line 2 *'but in these days I have been thinking about you'*. This phrase suggests that the writer has a close relationship with the reader. However in lines 5 to 8, this student mentions information that would be written to an unknown reader or someone who has not been met yet: information about himself and his college major. It seems this student had difficulty maintaining the purpose of the letter and the "who" of this purpose in mind while writing.

4.3.1 Possible Solutions to Case Three: Plan revision and Peer feedback.

Text 2 would benefit from revising the established plan and from peer work that could aid the writer in recognizing incoherent information. By encouraging peer and group work teachers can provide a real audience for students and help them build awareness of the readers (Hodge, 2000; Scow, 2002). Composers could be encouraged to write a detailed outline of what they intend to write and the ideas they plan to include. Once this plan is completed, writers could be paired with a peer and asked to share their plan focusing attention on audience and content. Therefore, giving peers the opportunity to review and analyze each other's papers.

4.4 Avoidance of the multiple-draft stage: Case Four

Creating drafts may become a dreadful job for writers. However, as mentioned in section 2.3.1, multiple drafting provides the writer the opportunity to write without feeling the pressure of getting it right the first time. But, in many cases writers seem to omit the drafting stage to avoid dedicating more time to the process, especially if written work is done for homework. Sample text 5 (appendix E), is a text that could benefit from multiple drafting activities. This problem-solving essay includes an introduction, a body and a conclusion. However, it seems the writer started writing and never stopped to organize the information. Although this paper includes content information that is relevant to the task, no paragraphing is used to organize it. For instance, in lines 6 and 7 the writer seems to end the introductory paragraph with the expression *'...every day this pollution is making more and more damage to the people and other kinds of life around the pollution center'*. Then, in the same line, the writer begins the body by describing how necessary water is to human life.

4.4.1 Possible solutions to case four: Peer Feedback/ Teacher Feedback

I consider this written sample could benefit from teacher feedback or peer feedback to encourage the writer to produce a second draft. As described in section 2.3.1 of this paper, feedback, in any of its delivery modes, is a tool that motivates students to review their work and improve it if necessary. This student could be engaged in peer feedback activities in which each peer shares their specific text and gives each other suggestions. The teacher would function as a monitor and aid when necessary. Once peers have shared opinions, a second draft that incorporates the feedback received could be required. Writers should then have the freedom of evaluating the feedback received and choosing whether to incorporate it or not into the second draft. This encourages personal analysis of drafts and creativity in written outcomes. Finally, teacher feedback could be given to encourage a final or third draft.

4.5 Problems with revision strategies: Case Five.

Revision is a crucial step in improving written work. It's not only about correcting misspelled or misused words, as pointed out in section 2.3.1. Revising involves meta-cognitive skills that allow writers analyze and improve their work.

Sample text 4 (appendix D), a descriptive essay, narrates the writer's past vacation experiences. However, the introductory paragraph seems disorganized and lacks a specific topic sentence. The first sentence 'Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz' may confuse the reader and suggest the writer is about to write a newspaper report or a city description. On the other hand, line 2 mentions unlinked information about the writer's father's working place. It may seem that it is relevant to the topic, but the paper fails to state the relationship among given information.

4.5.1 Possible solutions to case five: Teacher-Student Conferencing Sessions.

I believe text 4 will benefit from revision activities encouraged by teacher feedback such as teacher-student conferencing sessions. During conferences, this student could be provided with ideas on how to organize the information in the paper and how to link the information provided. Teacher-student conferencing could be developed as a conversation in which writing is discussed and possible suggestions are negotiated. Additionally, the writing instructor could be more explicit in the suggestions provided while reinforcing real communicative competence, as described in section 2.3.1 of this paper.

5. CONCLUSION

Writing is a skill that demands specific attention when learning and teaching. A student does not learn to write by being exposed to the text. Instead, specific instruction that trains students to reflect on their own writing is needed. Process writing provides students with opportunities to analyze their activities with the purpose of learning from them. It is not restricted to the processes experienced or the final composition, but instead it is about teaching students meta-cognitive skills that will lead them to improved texts.

On the other hand, process writing involves guiding students to be proficient and competent users of the language by encouraging meaningful communication through written texts. Teachers, therefore, should provide authentic opportunities for practice that will lead

students to develop their writing skills and encourage language interaction with the rest of the society.

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7. APPENDIXES.

7.1 APPENDIX A: SAMPLE TEXT 1

Task: Write a brief description of what family rules you must following your home if you wish to go out and have fun. You may include a brief description of your family members and specific examples of the rules you must follow.

MY FAMILY

1 My family is made up by my mom of 57 years old, my dad of 54 years old, my
2 sister of 20 years old like me because we are twins. My mom is called Ma. del
3 Refugio, my dad Miguel Ángel and my sister is called Daniela.

4 My parents sometimes are strict with my sister and me but easy-going too
5 when we want to go out with our friends or when we do a party. Most of the
6 time my mom is who decides, but apparently my dad say her opinion, finally
7 take decision together.

8 when we have a party, we can arrived to our house at 3 am, but depend the
9 situation because if we have our car, they dont want that we stay a lot of time
10 out of the house. whe we arrived late, if at the next day want to go out again,
11 they say that we can't arrived late again like de day before.

12 if my sister and me don't clean our room, my parents don't give us
13 permission to go out o to use our computer. so finally we need to clean it.

7.2 APPENDIX B: SAMPLE TEXT 2

Task: Write an informal letter to a close friend living abroad and with whom you wish to keep contact. You may include information about your friends or family.

1 Hi my dear friend!

2 Thank you very much for the letter. I feel happy for to know about you. You are
3 not going to believe me, but in these days I have been thinking about you.

4 I'm well thank you.

5 Let me to tell you some things about me; I study medicine, the career is hard

6 but I really like. The classes are very interesting and I like learning new things. I

7 have studied a lot.

8 The people are very nice and polite.

9 Changing topic, a lot of congratulations for your new work, you are an

10 excellent person and you can do what ever you want.

11 I miss my friends, almost I don't have time to go out with them, but in some

12 occasions I have chatted with them.

13 If you yeah, I remember Masoko, tell to her that I love you.

14 Take care and I wait see you soon!

15 Love Vincent: D

16 P.S.1 Still I have the same number of telephone, you can communicate with 17 me

7.3 APPENDIX C: SAMPLE TEXT 3

Task: Has Internet's influence changed young people into a generation of laziness? Write an opinion essay developing your answer to this question.

1I think that this is true, because nowadays young people make use
2of the internet to get information easier and faster, in the past
3people use books, encyclopedia, newspapers, tv news and other
4things to get informed.

5Since they invented the internet people forget about get informed
6from books and encyclopedia, people most of the time is using
7internet to do works, homeworks, office works and things like that.

8In my own opinion I think that it is better to use the internet to do
9homework because it is so complicated, boring, and I loose time if I
10get books, so that is why I'm thankful with the person who
11invented the internet, because also with internet I can get
12communicated with my friends by the man, I can watch videos, I
13can download music, and it is so comfortable the use of it.

7.4 APPENDIX D: SAMPLE TEXT 4

Task: Write a descriptive essay in which you describe your family vacations. You may include specific information about the places visited or family members that accompanied you.

"My summer vacation"

1 Contracoalco, Veracruz. This is where I spend my summer vacations growing up.
2 Where my father worked for an independent boat company from New York City,
3 based in Veracruz. And he was the boat captain! This is where I had the greatest time
4 ever.

5 Since our home is in Reynosa, he had to move to Contracoalco, so every summer for
6 five years we would go and stay there with him. At first we would stay in the most
7 fabulous hotels, like the Emporio; this hotel had three swimming pools, one was a
8 closed pool with warm water, the second one was an open pool, with a big waterfall
9 and the third one had very tall and cool slides in one end, and a trampoline in the
10 other.

11 Then my father rented a house that had an attic. This attic was amazing to me and
12 my sister, it had bars a long side of the walls so it looked like a dance studio but
13 without the big mirrors. It also had a big window that faced the beach. It was
14 beautiful! And the beach was only one block away, so that was kind of our
15 sanctuary. We would dance to the music of some old tapes.

16 We had a female monkey who we named Cleo, it was a "Macaco" It was called that,
17 because it had five fingers in each hand. His fur was black and white colored. She
18 didn't like us at all; every time we went near her she would make an awful sound. So
19 we rather played with the neighbors cat, we called him "Weki" who was cross eyed,
20 he kept bumping into walls.

21 When father was working mother would take us out to the beach and my sister and I
22 would play in the sand, making sand castles or I would bury her legs in the sand and

23 make her look like a mermaid. Mother would buy some "Pitayas" (Typical fruit that
24 grows in Coahuila) for our thirst.

25 At night, my family and I would walk alongside of the beach "El Malecon". There
26 were many people selling souvenirs, arts and crafts, different flavored ice-cream, so
27 many things. But the most amazing thing yet was the way the sky would light up
28 with all those stars.

29 I looked forward to those summers; I couldn't wait for it to be summer again, so I
30 could dance in that attic or play with the cross-eyed cat and specially go to the beach
31 and have fun. The end.

7.5 APPENDIX C: SAMPLE TEXT 5

Task: *Pollution in water is becoming a serious problem to cope with in our daily lives. What do you consider can be done? Write an essay in which you state your opinion and possible solutions to this problem.*

1 Nowadays the pollution in the water is a problem very frequent in the big cities. The
2 principal problem of these cities is that big fabrics come here to work because of the
3 development of them, and sometimes do not have care about the wastes that they
4 threw to the environment, especially to the rivers; and the government does not do
5 something to get a solution of this problem and every day this pollution is making
6 more and more damage to the people and other kinds of live around the pollution
7 center. The water is a basic element in our lives. And because our lives depend in a
8 lot of ways of the water, government should to demand to the fabrics better policies
9 about their ways of take away the waste. The problem in this point is that fabrics do
10 not respect the laws, they prefer to pay the fine because is cheaper that invest in a
11 process to recycle the water and the waste or treat the water that they are
12 contaminating. The most popular way to take away the wastes is threw these to the
13 rivers, what is the worst damage. It affects to aquatic animals, plants and the people
14 that live around these rivers, and the consequences are the disease of these animals
15 and plant, and people get sick of rarely illnesses that are more difficult to attack.
16 Unfortunately, governments do nothing to combat these violations and their
17 consequences; they prefer to help the economy of the countries. I think government
18 has to make some reforms to its laws, because is not possible to keep the incredible
19 levels of the water pollution that is present today, and we should to be conscious
20 that water is necessary everyday in our lives and the damage that we are making us.