

DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING SKILLS THROUGH HOMEWORK

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education
In Partial Fulfilment for the Master of Education in English**

**Submitted by
Sushil Kumar Bham**

**Faculty of Education
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur, Kathmandu
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2011**

**T.U. Reg. No. : 35912-94
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**Date of Approval of the Thesis
Proposal :
Date of Submission :**

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DECLARATION

I here by declare that to the best of my knowledge this thesis is original; no part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of research degree to any university.

Date:

Sushil Kumar Bham

DEDICATION

Dedicated to

My Family, Friends and Well-Wishers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A would like to express my inner most gratitude to my thesis supervisor, **Dr. Anjana Bhattari**, Reader, Department of English Education, for her guidance, encouragement and cooperation throughout my research study, without which would not have completed this study . Therefore, I feel very much lucky to have worked under her supervision.

I am exceedingly grateful to **Dr. Chandreshwar Mishra**, Reader and Head, Department of English Education and Chairperson English and other Foreign Language Subject Committee, his support and providing an opportunity to conduct this research study. Likewise, I would like to express my gratitude to **Prof. Dr. Jai Raj Awasthi, Prof. Dr. Govinda Raj Bhattra, Prof. Dr. Trith Raj Khaniya, Dr. Balmukunda Bhandari, Dr. Tapasi Bhattacharya, Dr. Anju Giri, Mr. Vishnu Sing Rai, and Dr. Laxmi Bahadur Maharjan** for their priceless suggestions to energize my study behaviour which empowered me to carry out this research study.

My decent gratitude goes to **Mrs. Madhu Naupane, Mr. Saraswati Dawadi, Mrs. Hima Rawal, Mr. Bhes Raj Pokharel, Mr. Prem Bahadur Phyak, Mr. Bal Krishna Sharma** for their positive suggestions in the research study.

I would like to extend my deep respect to **Mrs. Madhavi Khanal**, Librarian, for her assistance in issuing the required books at the time of need. I would like to thank all the students, teachers, head teacher, and other non-teaching staff of Shree Mahakali Secondary School, Gamgadhi, Mugu for their co-operation in collecting data. I am very much grateful to Friend's Computer Service, Kirtipur for helping in typing and setting. Last but not the least, I would like to extend my deep respect to my family for their love and unflagging support my study.

Mr. Sushil Kumar Bham

ABSTRACT

The present research study entitled "Development of Writing Skills Through Homework" mainly attempted to look at the development of writing skills through homework in the case of secondary level students in a public school of Mugu district. In order for achieving this purpose, I regularly assigned homework and analysed and interpreted result of homework, conducted and analyzed pre-test, post-test, and progress test. I used both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was solicited from the forty students of Grade 9 of Shree Mahakali Secondary School, Gamgadhi, Mugu by administering homework, pre-test, progressive tests and post-test. The secondary sources of data that I used were different written materials and Grade 9 English textbook. In course of analysing and interpreting the data, what I found is out of 40 students, 45 per cent of the students have secured above the average score (i.e. 8.75) and 15 was the highest score on the pre-test whereas, on the post-test, 55 per cent of the students have secured above the average score (i.e. 26.52) and 35 was the highest score obtained by the students. So, it can be claimed that homework can have striking positive effect in developing writing skills.

This research study consists of four chapters. The first chapter entails the study related to general background, review of related literature, objectives and significance of the study. The second chapter entails the methodology adopted for the research study. The third chapter deals with interpretations in terms of analysis of homework, analysis of pre-test, progress tests and post-test. The fourth chapter entails the findings and pedagogical implications related to the research study.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The topic of this research study is "Development of Writing Skills through Homework". This chapter has incorporated general background, review of the related literature, and objectives and significance of the study, analysis and interpretation, findings and recommendations, work plan, references and appendix.

1.1 General Background

The world is ever in the flight of change. Nothing is fixed forever. Physically, the world is vast and bewildering but technologically the world is becoming a global village. One can be connected with a virtual world even sitting at the one nook of the world. Whatever development is taking place in the field of communication is mainly caused by the contribution of a language which is reckoned as one of the vehicles of exchanging thoughts, opinions, innovations and so forth.

Language has been defined variously by different people since the time immemorial. Among various definitions, in Jespersen's opinion (1904, as cited in Sthapit 2003. p. 1) "language is not end in itself... it is a way of connection between souls, a means of communication". Language is not a single entity; instead it encompasses various aspects such as social, linguistic, psychological and so forth. Moreover, it consists of four language skills which are considered very much important to be mastered over for advancing academic career.

Among four skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing), writing is regarded as a difficult one both in the mother tongue and in a foreign language. Regarding the difficulty of writing, Byrne (1998, pp. 4-5) states three

problems; (a) linguistic problems, (b) psychological problems and (c) cognitive problems which can be elaborated in the following ways:

- a. Linguistic problem: oral communication is sustained through a process of interaction and except in special circumstances, such a lecture, all the participants help to keep it going. We repeat, backtrack, and expand and so on. But in writing, we have to compensate for the absence of these features: we have to keep the channel open through our own effort.
- b. Psychological problem: Speech is natural and normal medium of communication for us in most circumstances and accustoms us in both to having some one physically present, when we get use language and to getting feedback of some kind. Writing on the other hand, is essentially solitary activity and the fact that we are required to write own our own, without the possibility of interaction or the benefit of feedback.
- c. Cognitive problem: We grow up learning to speak and in normal circumstances spend much of our time doing it. Writing, on the other hand, is learnt through a process of instruction. We have to master the written form of the language and to learn certain structures which are less used or perhaps not used at all. For effective communication in writing, we need to organize our ideas in such a way that they can be understood by a reader who is not present and perhaps who is not known to us.

Writing skill is made up of a number of conventions which separate it out from speaking. Apart from difference in vocabulary and grammar, there are issues of letters, words, text formation and so forth. More generally, writing skill consists of micro and macro aspects of writing. To be a good writer, one should take care of those aspects of writing skill. There have been developed

strategies, techniques and methods to accelerate writing skills to the line of satisfaction.

1.1.1 Nature of Language

Generativists believe that language is innate and rule-governed. Further more, they define language as a 'set of finite rules or symbols out of which the humans produce infinite number of sentences'. Generativist has mainly two aspects of a language: (a) the grammatical rules should be explicit and (b) grammar should reflect creativity of language. Chomsky (1957, p. 2), says, "From now I will consider a language to be a set of sentences each infinite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements". The language learning is seen to be the mastery of components of linguistic system, which are generally defined in terms of phonological units, grammatical units, grammatical operations and lexical items. If language is the finite set of symbols, it certainly consists of finite number of components. According to Todd (1991, p. 7), the possible components of language can be as follows:

Language

Phonology: sounds

Morphology: meaningful combination of sounds

Lexis: words

Syntax: meaningful combination of the words

Semantics: meaning

To get mastery over a language, one should be well acquainted with above components as well as social factors, psychological, political factors. In this regard, Hockett (1973, pp. 137-133, as cited in Varshney 2003, pp. 14-15) advocates the following five levels of a language to which he calls 'sub-system';

- a. The grammatical system: a stock of morphemes and the arrangement in which they occur;
- b. The phonological system: a stock of phonemes, and the arrangement in which they occur;
- c. The morphophonemic system: the code which ties together the grammatical and the phonological system;
- d. The semantic system: This associates various morphemes, and arrangements in which morphemes can be put, with things and situations, or kinds of things and situations.
- e. The phonemic system: the ways in which sequences of phonemes are converted into sound waves by the articulation of a speaker, and are decoded from the speech signal by a hearer.

In this regard, Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English language (1961, p. 1270, as cited in Brown 1994, p. 4) defines: [Language is] communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings. In the same way, Brown (1994, p. 5) states the following eight possible areas of a language:

- a. Explicit and formal accounts of the system of language and several possible levels (most commonly syntactic, semantic and phonology).
- b. The symbolic nature of a language: The relationship between language and reality; the philosophy of language; the history of language.
- c. Phonetics: phonology; writing system; Kinesics; proxemics, and the paralinguistic features of language.
- d. Semantics: language and cognition; psycholinguistics
- e. communication system: speaker-hearer interaction: sentence processing.
- f. Dialectology: sociolinguistics: language and culture; bilingualism and second language acquisition.

- g. Human language and non-human communication: the psychology of language.
- h. Language Universal: first language acquisition.

Likewise, Saville - Troike (2006, p. 33) states the following components of a language:

- a. Vocabulary (Lexicon)
- b. Morphology (word structure)
- c. Phonology (sound system)
- d. Syntax (grammar)
- e. Discourse (ways to connect sentences and organize information)

To add more information about language and its nature: the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of other Language) organization, in its guidelines for the certification and preparation of teachers in the United States (1975, as cited in Brown (1994, p. 6,) emphasized the necessity for the teacher to "understand the nature of language, the fact of language varieties-social, regional and functional, the structure and development of English systems"... Surely, if a second language learner to be successful in language learning, a teacher should take care of the components of the language.

1.1.2 Importance of the English Language

The English language is regarded as the window of the world through which one can peep out the world civilization. It is not only the window of the world but also the door of the world through which one can enter and can get opportunity to advance his/her life. Among many languages in the world, the English language possesses the most important place. Having got international recognition, it is popularly used as a lingua-franca for international communication and is taught and learnt in almost all countries of the world either as a native language or as foreign language. According to Kachru (1985,

as cited in Harmer (1991, p. 1), anywhere between 350-330 millions of people speak English as a first language and anywhere between 250-350 millions of people use English as a second language. In this regard, Kachru (1983) predicts "One might hazard a linguistic guess here. If the spread of English continues at the current rate, by year 2000 its non-native speakers will outnumber its native speakers" (as cited in Harmer 2003, p. 2).

In this context, Harmer (1991), p. 2) says,

"It is not necessary the case that English will remain dominant among world languages. However, there is no doubt that it is and will remain a vital linguistic tool for many business people, academics, tourists and citizens of the world who wish to communicate easily across nationalities for many years to come".

There are a number of interlocking reasons for the popularity of English as a lingua – Franca" (p. 2)

For this Harmer (ibid) introduces the following five reasons that are responsible for sustaining popularity of English:

- a. A Colonial history: Colonists not just bring with them a set of religion beliefs, nor only pioneering spirit and desire for colonization, but also their language and culture. At the time of British colonization in India and Australia, English rapidly become the official language.
- b. Economics: Military prowess may account for the initial establishment of a language, but it is economic power that ensures its survival and growth. A major factor in the growth of English has been the spread of global commerce.

- c. Travel: Much travel and tourism is carried on around the world in English. A visit to most airports around the globe will reveal signs not only in the language of the country, but also in English just as many airline announcements are glossed in English.
- d. Information exchange: A great deal of academic discourse around the world takes place in English. It is often lingua-franca of conference, meetings, journal articles etc. Internet has become a major channel for information exchange also shows a marked predominance of English.
- e. Popular culture: In the western world English is a dominating language in popular culture. Pop music, films and other entertainment related genres in English have been found popular all over the world.

So, Nepal also follows the craze of popularity of English. If we go through the history of the English language in Nepal, the teaching-learning of English in Nepal started only with the establishment of Darbar High School in 1954 A.D. by Junga Bahadur Rana. At that time learning English was confined only to the Ranas and Royal families but in 1910 B.S. it was opened for all social classes. Unfortunately, the English language is not affordable for everyone. The gap between private schools and public schools was wide. As English and power are considered as interchangeable words, people who have economic power, they can make their English better but it is a day dream for the lower class children. Nevertheless, English has got a very positive status in the world and it can open the door of opportunities to understand democracy, human civilizations, innovations, technologies and helps to become the citizen of the world.

1.1.2.1 The English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal

English language genetically belongs to the West-Germanic group of the Proto-Germanic dialect of the Indo-European language family (Varshney, 2003). The English language has paramount importance and is regarded as a store house of world body of knowledge. Introducing the English language in the education system of Nepal, Awasthi,(2003) states:

English entered in the Nepalese education in 1954 when the Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana opened a high school in Kathmandu. However, it was not introduced in the higher education until 1918 when Tri-Chandra College, the first college in the kingdom, was established. The introduction of ELT (English Language Teaching) in Nepalese education started only in 1971 with the implementation of National Educational Plan (NESP). Until then English teachers were not trained. (p. 22)

After the introduction of National Educational Plan (NESP) in 1971, Nepalese education system was revamped. In this regard, Bhattarai states:

It was in early 1970s that Nepalese government took an initiative towards the total overhauling and restructuring of education system of the country in which the objectives of teaching English or any foreign language for that matter were clearly defined or redefined... it was introduced as a language of science and technology, foreign contact, tourism and library use. (2006, p. 2)

From the above discussion what we can extract is that the government of Nepal realized the potentialities in English language teaching for the sake of ushering education system more flexible, competent, dynamic and contextual.

Pondering over the potentialities of English language teaching and learning in Nepal, Nepal English language Teachers' association (NELTA), with the noble vision of enhancing professionalism of English teachers in Nepal, is managing different activities for the last 19 years. Apart from this, Nepal has a huge inclination towards English language teaching. English language institutions are mushrooming day by day with sophisticated technology. Though, such types of opportunities are accessible only to the dwellers of urban areas.

English language teaching and learning in remote areas is still practicing with the old methods. With the help of course books, teaching-learning process is directed sheerly for the purpose of passing exam. Lack of trained teacher, lack of instructional materials, sophisticated technology and so forth are the main impediments in those areas.

1.1.3 Language Learning

Language is the 'species-specific' and species uniform, possession of man (Varshney 2003, p. 1). He further says, "Without language man would have remained only a dumb animal" (Ibid). The presence of language is every where - in our thoughts and dreams, prayers and meditations, relations and communications and rituals. Apart from being a means of communication and store house of knowledge, it is an instrument of thinking as well as a source of delight. Language learning means acquiring (or getting knowledge of a subject or) skills by study, experience or instruction. According to Kumble and Garmezzy (1963, p. 133, as cited Brown 1994, p. 7) "Learning is a relatively permanent change in behavioral tendency and is the result of reinforced practice". Learning does not only refer showing or helping someone to learn

how to do something, giving instruction but also involves psychological and cognitive processing. Brown (1994, p. 7) breaks down the components of the definition of learning in the following ways:

- a. Learning is acquisition or "getting".
- b. Learning is retention of information or skills.
- c. Retention implies storage system, memory, cognitive organization.
- d. Learning involves active, conscious focus on and acting upon events outside or inside the organism.
- e. Learning is relatively permanent but subject to forgetting.
- f. Learning involves some forms of practice, perhaps reinforced practice.
- g. Learning is a change in behavior.

These concepts give to a number of subfields within the discipline of psychology, acquisition processes, perception, memory system, recall, conscious and sub-conscious learning styles and strategies, the theory of forgetting, reinforcement, and the role of practice.

The purpose of learning a language is to enable the students to communicate in that language through spoken or written medium of communication. In this regard, Haycraft (1978, as cited in Phyak and Sharma (2007, p. 197) says, "To be able to use the language, to convey thoughts, intentions, wishes, information etc. a person needs a mastery of various elements". To enable to master over those elements of a language, different theories of language learning have been put forward by different scholars. Among them, Skinner, (1957, as cited in Van Els 1984, p. 27) the proponent of 'Behaviourism' advocates, "learning as a process of operant conditioning through a carefully paced programs of reinforcement." Similarly, people who believe in the behaviorism put emphasis on environmental factors of learning. According to Todd:

This theory claims that language learning in children can be accounted for in very much the same way as we can account for a dog learning to stand on its hind legs to beg for a biscuit: training, stimulation, imitation, reward and repetition. (1987, pp. 108-109 as cited in Phyak and Sharma 2007)

But in 1959, Chomsky's Review on *Verbal Behavior* revolutionised the world of learning and bent down the concept of repetition, imitation or S-R theory of learning. In this regard, people who believe in an active participation of a learners' mental process, put forward theory views on language learning. Chomsky believes that a child has the capacity of hypothesis formation and testing so that he/she makes his or her own rules. Chomsky argues that human behavior is considerably more complex than animal behavior. To add corroborative support to Chomsky's view, McNeil (1966, p. 61, as cited in Ellis 1985, p. 44) advocates Language Acquisition Device (LAD, as an innate universal as says, "The child appeared to build up his competence by *Successive approximations*", passing through several steps that are not yet English ... Certainly, language behavior is more specific to humans that it could never be explained through animal behavior. Chomsky (1959, as cited in van Els. et al. 1984, p. 27) opines that a description of language behavior cannot be just a description of external stimuli and concomitant responses, but primarily has to be a description of the innate ability of human beings to learn a language.

Krashen and Terrel (1983, p. 27) discuss difference between language acquisition and language learning and claim that children have two distinct ways of developing competence in second language. They differentiate acquisition and learning in the following ways:

Acquisition	Learning
Similar to first language acquisition	Formal knowledge of language
"picking up" a language Subconscious	"Knowing about" a language Conscious
Implicit knowledge Formal teaching does not help	Explicit knowledge Formal teaching helps

Apart from these approaches of language learning, several methods have been put such as multifactors learning, confluent education/learning, total physical response (TRP), the silent way, community language learning, the natural approach, communicative approach, multiple intelligence approach and so forth.

1.1.4 Language Skills

Language teaching-learning includes getting mastery over various aspects of language e.g. speech sounds, words, lexicology, semantics and morphology, sentences, syntax, meanings, semantics and, text, discourse analysis. Besides these language aspects, it is essential that every language is equipped with some kinds of language skills which are considered very important to master a language. The four main language skills, (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) can be classified as receptive skills, (i.e., listening and reading) and productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing). Focusing on the importance of language skills, Harmer (1991, p. 16) expresses, "... we have said that our choice of language may depend upon the channel of communication". If we examine this concept, we can identify language skills that native speakers and competent language users possess. Literate people who use language have a number of different abilities. They will be able to speak on telephone, write

letters, listen to the radio or read books. In other words, they possess the four basic language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking and writing involve language production and listening and reading skills are referred as receptive skills. These skills should be carefully integrated and used to perform as more genuinely communicative task as possible.

To sum up, language learning is not simply learning of one or other skills rather it is a composite learning through which a learner can express his/her ideas, feelings, information, through either of these two channels of communication.

1.1.4.1 Writing Skill

The prime purpose of teaching a language, whether it is mother tongue or a foreign language, is to develop the four basic skills. Instructional activities that represent only one skill at a time are rarely found. In one way or other way, integrative activities can boost up in learning language skills. Among the four skills, writing skill embraces special attraction because, "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man" Bacon, (1561, as cited in Regmi 2002, p. 123).

Writing skill is a specific ability which helps writer put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and to mentally interact with message. Writing skills help the learner gain independence, comprehensibility, fluency and creativity in writing Schlig, (2000).

There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. According to Heaton (1988, p. 135), "The writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental elements". Writing skill is not simply using graphic symbols on a piece of

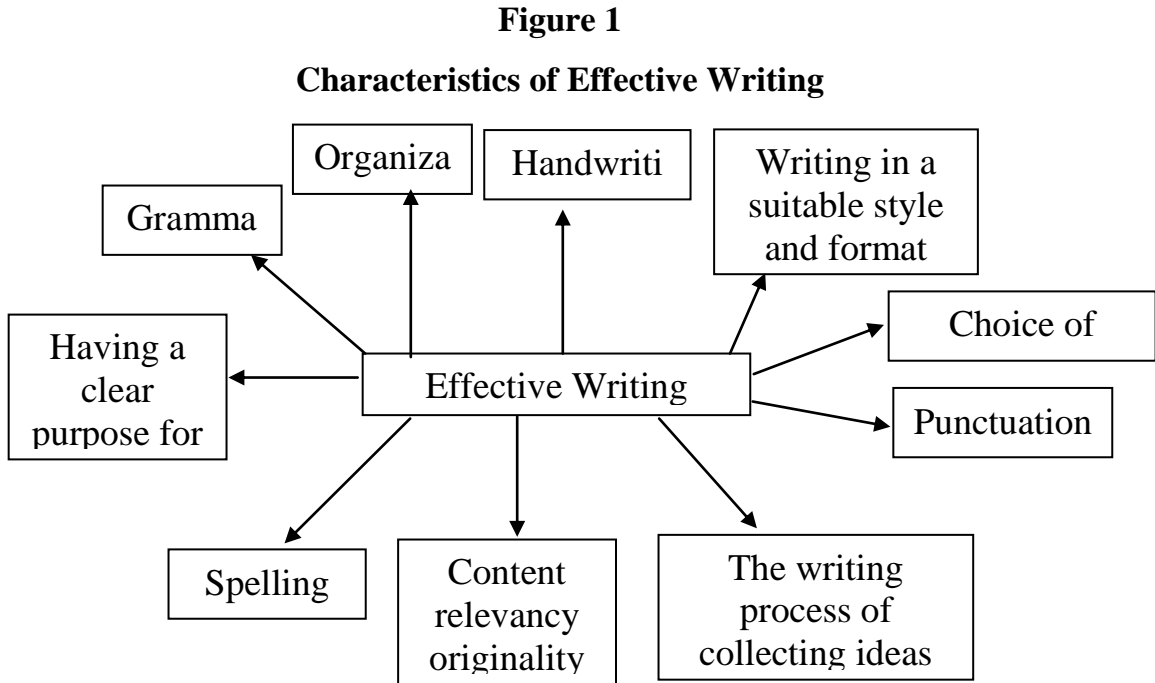
paper but it is a complex activity of arranging various elements of language into meaningful context. The difficulty has not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text. It is not only complex but intricate too. A writer needs to take care of both micro skills of writing (i.e. mechanics, grammar etc.) and macro skills of writing skills (i.e. audience, purpose, context etc.) in order to communicate properly through written medium. Writing is one of the most important skills for learning a new language. Being a productive skill, this needs proper handling of the mechanics of writing to make sensible sentences and paragraphs.

In spite of its colossal nature, writing has its own charm and satisfaction. People frequently have to communicate with each other in writing; visitors to another country often have to leave a note for the mailman, fill out a customs declaration form, give written instruction, or write a thank-you letter. Raimes (1983, p. 3) mentions the following important reasons of teaching and learning of writing.

- a. Writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that we have been teaching our students.
- b. When our students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risk.
- c. When they write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eye, hand, and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning.

As writers struggle with what to put down next or how to put it down on paper, they often discover something new to write or new way of expressing their ideas. Writing is considered very useful and important skill to develop cognitive as well as motor domains simultaneously. Following diagram shows

what writers have to deal with as they produce a piece of effective writing.
[<http://www.tutorvista.com/content/english/english-1/effective-writing.php>.]

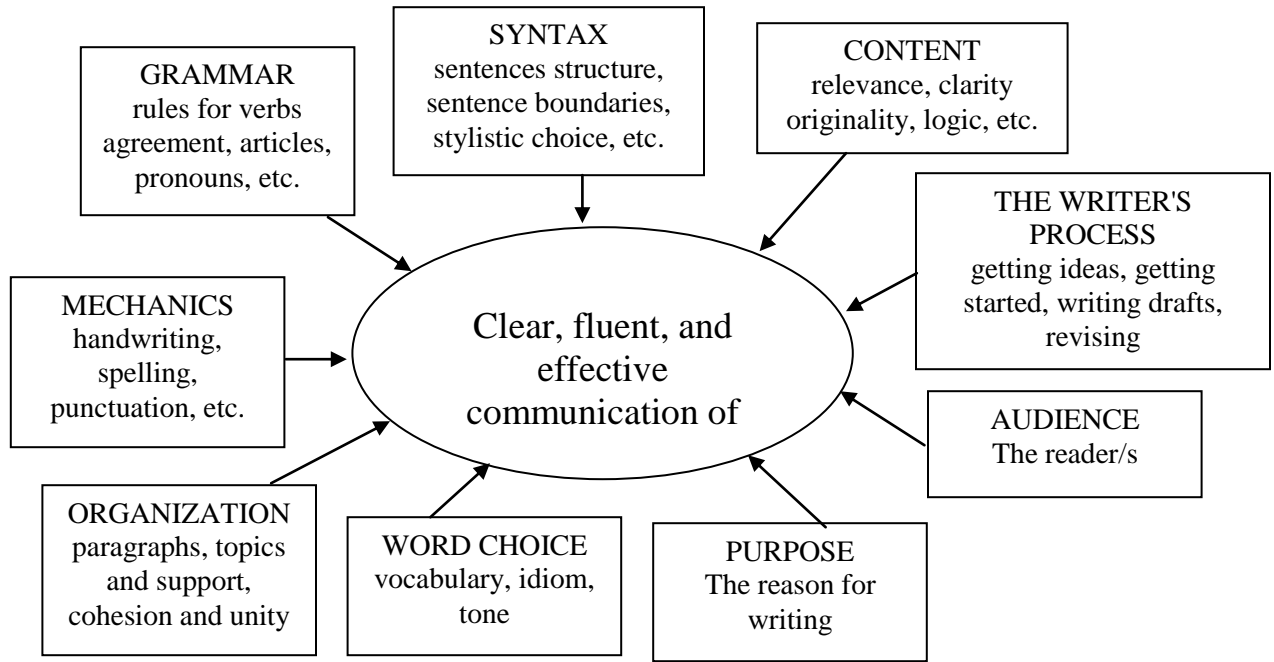


It is a fact that writing skills involve very complex systems and sub-systems. The most important factor in writing is that students need to be personally involved and handle both micro and macro skills of writing properly.

1.1.4.2 Components of Writing

Writing is not a single entity but an amalgam of different components e.g. mechanics, coherence, cohesion, orthography and para-orthographic text and so forth. In this connection, Raimes (1983, p. 6) presents the following diagram highlighting the components writers have to deal with as they produce a piece of writing.

Figure 2
Producing a Piece of Writing



1.1.4.3 Developmental Writing Stages

Learning of writing skills is not a set of easy step that can be programmed in a "quick do- it yourself kit" Brown (1994, p. 1). It is something intricate web of variables that are spun together to affect how and why one learns or fails to learn writing. According to Rivers (1968, pp. 242-252), "to be able to write in the foreign language, the students must learn systematically through five stages of development, (copying, reproduction, recombination, guided and composition of free writing). Implementation of these stages in the classroom depends upon the level of the students. Generally, copying, reproduction and recombination are akin to lower secondary level and guided and free writing are suitable to secondary level onward.

Obviously, not all students of the same level or age write in the same way; students pass through several developmental writing stages. Ghazi (2002) presents the following four stages of writing:

Stage 1

Novice writer (unskilled, unaware, teacher-dependent writer)

- a. has little, if any, individual style
- b. has little awareness of writing process
- c. has undeveloped skills and techniques
- d. seeks approval from teacher
- e. is reluctant to revise any writing
- f. believes good writing comes easily

Stage 2

Transitional writer (transitional, self-involved, self-delineating writer)

- a. needs support and coaching in order to develop
- b. learns from modeled behaviors
- c. is developing a degree of comfort with the craft
- d. is anxious to stand alone, yet is uncomfortable with peer collaboration
- e. is developing an awareness of personal needs, interests, and preoccupations.

Stage 3

Willing writer (peer-involved, willing writer)

- a. is able to collaborate well with others
- b. requires external feedback to shape progress
- c. is able to profit from criticism
- d. is developing objectivity concerning work
- e. enjoys practicing craft
- f. is developing a sensitivity to audience

Stage 4

Independent writer (independent, autonomous writer)

- a. makes highly objective self -assessments
- b. has developed a sophisticated personal style
- c. has developed writer's voice
- d. takes risks and experiments
- e. is self-motivating and self-aware as a writer
- f. is a craft person

1.1.4.4 Approaches to Teaching Writing

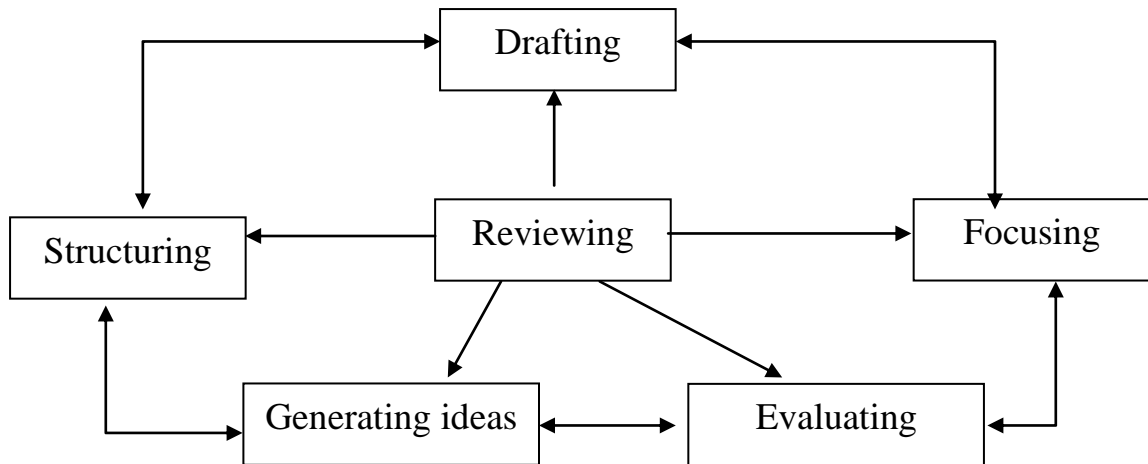
There are a number of different approaches to the practice of writing skills both in and outside the classroom. We need to choose between them, deciding whether we want students to focus more on the process of writing than its product, whether we want students to study different written genres, whether we want to encourage creative writing.

In the teaching of writing we can focus on the writing process itself or on the product of writing. When concentrating on the product we are only interested in the aim of a task and in the end product. Those who advocate a process approach to writing, however, pay attention to the various stages that any piece of writing goes through. According to White and Arndt (1995, p. 5, as cited in Harmer 1991, p. 258), process writing is an interrelated set of recursive stages which includes:

- a. drafting
- b. structuring (ordering information, experimenting with arrangement)
- c. reviewing (checking context, connections, assessing impact, editing)
- d. focusing (that is making sure you are getting the message across you want to get)
- e. generating ideas and evaluation (assessing the draft and /or subsequent draft)

Whit and Arndt (1995, p. 5) mode can be represented diagrammatically as below:

Figure 3
White and Arndt's process writing model



Likewise, Raimes(1983, pp. 5-11) presents six general approaches to teaching writing.

a. The Controlled- to Free Approach

In the 1950s and early 1960, the audio-lingual method dominated second language learning. Speech was primary and writing served to reinforce speech, in that it stressed mastery of grammatical and syntactic forms. English as a second language (ESL) teachers developed techniques to move students towards this mastery. The controlled-to free approach in writing is sequential: students are first given sentence exercise, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by, for instance, changing question to statement, present to past, or plural to singular. They might also change words to clause or combine sentences. With these controlled compositions, it is relatively easy for students to write and yet avoid, which makes error correction easy. Students are allowed to try some free composition after they have reached an

intermediate level of proficiency. As such, this approach stresses on grammar, syntax, and mechanics. It emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality.

b. The Free-Writing Approach

This approach stresses writing quantity rather than quality. Teachers who use this approach assign vast amounts of free-writing on given topics with only minimal correction. The emphasis in this approach is on context and fluency rather than on accuracy and form. Once ideas are down on the page, grammatical accuracy and organization follow. Thus, teachers may begin their classes by asking students to write freely on any topic without worrying about grammar and spelling for five or ten minutes. The teacher does not correct their pieces of free writing. They simply read them and may comment on the ideas the writer expressed. Alternatively, some students may volunteer to read their own writing aloud to the class. Concern for "audience" and "content" are seen as important features in this approach.

c. The Paragraph-Pattern Approach

Instead of accuracy of grammar or fluency of content, the paragraph-pattern approach stresses on organization. Students copy paragraph and imitate model passages. They put scrambled sentences into paragraph order. They identify general and specific statements and choose to invent an appropriate topic sentence or insert or delete sentences. This approach is based on the principle that in different cultures people construct and organize communication with each other in different ways.

d. The Grammar-Syntax Organization Approach

This approach stresses on simultaneous work on more than one composition features. Teachers who follow this approach maintain that writing cannot be

seen as composed of separate skills which are learned sequentially. Therefore, students should be trained to pay attention to organization while they also work on the necessary grammar and syntax. This approach links the purpose of writing to the forms that are needed to convey message.

e. The Communicative Approach

This approach stresses the purpose of writing and the audience for it. Student writer are encouraged to behave like writers in real life and ask themselves the crucial questions about purpose and audience:

Why am I writing this?

Who will read it?

Traditionally, the teacher alone has been the audience for student writing. But some feel that writers do their best when writing is truly communicative act, with a writer writing for a real reader. As such, the readership may be extended to class mate and pen pals.

f. The Process Approach

Recently, the teaching of writing has moved away from concentration on written product to an emphasis on the process of writing. Thus, writers ask themselves:

How do I write this?

How do I get started?

In this approach, students are trained to generate ideas for writing, think of the purpose and audience, and write multiple drafts in order to present written product that communicate their own ideas. Teachers who use this approach give student time to try out ideas and feed back on the content of what they write in their drafts. As such, writing becomes a process of discovery for the students as they discover new ideas and new language forms to express them.

Finally, learning to write is seen as a developmental process that needs students to take care of different steps or process and helps to write as professional authors do, choosing their own topics and genres, and writing from their own experiences or observations. The writing process approach requires that teachers give students a greater responsibility for, and ownership of, their own learning. Students make decisions about genre and choice of topics and collaborate as they write. During the writing process, students engage in pre-writing, planning drafting, and post writing activities.

1.1.4.5 Activities for Teaching Writing

Choosing classroom techniques or activities is a day-to-day business of every writing teacher. The teacher can assign various activities depending on the level of the students and the purpose of the writing. Generally, following activities can be given to the students:

- a. Controlled writing**
 - i. Combining
 - ii. Reproduction
 - iii. Completion

- b. Guided Writing**
 - i. Paraphrasing
 - ii. Parallel writing
 - iii. Developing skeleton into a fuller text

- c. Free Writing**
 - a. Jigsaw sentences
 - b. Copying with correction
 - c. Dictation
 - d. Picture description, comparison, contrast
 - e. Producing a summary

- f. Note writing
- g. Replying to letters
- h. Replying to advertisement
- i. Newspaper clippings
- j. Half dialogue completion
- k. Diaries
- l. Story completion

In this connection, Ur(1991) advocates the following writing tasks:

a. Book report	b. Book review
c. Instruction sheet	d. Narrative
e. Personal story	f. Describe a view
g. Describe someone	h. Describe people
i. Answer a letter	j. Job application
k. Propose change	l. News report
m. Ideal school	n. Describe process
o. Film music	

Whether it is a class work or homework, tasks that are provided to the students should be clearly designed before hand, so that tasks that are set to assign could create a kind of interaction between students and tasks and students could communicatively express their views.

1.1.5 Testing Writing

Since the 1970s studies present writing as a "recursive", non-linear cognitive process in which the writer moves back and forth between pre-writing, revising, and editing until he/she is satisfied with his/her creation. Writer is involved in a complex process that includes exploration of a problem, evaluation of facts and evidence, generation and testing of hypothesis in

relation to new ideas and evidence. In order to overcome these problems, students need to be aware that good writing is not just grammatically accurate but also other factors, such as organization, coherence and use of cohesive devices, are essential elements.

According to the Department of Education and Science (DES), (as cited in Khaniya 2005, p. 150), the following difficulties in assessing writing:

- a. how to decide what features of writing should be tested?
- b. by what criteria is one to measure them?
- c. how are validity and reliability ensured?

To help with these problems, the report suggests the reconciliation of the marking system and the difficulties in administering the test.

Heaton (1975, p.135) advocates the following five sub skills should be considered while testing writing skills:

- a. Language use: The ability to write correct and appropriate sentences;
- b. Mechanical skills: The ability to use those conventions peculiar to the written language-e. g. punctuation, spelling correctly;
- c. Treatment of content: The ability to think creatively and develop thoughts, excluding all irrelevant information;
- d. Stylistic skills: The ability to manipulate sentences and paragraphs, and use language effectively;
- e. Judgment skills: The ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information.

Testing of writing largely depends upon the purpose and context of testing. In this connection, Bachman and Palmer (1996), argues " argue primary purpose of testing writing is to make inference about the language activities of the learners and the secondary purpose is to make decision on the basis of those

inferences" (as cited in Khaniya 2005, p. 152). Hughes (1995, p. 75) assumes, "we will make the assumption that the best way to test people's writing ability is to get them to write". Likewise, Khaniya (2005, p. 152) says " while testing writing, the tests task should be such that they yield information about the testees based on which we can make inference about their writing ability." In this regard, Hughes (1995, p. 75) mentions three types of writing problems:

- a. We have to set writing tasks that are properly representative of the population of tasks that we should expect the students to be able to perform.
- b. The tasks should elicit samples of writing which truly represent the students' ability.
- c. It is essential that the sample of writing can and will be scored reliably.

There are certain features of tasks that make the writers write better. For example, a task with clearly defined problem motivates writing; a task that requires the testee to say something and a purpose to say that lessens pressure on him of context; a clear understanding of who the audience is facilitates to process language in a meaningful situation. Therefore, the tasks that are realistic, natural, meaningful and purposeful are useful in testing writing. Hughes (1995, pp. 81-85) believes that the following points should be kept in mind while setting testing tasks:

- a. Set as many tasks as possible
- b. Test only writing ability, and nothing else.
- c. Restrict candidates.

Language testing at any level is a highly complex undertaking that must be based on theory as well as practice. According to Combe, (2007). "... The guiding principles that govern good test design, development and analysis are validity, reliability practicability, wash back, authenticity, transparency and security".

1.1.6 Marking Writing

Traditionally, marking system can be discussed under two headings; e.g. atomistic and holistic marking approaches. Atomistic marking method, sometimes called 'indirect' or 'frequency count', as Llyoed-Jones (1977, p. 33, as cited in Khaniya 2005, p. 155) says, "rely on the assessment of particular features associated with skills in discoursing, whereas, holistic method consider sample of discourse." In this connection, Heaton (1975, p. 144) believes that markers may award their marks on (a) what a student has written; (b) what they believe the student meant by what he or she wrote; (c) handwriting and general appearance of what the student has written; and (d) previous knowledge of the student.

Marking method on writing depends upon the purpose of writing. If the students are needed to enhance their grammatical competence, the marking system will differ from the communicative approach of marking. There may occur marking discrimination, one may mark differently from other markers on the same written piece of students. This particular type of unreliability may harm to the whole education system and may trace harmful backwash effect to students. To address this problem, test-re-test reliability, marker-remark reliability have been embraced. In this regard, Heaton (1975, p. 145) says, "because of inherent unreliability in composition marking, it is essential to compile a banding system or at least, a brief description of the various grades of achievement expected to be attained by the class." He has used the following rating scale which is the result of considerable and careful research conducted in scoring of composition in the United States:

Content
<p>30-27 Excellent to very good: knowledgeable substantive etc.</p> <p>26-27 Good to average: some knowledge of subject, adequate range etc.</p> <p>21-17 Fair to poor; limited knowledge of subject- little substance - etc.</p> <p>16-13 very poor: does not show knowledge of subject - non- substantive etc.</p>
Organization
<p>20-18 Excellent to very good: fluent expression - idea clearly stated etc.</p> <p>17-14 Good to average: some what choppy- loosely organized but main idea stand out etc.</p> <p>13-10 Fair to poor: non-fluent-ideas confused or disconnected etc.</p> <p>9-7 very poor: does not communicate - no organization etc.</p>
Vocabulary
<p>20-18 Excellent to very good: sophisticated range - effective words/idioms choice and usage but meaning not obscured.</p> <p>13-10 Fair to poor: limited range - frequent errors of word/ idiom form, choice, usage etc.</p> <p>9-7 very poor: essentially translation, little knowledge of English vocabulary etc.</p>
Language Use
<p>25-22 Excellent to very good: effective complex construction etc.</p> <p>21-19 Good to average: effective but simple construction etc.</p> <p>17-11 Fair to poor: major problems in simple/ complex construction etc.</p> <p>10-5 very poor: virtually no mastery of sentence constructions rule etc.</p>
Mechanics
<p>5 Excellent to very good: demonstrate mastery of conventions etc.</p> <p>4 Good to average: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation etc.</p> <p>3 Fair to poor: Frequent errors of speeding, punctuation, capitalization etc.</p> <p>2 very poor: no mastery of conventions, dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing etc.</p>

1.1.7 Homework

Homework is an out-of-class tasks assigned to students as an extension or elaboration of work Vassallo, (2008). In this regard, Harmer (1991, p. 338) says, "Learner autonomy gets a powerful boost the first time that homework is set for students to do out of class. They will now have to study without the help of a teacher." The advocates of homework claim that it encourages students' initiative develop independent learning skills and allow time for practice and application of what has been learnt in school. Furthermore, it helps learners take more control over their lives-individually and collectively. Homework in learning is about students taking control over their learning outside the classroom and it develops a kind of capacity to take charge of, or take responsibility for, or control over our own learning.

There are a number of terms related to homework for example, self-study, out-of-class learning, independent learning, and self-directed learning and so forth. Krashen and Terrell (1983, pp. 154-155) classify homework into three types:

- i. Activities that provide more comprehensible input, to supplement class offerings. (Extension)
- ii. Activities that provide the students with routines and phrases that help conversational management (dialogue) and
- iii. Activities that build a monitor, i.e., to learn rules.

Similarly, homework can be classified into following types as well.

- a. Practice: designed to drill or reinforce skills and information covered in class.
- b. Extension: involves the transfer of previously learned skills to new situation.
- c. Preparatory: given to prepare students to profit from sub-sequent lesson.

- d. Integration: requires the students to apply separately learned knowledge/skills to produce a single product.
- e. Creative: designed to require students to express their own views in their own style and to integrate many skills simultaneously.

Assignments reinforce newly acquired skills. Homework should be assigned on the basis of the level, age, needs and interest of students. If the above mentioned factors are not considered, simply assigning homework will jeopardize the whole learning environment.

1.1.7.1 Reasons for Setting Homework

Homework is expected by students, teachers and institutions. It reinforces and helps learners to retain already learned skills and to experience with wider range of new language. According to Horowitz, (2005) presents that there is a powerful positive link between homework and academic achievement as follows:

- a. Homework is an effective tool for teaching students to work independently.
- b. Well-designed homework encourages good study habit (whether student initiated or modeled by teachers and parents).
- c. Homework can effectively prepare students to identify and use resources such as the library, internet, research texts and other informational sources.
- d. Homework can strengthen school-home communication.
- e. Doing homework is a highly cost effective way to have students revisit, remember and understand material taught in school and prepare for the next day's lesson.
- f. Doing homework can impress upon students that learning can (and should) take place outside the classroom.

- g. Engaging in homework can help student learn and practice organization and time management skills and serve to create important early linkage between adults in this home and school personnel.

Apart from these above mentioned merits of homework, it fulfills directives from school administrators, informs parents about what is going on in school, improves retention, fosters independence and responsibility, encourages problem solving skills, and so on.

1.1.7.2 Attitudes towards Homework

Despite of all above mentioned plus points of assigning homework, some educators, parents and students worry that students will get bored if they are required to spend too much time on academic material. Homework can deny access to leisure time and community activities that also teach important life skills. Parent involvement in homework can turn into parent interference. Furthermore, homework can actually lead to the acquisition of undesirable character trait if it promotes cheating, either through the copying of assignment or help with homework that goes beyond tutoring. Homework could accentuate existing social inequities. Children from disadvantaged family may have more difficulty completing assignment than their middle class counterparts.

In this connection, Horowitz,(2005) states some pitfalls of homework:

- a. Homework has shown to provide different benefits at different stages in school and a mismatch in homework assigned and student's readiness can result in frustration and a students' reluctance to keep trying.
- b. Most homework should not be graded, nor should it be viewed as a test; doing so discourages student reflect upon their work and evaluate their understanding of material taught in class.
- c. It is unfair to students to use materials as a vehicle to teach new skills.

- d. Despite the temptation, homework should not be assigned as a punishment.
- e. Assigning too much homework may result in disinterest and fatigue: students overburdened with homework assignment will also begin to view their assignment as punitive and will do what they can do either avoid doing it, or yes, even cheat, to get it done.

1.1.7.3 Appropriate Amount of Homework

There are already many demands on young children so we should not expect them to spend hours on a homework task. Not only would they be discouraged, they would be very unlikely to complete the task effectively. Assigning homework also implies marking homework or at least going through it in class. So, teachers need enough time to check the homework that has been set, which is very difficult to check homework of all the students. In this regard, Cooper says,

Experts agree that the amount of and type of homework should depend on the developmental level of the student. The National Parents Teacher Association (PTA) and the National Education Association (NEA) suggest that homework for children in grade K-2 is most effective when it does not exceed ten to twenty minutes each day, in grade three through six, children can benefit from thirty to sixty minutes daily and junior high school and high school students can benefit from more time on homework and the amount might vary from night to night (2000, p. 4)

1.1.7.4 Roles of Teachers, Parents, Students on Homework

Homework has been a part of students' lives since the beginning of formal education in the United States. However, the practice has been alternatively accepted and rejected by educators and parents. When the twentieth century began, the mind was viewed as a muscle that could be strengthened through mental exercise. Since this exercise could be done at home, homework was viewed favorably. During the 1940s, the emphasis in education shifted from drill to problem solving. The late 1960s witnessed yet another reversal.

Educators and parents became concerned that homework was crowding out social experience, out door recreation and creative activities. To Cooper (2000, p. 1) homework work as its real spirit, the concerned bodies, such as parents, teachers, students, Parents Teachers Association (PTA), School Management Committee (SMC) and child club should imbibe their own responsibilities.

Different views on homework, homework policy, role of different people are expressed by many scholars, in this connection, Vassallo,(2008) views on homework/ Class work policy in the following ways:

Rationale

Research has shown that at secondary school level, there is a direct link between time spent on well planned and relevant homework/class work and achievement.

a. Homework helps

- i. Students to become independent learners,
- ii. Students to become more self discipline.
- iii. To consolidate the learning this has happened in classrooms.
- iv. To improve the links between home and school encouraging parents to become involved in the child's education.
- v. As it supports the attitude that learning is not confined to the classroom.

Policy Aims

- I. To clarify what is expected of students, parents and teachers in the homework process.
- ii. To inform parents of the time and frequency and where appropriate, the subject of homework, and how they can support their child.
- iii. To enable students to access information regarding completion, marking and follow-up of homework.
- iv. To ensure that effective homework is assigned varied and interesting, appropriate to needs of students, well explained and related to the ongoing work done in class.
- v. To help teachers to measure the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- vi. To reach specific aim-dependant on form, academic level of students, etc.

Teachers' Role

- I. Homework must be a relevant task with the chief aim of consolidating learning.
- ii. Homework should be as far as possible differentiated-suitable for all students concerned and later for those with learning difficulties as well as those who show a marked aptitude for the subject.
- iii. Homework given need not be in written form.
- iv. Students should expect their homework to be marked or commented upon where appropriate within a reasonable time frame.
- v. Parents to be given guidelines on how best they can support their child's homework tasks.
- vi. Parents to be informed when students fail to do homework. Teachers should use their discretion to sanction student failing to do their homework (ex. break in to do missing homework).

- vii. Homework should be a continuation of class work (especially for academically challenging students and those students who lack home support- PEER TUTORING TO BE ENCOURAGED).
- viii. Teachers should write HW, including the due date, on white board well before end of lesson.
- ix. Each subject teacher should ensure that students record the homework tasks in their diary and perfect records homework in class Master diary. Form teachers should conduct a regular check to see that students are recording homework each day.
- x. Teachers are encouraged to set homework tasks that encourage for research.
- xi. Teachers should be consistent when giving out homework-both in amount and the quality of homework assigned.

Students' Role

- I. Students to record homework task in their personal homework diary. They should listen carefully and follow instructions. They should know when it is due.
- ii. Discuss with parents the homework given by the teachers (to inform parents that teachers are giving homework).
- iii. Students should spend time doing their homework and present homework in time.
- iv. Students should show parents/care takers 'notes to be assigned' sent by subject teachers and return notes to subject teachers.
- v. At the beginning of the year each student should write two of his classmates telephone numbers in his diary so that he can contact them incase of absence or difficulty.

Parents' Role

- I. Parents/careers to check and sign their child's homework diary and support school to enforce its homework policy.
- ii. Make available resource material, e.g. books, photo copies.
- iii. Where parents/care takers are concerned about homework issues they should contact the subject teachers by writing a short note or fixing an appointment.
- iv. Create a supportive environment.
- v. Check that all homework is done and write comments as necessary.
- vi. Do not let the child go to school without homework.

Monitoring:

- I. Subject meetings should be extensively used to discuss difficulties and monitor progress of homework policy by each department.
- ii. Parents are duty bound to monitor academic progress of their sons and to sign homework sent and homework diary.
- iii. Head of department have an important role to assure quality of work given.
- iv. SMT (school management team) members have the overall responsibility to ensure that the homework policy is adhered to by all stakeholders.

1.1.7.5 Homework Checking

In connection to homework checking, Ur (1991, p. 242) says, "in the context of teaching in general, feedback is information that is given to the learner about his/her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving this performance". With very young learners drawing a happy face next to their work when they have obviously put a lot of effort into it is always well received and encourages them to take pride in their work. It is a considered

imperative to use some standard expressions such as 'excellent work', 'well done', 'great drawing', 'very good work', and use their name as much as possible and be positive whenever we can. Teachers should not be too hard on children who do not do their homework. It may not be their fault and it is not as if they are studying for their finals. It would be wise that if teachers speak to an individual about their reluctance in doing homework that is set and ask what approach he/she takes.

We can go through different opinions on how written errors should be considered while checking homework. In this regard, Ur (1991, p. 244) mentions the following five opinions:

a. Audio-lingualism

Learners' mistakes are, in principle, avoided by the limiting of progress to very small, controlled steps. Hence, there should be little need for correction. The latter is, in any case, not useful for learning; people learn by getting things right in the first and having their performance reinforced.

b. Cognitive code-learning

Mistakes are regrettable, but an avoidable part of learning: They should be corrected when ever they occur to prevent them occurring again.

c. Interlanguage

Mistakes are not regrettable, but an integral part of language learning; correcting them is a way of bringing the learner's interlanguage closer to the target language.

d. Communicative approach

Not all mistakes needed to be corrected: The main aim of language learning is to receive and convey meaningful message, and correction should be focused on mistakes that interfere with this aim, not on in accuracies of usage.

e. Monitor theory

Correction does not contribute to real acquisition of the language, but only to the learner's conscious monitoring of speech or writing. Hence, the main activity of the teacher should be to provide comprehensible input from which the learner can acquire language, not to correct (Krashen, 1982).

Correction of error, then, in fact, depends on the basis of philosophy of correction one is imbibing and the nature of error. In this connection, Harmer argues:

Feedback encompasses not only correcting students, but also offering them an assessment of how well they have done, whether during a drill or after a longer language production exercise. We assess and correct students will depend not only upon the kind of mistakes being made, but also on the type of activity the students are taking part in (1991, p. 99).

It is sometimes tempting to concentrate all our feedback on the language which students use such as incorrect verb tenses, punctuation, and spelling and to ignore the content of what they are saying or writing. But it is also believed that if the students are engaged in creative, communicative, fluent activities, the correction of spellings, punctuations do not matter a lot, but mistakes in accuracy routine type of exercise, should be corrected in an affirmative fashion. While talking about correction of written work, depends on the kind of writing tasks the students have to undertake, and the effect we wish to create. In the same way, Harmer argues:

When students do work book exercises based on controlled testing activities, we will mark their efforts right or wrong, possibly penciling in the correct answer for them to study. However, when we give feedback on more creative or communicative writing (such as letters, reports, stories or poems) we will approach the task with circumspection and clearly demonstrate our interest in the content of the students' work. (1991, p. 109)

Likewise, Raimes views,

Responding to students' writing is very much a part of the process of teaching writing ..., it is as important as devising materials and preparing lessons. In this case what the teacher says about the piece of writing can have no influence on the content, form, or accuracy of the piece..., the teacher can only judge and evaluate not influence the piece is writing. (Raimes, 1983, p. 139)

Whether errors in written work should be corrected or not is a hot issue. Some believe that correction is some how based on whether we want to encourage students improve in guided and controlled writing or in free creative writing favoring on communicative approach of correction. Long (1988, p. 36, Light Bown and Spada 1990, as cited in Harmer 1991, p. 219) suggest:

"Form focused instruction can indeed increase learner's level of attainment, but that the "Neanderthal" (Long 1988, p. 136) practices (grammatical explanations, discussions of rules, role practice) of by gone year is clearly not justified"

In contrast to this view, Heaton argues:

Evaluating written work according to the degree of intelligibility is not always a reliable method of assessment. Frequently, the students' performance and success in accomplishing the task may be masked by errors and a tired marker may fail to make the necessary effort to respond to the writing as a means or communication. (1975, p. 149).

Some scholars argue that errors that hinder communication (i.e. global error) should be revisited whereas those errors that are not considered as an impediment of communication process (i.e. local error) should not be taken as blunder. Byrne (1979, p. 132) argues, "That.... the importance of getting the students themselves to identify and correct mistakes needs perhaps to be stressed". He further introduces following correction procedures:

- a. Indicate mistakes so that students can correct them (e.g. 'Sp' for spelling mistakes, 'p' for punctuation, 'Vb' for verb form, 'c' for concord and so on).
- b. Correct the mistake.
- c. Explain a mistake.
- d. Indicate that the students should consult you about a mistake.
- e. Use the mistakes as the basis for remedial teaching.

Finally, whatever the approaches to error correction of homework are, which procedure should be followed totally depends on type of tasks we have set and in which context. Error correction should be done in a way so that the student's language ego, self-image and personhood should not be devalued and dehumanized. And error should be taken as a natural process of learning writing. In this regard, Corder (1967, p. 167, as cited in Brown 1994, p. 105) says, "A learner's errors are significant in that they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovering of the language".

1.1.8 Action Research

The concept of action research is historically attributed to the movement in educational sciences and a variety of other social reform initiatives in as early as the late nineteenth century. Dewey's presupposition, for educational research is captured in the following statement:

The answer is that 1) education practice provides the data, the subject matter, which form the problems of enquiry... These educational practices are also 2) the final test of value and test the worth of scientific result. They may be scientific in some other field, but not in education until they serve educational purposes can be found out only in a practice. (Dewey 1929, cited in Hodgkinson 1957, p. 138)

In the 1940s, an important contribution to Dewey's ideas on action research came from Kurt Lewin, who was not an educator, but a social psychologist. Lewin proposed a mode of inquiry that comprised action cycle including analysis, fact finding, conceptualization, planning, implementation and

evaluation. In this regard, he says, "we should consider action research and training as a triangle that should be kept together for the sake of any of its corners" (Lewin, 1946, p. 42). Similarly, Harmer states:

Action research is the name given to a series of procedures teachers can engage in, either because they wish to improve aspects of their teaching or because they wish to evaluate the success and/or an appropriacy of certain activities and procedures. (1991, p. 344-345).

Likewise, Kemmis and McTaggart(1988) argue:

The three defining characteristic of action research are that it is carried out by practitioners (for our purpose, classroom teacher) rather than outside researcher; secondly, that it is collaborate; and thirdly, that it is aimed at changing things. (as cited in Nunan 1992, p. 17).

A distinctive feature of action research is that those affected by planned changes have the primary responsibility for deciding on course of critically informed action which seem likely to head to improvement, and for evaluating the result or strategies tried out in practice. Action research is group activity. For Kemmis and Mc Taggart, the essential impetus for carrying out action research is to change the system. In the same way, Cohen and Manion (1985, as cited in Nunan 1992, p. 18) offer a similar set of characteristics, they say, "Action research is first and foremost situational, being concerned with the identification and solution of problems in a specific context". They also identify collaboration as an important feature of this type of research.

The main aim of action research is to improve the current state of affair within the educational context in which the research being carried out. In this research, the participants critically examine their own activities, find facts in relation to successfulness and unsuccessfulness, reflect them, take action again, evaluate the action, and deduce the conclusion. In this regard, Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, as cited in Nunan (1993, p.18) speak of the "action research spiral" in which the researcher reflects on or returns to, and extends the initial inquiry. In case of language teaching-learning, the teacher can conduct an action research to experience the effectiveness of a technique, methodology, teaching aid, and so on by introducing them in the existing situation. There has been increasing interest to the use of "action research" both as a way of increasing our knowledge of classroom and as a tool in teacher education. Carr and Kemmis offer the following definition:

A form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which these practices are carried out. (Carr & Kemmis 1985, p. 220).

Today, the prevailing idea is that action research should be employed for various purposes; for school-based curriculum development, as a professional development strategy, in pre-service and graduate course in education, and in planning system and policy development. Harmer, on the aims of action research, views:

There are many reasons for conducting our own action research. We may want to know more about our learners and what they find motivating and challenging. We might want to learn more

ourselves as teachers-how effective we are, how we look to our students, how we would look to ourselves if we were observing our own teaching. We might want to gauge the interest generated by certain topics, or judge the effectiveness of certain activity types. We might want to see if an activity would work better done in groups rather than pairs, or investigate whether reading is more effective with or without pre-teaching vocabulary. (1991, pp. 345-346).

To sum up, the basic features of action research are as follows:

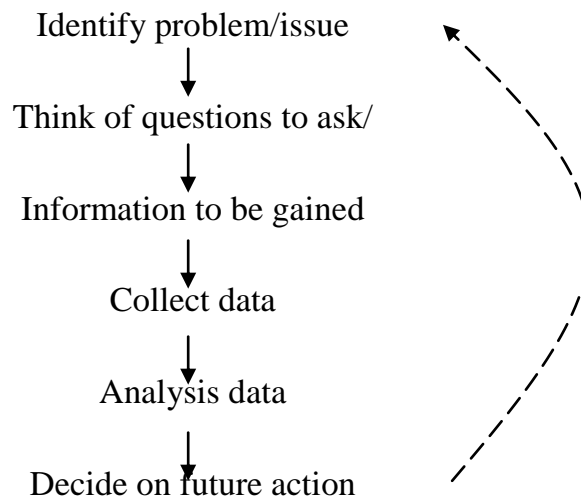
- a. Action research is led by inductive approach.
- b. It is a research in action.
- c. It focuses on small group professional practices but not on producing general statements, in which reflection cycle is facilitated.
- d. It embodies informational reflection through structured reflection.
- e. It is critical and collaborative.
- f. Reflective practitioners are accountable in making the result of their enquiry.
- g. Self-evaluation in their practice.
- h. Participatory problem solving and continuing.

1.1.8.1 Process of Action Research

Process of action research refers to the different steps used in this research and has been recommended in a number of ways. One of them includes reflection, exploring, finding problems, plan the intervention, research, analysis, act and review. Apart from these steps, Bhattarai (2005, p. 16), presents a table of three different scholars' views on process of action research:

Nunan (1992)	Wallace (1998)	Denscombe (1999)
1. Initiation	consider problems/issues	1. Professional practice
2. Preliminary investigation	Ask questions	2. Critical reflection identifying problem or evaluating change
3. Hypothesis		Research (systematic and rigorous enquiry)
4. Intervention		Strategic planning (translation of findings into action)
5. Evaluation	Action research	Action (instigate change)
6. Dissemination	Data collection and analysis	
7. Follow-up		
	Application to professional practice	

Likewise, Harmer (2001, p. 245) shows that the action research can be carried out by following steps:



Similarly, Cohen and Manion (1985, pp. 220-1) outline eight stages in the action research process (as cited in Nunan 1989, p. 13).

- a. Identify the problem.

- b. Develop a draft proposal based on discussion and negotiation between interested parties, i.e., teachers, advisors, researchers and sponsors.
- c. Review what has already been written about the issue in question.
- d. Restate the problem or formulate hypothesis; discuss the assumptions underlying the project.
- e. Select research procedures, resources, materials, methods, etc.
- f. Choose evaluation procedures.
- g. Collect the data, analyze it can provide feedback.
- h. Interpret data, draw out inferences and evaluate the project.

Likewise, Kemmis and McTaggart's procedure for carrying out action research consists of four developmental phases (as cited in Nunan (1989, p. 12).

- Phase I Develop a plan of action to improve what is already happening.
- Phase II Act to implement the plan.
- Phase III Observe the effect of action in the context in which it occurs.
- Phase IV Reflect on the effects.

1.1.8.2 Tools Used in Action Research

In order to conduct the action research, the researcher can use any of the following tools:

a. Time-on-Task

After starting an action, the researcher can provide the students with test items related to the action which has already been presented, and scores on the test and the scores on the pre-test is then analyzed.

b. Check List

It is prepared by the teacher on the basis of traits that have been projected to record the observed events.

c. Individual File

The individual file for each student's progress can be kept on which reflection and analysis occur.

Along with the above mentioned tools, the researcher can make use of 'portfolio', questionnaire, journal, and video tape, still photograph, case study and so forth.

1.2 Review of the Related Literature

Every new task needs the knowledge of previous background which considerably assists and ushers to approach new findings. Some studies related to the development of writing in the following way:

Kochhar (1985) advocates that assignment of homework is one of the forms adult-centered or teacher-centered methodology. This methodology has great educational benefits. It is argued, if learning is worthwhile, it should not be confined nearly to the hours students spend in the classroom. This device gives opportunity to pupils to plan and perform their work independent of the guidance and help of the teacher. It develops the moral and intellectual qualities of self-reliance, self-direction and initiative in grappling unaided with the problem arising from the work. Kochhar (ibid) further says, "Thus, homework properly understood, skillfully planned, intelligently assigned and, sympathetically checked is indispensable and invaluable."

Cooper (1994) presents immediate and long-term effects of homework,
Immediate: Students retain information and understand material better,
Critical Thinking and concept formation are increased. Information processing is improved, and the curriculum enhanced.

Long-term academic: Learning encouraged during leisure time. Attitude towards school is improved, study habits and skills are better.

Long-term non-academic: Students have greater self-direction and self-discipline. Time management is easier for students. Students are more inquisitive and participate in more independent problem solving (Cooper, 2000) further says, in his much-cited review of homework studies, there has been 20 studies since 1962 that compared the achievement of students who receive homework with students given non homework, fourteen are pro-homework. Of fifty studies correlating the time on homework with student achievement, Cooper, (ibid) further states that forty-three of the studies showed students who did homework had better achievement. A typical homework-completing high school student, will outperform student who do not do homework by 69% on standardized tests. Cooper (ibid) further states that the clearest point is the striking influence of age. There seems from these studies, to be clear and significant benefit to doing homework for high school students. Students 11 to 13 years of age also showed a clear benefit, but it was much smaller. Students below this age showed no benefit.

Corno (1996) says "Homework is easily misused or abused by teachers and schools". Corno (ibid) further says "I from my third grader that some teachers use homework as a form of punishment of student misbehaviour in school (staying after school to write "I will not misbehave" 100 times on the chalk board is replaced by these days by a length can overly demanding homework assignment instead).'

Checkely (1997) advocates that we can not keep assigning homework like the homework we had in the 60s and 70s," asserts Patricia Casperly, a fourth grade teacher at Franklin Elementary School in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Traditional homework assignments were once the norm at Franklin, "but students weren't getting it done.. They kept forgetting their home work. So, Casparly and her colleagues tried a different approach... A little creative goes a long way in designing homework that is relevant to students' lives, Checkely (Ibid) further

advocates"... requires teachers to create homework assignments that are "interactive" and to include activities children can do with their parents or older siblings. He further says "we call our homework "Homelinks" because it is the link between home and school". Through Homelinks, parents have an opportunity to reinforce learning, to become involved in their child education".

Gaith (2002) mentions that writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete. Writing encourages thinking and learning for it motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection. When thoughts are written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed.

Bempechat (2004) mentions that homework plays a critical, long-term role in the development of children's achievement motivation. More specifically, homework assignments provides children with the time and experience they need to develop belief about achievement and study habit that are helpful for learning, including the value of effort and the ability to cope with mistake and difficulties. Bempechat (Ibid) further argues "I argue that homework is a vital means by which children can receive the training they need to become mature learners.

Saville-Troike (2006) argues that writers must express ideas without recourse to objects and events in their own immediate physical environment or that of their readers, or to gesture and other non-verbal means of communication, and without reliance on immediate feed back or hearer cooperation to fill in gaps, writing can potentially push learners closer to the limits of their current level of their linguistic knowledge ... It seems likely that pushing the limits of linguistic knowledge in written production contributes to SLA by stimulating syntactic development. Saville Troike (ibid) further argues that the need for interaction of other domains of communicative competence with language knowledge is

evident. When we consider some of the steps that are involved in proficient writing:

- a. Formulating mental concepts that can be expressed centrally requires content knowledge.
- b. recognizing what content will be relevant for intended readers and what will be shared versus new information, requires context knowledge.
- c. Constructing text within socially defined conventions of expression (including selecting linguistic forms and organization patterns that are appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience) also requires other aspects of cultural knowledge.

Torrance (2008) carried out research entitled 'Cognitive Processes in the Development of Writing Expertise'. The purpose of this research was to find out the role of meta cognitive (strategic) control in the development of writing. The finding of the study showed that inadequacies in student's texts can result from lack of knowledge, but may also result from a failure to apply existing knowledge; this is in turn, results form failure to manage the multiple competing demands of the writing process within limited cognitive resources. And competent writing requires metacognitive control: this typically not develop without educational intervention.

As far as my study is concerned, it is substantially different from the above mentioned studies. The above mentioned studies are related to age factor in homework, type of homework, importance of homework and how cognitive process helps in developing writing. My study is akin to the design of action research with single group to examine the development of writing skills through skillfully handled homework.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- a. To find out the development in writing skills through homework.
- b. To signify pedagogical implications of the study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Since the present research work is completely a new venture in the context of Nepal, it will be beneficial to researchers; for theoretical backup, language teachers; in order to consolidating learning. parents ; In order to make available resource materials and create a supportive environment and to the students themselves; so that they could listen, record and follow instruction properly. The study further will be helpful to policy makers and administrators as well.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Methodology briefly describes the methods and procedures embraced to carry out this study. The population, sampling procedure, administration of tools and other procedures are described. Thus, to fulfill the objectives of the study, the following methodology was followed.

2.1 Sources of Data

I used both primary and secondary sources for collecting data. The primary source was used for collecting data and the secondary source was used to foster and enrich the study.

2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data

The primary data were elicited from the students of grade nine of Mahakali Higher Secondary School, a government aided school in Gamgadhi, Mugu by administering homework, progress test, pre-test and post-test. So, those students were the primary sources.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data

While making theoretical back up of the study, to pave the way towards the real spirit of research, I consulted Heaton (1975), Byrne (1979), Krashen and Terrell (1983), Raimes (1983), Hughes (1989), Nunan (1989), Harmer (1991), Ur (1991), Brown (1994), Khanyia (2007), Journals of NELTA, articles, Websites.

2.2 Population of the Study

The population of my study was the students of grade 9 of government aided school of Mugu district.

2.3 Sampling Procedure

In order to meet the need of required population for the study, Mahakali Higher secondary school was selected using purposive sampling and all the students were selected from grade 9 of the same school.

2.4 Tools for Data Collection

Pre-test, homework analysis, progress tests and post-test were used for data collection. The test was based on the English book prescribed for Grade 9. The pre-test and post-test consisted of the same items whereas progress test items were related to how lessons was in progress. Regarding marking scheme, test items of pre-test, post-test and progress tests consisted of three categories of writing, such as controlled writing, guided writing and creative or free writing and each of the category was carried 10 marks; each of the progress tests was carried 10 marks.

2.5 Process of Data Collection

I collected the primary data by embracing the following steps:

- a. First of all, I visited the selected school and talked to the concerned authority for permission to run the class for the research study.
- b. I visited the school head master and subject teacher to build rapport with them and explained the purpose of my study.
- c. In collaboration with the subject teacher, head master, I got the period fixed for carrying out the action teaching.
- d. After fixing the time for period, I met the nine grader of the school and informed them about my study.
- e. To determine the current level of the students' writing skills, a pre-test (written) was administered.
- f. Then, I analyzed the students' ability of writing skills.
- g. Then the action was started, i.e. I started teaching writing and assigning homework daily.

- h. To find out the progress of the students on writing skills, I conducted weekly progress test at the end of each lesson.
- i. Finally, by the end of my teaching after 5 weeks, I administered the post-test to assess the effectiveness of using homework to develop writing skills.

2.6 Limitations of the Study

- a. The study was limited to a government aided school of Mugu district, (i.e. Mahakali Higher Secondary school).
- b. Only Grade 9 students of this school were included in the study.
- c. Primary data of this study was gathered only by administrating homework, pre-test, progress tests and post-test.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the primary sources. The main objective of the study was to find out the role of assigning homework in developing writing skills. For this purpose, I tabulated and analyzed the data in the following order:

- a. Analysis and interpretation of homework checking
- b. Analysis of individual test scores obtained from five progress tests including the pre-test and post-test.
- c. Component wise qualitative statement on the five tests including pre-test and post-test.

3.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Daily Homework assignment

In this section, I present analysis and interpretation on how daily assignment of different types of homework helped in the development of writing skills of the grade 9 students.

I spent almost two periods in introducing the topic. During these periods, the following sub-topics were discussed:

- a. Identifying components of writing skills.
- b. Identifying different types of homework.
- c. Fostering relationship between homework and writing skills.

The prime intention of introducing the above mentioned topics was to get the students acquainted with different types of sub- skills of writing and how they can be fostered through homework, so that the students could show positive attitude in doing homework. The data I have collected consists of daily homework assignment, checking, analysis and the progress that brings

especially in writing skills. I analyzed and interpreted homework after my each action which had been done as follows:

3.1.1 Homework Setting

At the end of the class, I assigned the following task as homework.

Q.1 Complete the following sentences by putting the correct verbs so that they reflect the intention of the speakers.

1. I will (finish/ have finished) my Dashain home works by next Sunday.
2. You will/will see the jungle and snow covered mountain peaks.
3. I (plan to/plan) visit my English teacher this evening.
4. Ram is (go to/going to) Katmandu with his elder brother.
5. I (will/ will be) stay at a hotel during my visit to Rara.

The next day the homework was checked and the following scores were obtained by the students.

Table No. 1
Individual Scores on Homework

No. of students	No. of students in %	Marks obtained	Obtained mark in %
3	20	3	60
21	52.5	2	40
8	20	1	20
3	7.5	0	0
Total = 40	Total = 100	Fullmarks-5	Total = 100

Average score = 1.85

As the above table shows, the average score is 1.85. Out of the total, 72.5 per cent of the students have secured above the average score, likewise, 27.5 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Similarly, 20 per cent of the students have secured highest mark (i.e. 3 marks) and 7.5 per cent of the students have secured lowest mark (i.e. 0 mark). Since it is the first classroom teaching that I conducted assigning homework, the result that has been revealed is commendable. During the classroom delivery, the students were encouraged to work in pairs and groups. Most of the time, the teacher worked with the students as a facilitator and guide.

The students who scored less than 1.85 per cent on homework assignment were slow pace learners. To overcome this problem, I decided to plan the next lesson as follows:

- a. I will supply additional support to those students who have secured below 1.85 per cent.
- b. I will pay relatively more attention and make personal contact out of school time as well.

3.1.2 Homework Setting

At the end of the class, I assigned the following task as a homework.

Q.1 Rearrange the following words into sensible sentences.

- a. Sita is / Kathmandu with / going to / her father
- b. Rara / how about / going to?
- c. do not / please / to bring / forget / my book
- d. Hariram / businessman / is / a wealthy
- e. plan / Rara / I / go to / my aunt / with

As usual homeworks were checked and the following scores had been obtained by the students.

Table No. 2

Individual Scores on Homework

No. of students	No. of students in %	Marks obtained	Obtain mark in %
7	17.5	3	60
23	57.5	2	40
10	25	1	20
Total = 40	Total = 100	Fullmarks-5	Total = 100

Average scores: 1.92

As the above table shows, the average score is 1.92. Out of the total, 75 per cent of the students have secured above the average score, likewise, 25 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Similarly, 17.5 per cent of the students have secured highest mark (i.e. 3 marks) and 25 per cent of the students have secured lowest mark (i.e. 1 mark).

In comparison to the scores of the previous one, the scores the students have secured are satisfactory. More than 17 per cent students have secured 3 marks, 57 per cent of the total students have obtained 2 marks and 25 per cent of the students have secured 1 mark. Furthermore, the previous scores of the students reflected the average score of 1.85 per cent, whereas the recent scoring reflects the average scores of 1.92 per cent. This achievement of assigning homework and checking regularly reveals the fact that regular checking and providing positive feedback is helpful in developing writing skills and learning.

3.1.3 Homework Setting

At the end of the class, I assigned the following task as homework.

Q.1 Make Five Requests from the Following Simple Substitution Table.

Table No.3
Substitution Table

Would you mind I wonder If you	please	pass that book tell me stop making noise read your book bring me your notebook	The way to Rara to me for an hour? for a day? for a while?
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As a regular course, the given tasks were checked and the scores of the students have been tabulated as follows:

Table No. 4
Individual scores on Homework

No. of students	No. of students in %	Marks obtained	Obtain mark in %
9	22.5	3	60
24	60	2	40
7	17.5	1	20
Total = 40	Total = 100	Fullmarks-5	Total = 100

Average scores: 2.5

As the above table shows, the average score is 2.5. Out of the total, 22.5 per cent of the students have secured above the average score, likewise, 77.5 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Similarly, 22.5 per cent of the students have secured highest mark (i.e. 3 marks) and 17.5 per cent of the students have secured lowest mark (i.e. 1 mark).

In previous score of the homework, the average score was 1.92 and the current average score is 2.5. The number of the students securing highest mark is increasing gradually and the number of students securing lowest mark is decreasing.

What we can infer analyzing the above table is that active participation of the students in the classroom activities positive feedback, regular assignment of homework and regular homework checking do have positive impact on writing skills.

3.1.4 Homework Setting

The following questions were assigned as the homework.

Q.1 Write down what you are going to do in the future.

- a. This evening?
- b. After completing SLC?
- c. On Saturday?
- d. On your birthday?
- e. On new year/s eve?

As usual the given homework assignments were checked and the scores of the students have been tabulated as follows:

Table No. 5

Individual Scores on Homework

No. of students	No. of students in %	Marks obtained	Obtain mark in %
11	27.5	3	60
27	67.5	2	40
2	5	1	20
Total = 40	Total = 100	Fullmarks-5	Total = 100

Average scores= 2.22

As the table shows, around 27 per cent of the students have secured above the average score (2.22), and around 72 per cent of the students have obtained

below the average scores (i.e. 2.22). Likewise, the highest score is 3 and the lowest is 1. When we observe the previous average scores and the average scores on the above table, only 27 per cent of the students secured 3, and 67.5 per cent of the students have secured the second highest mark (i.e. 2 marks), whereas, in the previous one, only 22.5 per cent of the students have secured the highest mark (i.e. 3 marks) and only 60 per cent of the students have secured the second highest mark (i.e. 2 marks). What can be observed is that the progress of the students is gradually increasing. But more than 72 per cent of the students have secured lower the average score. This fact ushered me to think why it happens. To find the root cause behind this inconsistency, I became a little bit conscious of the way students worked on homework. Finally, what has been found is that they did not have ideas in doing homework and lacked of seriousness. To overcome this situation, I considered providing some tips of doing homework like urging them to be serious while doing homework and taking active part in the classroom activities.

3.1.5 Homework Setting

As a regular course, the following task was assigned as homework.

Q.1 Make sentences with the following clues. The first one is done for you.

- a. Sita / have / dinner / with her friends / this evening
E.g. Sita is going to have a dinner with her friends this evening.
- b. I am / visit / Rara / in Dashain / vacation
- c. We have / dinner / with Rajesh Hamal / next week.
- d. We / have / hydro-electricity / from the Dashain.
- e. I am / study / English subject / after completing SLC.
- f. Sita / attend / SLC examination / for the next Sunday.

The scores obtained by the students can be tabulated as follows:

Table No. 6

Individual scores on Homework

No. of students	No. of students in %	Marks obtained	Obtain mark in %
3	7.5	4	80
28	70	3	60
7	17.5	2	40
2	5	1	20
Total = 40	Total = 100	Fullmarks-5	Total = 100

Average scores = 2.8

Observing the above table, what can be construed is that 77.5 per cent of the students have secured above the average scores (i.e. 2.8) and only 22.5 per cent of the students have scored below the average scores. This time, 7.5 per cent of the total students have secured 4 (i.e. 80 percent) out of 5, similarly, 70 per cent of the total students have secured 3 (i.e. 60 percent) and only 5 per cent of the students have secured 1 (20 percent) marks. This clearly reveals that very first time 7.5 per cent of the total students have got 80 per cent of marks. The cause behind this may be the repetition of same nature of homework or may be they got serious on doing homework.

3.1.6 Homework Setting

As regular, I have assigned the following controlled parallel writing as homework.

Q.1 Write a daily routine of your own with the help of following clues.

- Study grade -9
- get up at 6 early in the morning
- brush teeth, wash
- take ten, breakfast

- study for two hours
- go to school at 9:30 am
- return home at 4 pm
- play with friends
- do homework
- go to bed at 10 pm

This time I have used communicative and humanistic approach (i.e. banding system) for a novice writers pondering over the inherent unreliability in guided composition marking system. I have decided to provide score on the basis of following components of writing skills:

- Content = 1 mark
- Organization = 1 mark
- Vocabulary = 1 mark
- Language use = 1 mark
- Mechanics = 1 mark

Scores obtained by the students can be tabulated as follows:

Table No. 7

Individuals Scores on Homework

No. of students	No. of students in %	Marks obtained	Obtain mark in %
5	12.5	2	40
28	70	1	20
7	17.5	0	0
Total = 40	Total = 100	Fullmarks-5	Total = 100

Average score - 0.95

The above table shows that 0.95 is the average score. Out of the total, 12.5 per cent of the students have secured 2 marks, 70 per cent of the students have secured 1 marks and 17.5 per cent have scored 0 marks. Observing the

distribution of scores in the above table, what can be inferred is that 82.5 per cent of the total students have succeeded to secure above the average scores (0.95 per cent) and 17.5 per cent of the students have got below the average scores.

From the above analysis, this is clear that most of the students are weak in semi-free writing. And almost all the students are weak in organization, language use and content. To overcome this problem, I decided to change the class period and provided more exposure. To achieve this, I discussed with head teacher, subject teacher and students and got fixed the period to have after 4.30 pm.

3.1.7 Homework Setting

Having considered the low achievement of the students in guided writing, I had to return back to previous lesson. And this time I discussed about the use of simple present tense while writing daily routine rigorously. And the following parallel guided writing had been given as homework.

Q.1 Read Shyam's Daily Routine. And Write a Daily Routine of Your Own

Shyam studies in Grade 8. He gets up at 6 early in the morning. Then after, he brushes his teeth and washes his face. Then he goes to toilet. After this, he goes for morning walk. After finishing this, he takes tea and he goes for study for two hours. He gets ready for school and have food. He goes to school at 9: 30 and returns from the school at 4: 30. And he plays with his friends for sometimes and does homework and he goes to bed at 10 at night.

The scores of the students on the homework have been tabulated as follows;

Table No. 8

Individual scores on Homework.

No. of students	No. of students in %	Marks obtained	Obtain mark in %
11	27.5	3	60
23	57.5	2	40
5	12.5	1	20
1	2.5	0	0
Total = 40	Total = 100	Fullmarks-5	Total = 100

Average scores = 2.1

As the table shows, 2.1 are the average score. Out of total, 27.5 per cent of the students have secured above the average score (i.e.2.1), and around 72.5 per cent of the students have obtained below the average scores, likewise, the highest score is 3 and the lowest is 1.

Comparatively, 2 was the highest marks and only 12.5 per cent of the students had secured it in previous one, whereas, 3 are the highest marks and almost 27.5 per cent of the students have achieved this in the current one.

This above analysis clearly shows that the majority of the students are weak in parallel writing. And most of the students have shown poor proficiency in organization, content, language use and in some sub-aspects of mechanics. This result ushered me to make the classroom activities more conducive to their level.

3.1.8 Homework Setting

As usual, I have assigned the following task as homework.

Q.1 Make five suggestions or advices to your friends who do not feel well with the help of the following formula

- How about + V ing
- You'd better + V
- If I were you I'd + V

As usual the given assignment was checked and the scores of the students on homework have been tabulated as follows:

Table No. 9

Individual Scores on Homework

No. of students	No. of student in %	Marks obtained	Mark obtained in %
13	32.5	3	60
24	60	2	40
3	7.5	1	20
Total -40	Total-100	Full marks -5	Total-100

Average scores = 2.25

Observing the above homework score, 2.25 is the average score. Out of the total, 32.5 per cent of the students have secured above the average score, 67.5 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Moreover, the highest score is 3 and the lowest score is 1. Only 27.5 per cent of the students secured the highest score (i.e.3) and 2.5 per cent of the students secured 0 mark in the previous homework whereas, 32.5 per cent of the students have secured the highest score (i.e.3) and 7.5 per cent of the students have secured 1 mark. This reflection shows that daily assignment of homework and providing positive feedback have paramount importance in developing writing skills.

3.1.9 Homework Setting

As usual, I have assigned the following task as homework.

Q.1 Advise your partner in the following situations.

- a. leave, but it's raining
- b. buy a birthday present, but has very little money
- c. spend a weekend on holiday.
- d. repair my mobile.
- e. I am sick.

The scores of the students on homework can be tabulated as follows:

Table No. 10

Individual Scores on Homework

No. of students	No. of student in %	Marks obtained	Mark obtained in %
2	5	4	80
20	50	3	60
18	45	2	40
Total -40	Total-100	Full marks -5	Total-100

Average scores= 2.6

The above table shows that 2.6 is the average score. Out of the total, 55 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and 45 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. 4 marks (80 per cent), which is the highest mark, likewise, 3 marks is the lowest marks.

In the previous homework, only 32.5 per cent of the students secured above the average score (i.e. 2.25) whereas, 55 per cent of the students have achieved above the average score. This may be the cause of creating more conducive environment in the classroom activities and repetition of similar topic of the previous ones.

3.1.10 Homework Setting

As usual, I have assigned the following task as homework.

Q.1 Two friends are talking on the phone. Fill in the blank spaces in their conversation with your own words.

Hira: Hello!

Sita : Hello ! It's me

Hira: Hi, Sita

Sita: I am fine, what's the plan today?

Hira: I am planning to go Do you have time

Sita: I love to go

Hira: At 10 AM in the morning.

Sita: Ok then, I will be there at 10.

Hira: Ok, bye then, we will be there right at 10.

Sita: Bye.

As usual the given assignment was checked and the scores of the students on homework have been tabulated as follows:

Table No. 11
Individual Scores on Homework.

No. of students	No. of student in %	Marks obtained	Mark obtained in %
7	17.5	4	80
23	57.5	3	60
8	20	2	40
2	5	1	20
Total -40	Total-100	Full marks -5	Total-100

Average scores= 2.95

As the above table shows that the average score is 2.95. Out of total, 75 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and only 25 per cent of the students have secured lower the average score. Likewise, 4 is the highest score and 1 is the lowest score.

While comparing this with the previous one, only 55 per cent of the students had secured above the average score (i.e.2.6) and 45 per cent of the students had secured lower the average score, whereas, 75 per cent of the students have secured above the average score (i.e.2.95) and only 25 per cent of the students have secured lower the average score. So, what we can say is that active participation of the students in the classroom activities and regular assignment of homework do have positive effect on writing skills.

3.1.11 Homework setting

As usual, I have assigned the following leave application as homework.

Q. 1 Today is Sunday. You have to go to school. Unfortunately, you are suffering from severe cold. Write a leave application to your class teacher for two days leave.

Here, I have used communicative and direct method of scoring for a novice writes. Pondering over the inherent unreliability in free writing marking system I have decided to provide scores on the basis of following components of writing skills:

- Content- 1 mark
- Origination - 1 mark
- Vocabulary - 1 mark
- Language use - 1 mark
- Mechanics - 1 mark

Score obtained by the students can be tabulated as follows:

Table No. 12

Individual Score on Homework

No. of students	No. of student in %	Marks obtained	Mark obtained in %
18	45	3	60
20	50	2	40
2	5	1	20
Total -40	Total-100	Full marks -5	Total-100

Average scores: 2.4

The above table shows that the average score is 2.445 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and 55 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Similarly, the highest score is 3 and the

lowest score is 1. In comparison to the previous score, the total students securing above the average score is higher than the current one.

From the above analysis, we can say that the majority of the students are weak in free writing. And most of the students have serious problems in mechanics, content, organization and language use. To overcome this problem, I decided to take more rigorous activities and supply more learning materials.

3.1.12 Homework Setting

As usual, I have assigned the following free writing activity as homework.

Q.1 Why do you love Dashain festival? Give some reasons.

In order to make scoring reliable, I have used communicative approach and liberal marking system. And the scores have been credited on the basis of following components of writing.

- Content - 1
- Mechanics - 1
- Organization -1
- Vocabulary - 1
- Language use -1

Scores obtained by the students can be tabulated as follows:

Table No. 13

Individual Scores on Homework

No. of students	No. of student in %	Marks obtained	Mark obtained in %
21	52.5	3	60
17	42.5	2	40
2	5	1	20
Total -40	Total-100	Full marks -5	Total-100

Average scores= 2.47

The above table reveals that 2.47 is the average score. Out of total, 52.5 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and 47.5 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Likewise, the highest score is 3 and the lowest score is 1.

This under achievement in free writing activities ushered me to embrace the following steps:

- providing some vocabularies related to Dashain.
- providing more relevant materials to the students.

3.1.13 Homework Setting

As usual, I have assigned the following free writing activity as homework.

Q.1 How do you celebrate Dashain? Write some Negative aspects of Dashain.

In order to make scoring reliable, I have used communicative approach and liberal marking system. And the scores have been credited on the basis of following components of writing.

- Content - 1
- Mechanics - 1
- Organization -1
- Vocabulary - 1
- Language use -1

The scores obtained by an individual student have been tabulated use follows:

Table No. 14

Individual Scores on Homework

No. of students	No. of student in %	Marks obtained	Mark obtained in %
5	12.5	4	80
24	60	3	60
9	22.5	2	40
1	2.5	1	20
Total -40	Total-100	Full marks -5	Total-100

Average scores= 2.77

As the table shows, the score have been distributed around the average scores of 2.77 per cent, out of total,72.5 per cent of the students have secured around the average scores. Altogether, 72.5 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and 25 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Similarly, 4 are the highest score and 1 is the lowest score. Observing this progress of the students, it can be inferred that applying different scaffolding activities may have constructive effect in developing writing skills.

3.2 Analysis and Interpretation of Data Gathered Through progress test, Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

This section constitutes the analysis of the scores of the students on the progress test, pre-test, post-test, and aspect wise analysis of the tests.

3.2.1 Analysis of the Scores on the Progress Test, pre-test and Post-Test

3.2.1.1 Comparison of Result of all the Tests

In the post-test, the students have shown notable performance in writing skills in comparison to their performance on the pre-test. The comparison between the two performances can be summarized in the following ways:

Table No. 15
Comparative Analysis of the Score of Pre-test and Post-test

S.N.	Test	First highest score	The highest score in %	The second Highest score	The second highest score in %
1.	Pre-test	15	37.5	10	25
2.	Post-test	35	87.51	33	82.5

While analyzing the above table, out of 40, 15 marks was the first highest score and 10 marks was the second highest score out of 40 obtained by the

students on the pre-test, whereas, 35 marks is the first highest score and 33 marks is the second highest scores obtained by the students on the post-test.

After analysis , it can be claimed that on the post-test most of the students have secured higher marks than on the pre-test. Finally, the above analysis led me to believe that it was the use of homework and active classroom environment that more effectively facilitated the students to develop writing skills.

3.2.1.2 Progress Tests

On each and every progress test, the students have shown notable progression in writing skills. The following shows the comparison among the five progress test.

Table No. 16

Comparative Scores on Five Progress Tests

Progress Tests	The First Higher Scores	The First Higher Scores in %	The Second Highest Scores	The Second Highest Scores in %
First	6	60	5	50
Second	7	70	6	60
Third	7	70	6	60
Fourth	7	70	6	60
Fifth	8	80	7	70

While analyzing the above comparison table, 6 marks was the first highest score and 5 were the second highest score on the first progress test. Likewise, on the second progress test, 7 marks were the first highest score and 6 were the second highest score obtained by the students. Similarly, the score secured by the students on the second progress test, third progress test and the fourth progress test is even. Lastly, scores 8 was the first highest score and 7 was the second highest score obtained by the students on the fifth progress test.

After analyzing the above table, it can be claimed that the students have gradually improved in their writing skills. So, this kind of cumulative progress in writing skills of the students can be credited to daily assignment of homework and positive feedback to the written tasks.

3.2.1.3 Pre-Test

Before starting my action research based teaching, I administrated a pre-test to determine the students' initial proficiency on writing skills. The pre-test comprised of rearrangement, dialogue completion, substitution table, reproduction, parallel writing, telephone conversation, completion writing, leave application and paragraph writing. The scores of the students on the pre-test are presented in the following table:

Table No. 17

Individual scores on Pre-Test

S.N	F.M	Scores	Scores in %	No. of students	No. of Students in%
1.	40	15	37	8	20
2.	40	10	25	10	25
3.	40	8	20	11	27.5
4.	40	4	10	9	22.5
5.	40	3	7	2	5
Total		40	100	40	100

Average Score: 8.75

While analyzing the above table, 8.75 is the average score. Out of total, 62 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and 38 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Likewise, 15 is the highest marks and 3 is the lowest marks. Out of the total, 7.5 per cent of the students have secured 3 marks. This result clearly shows that the students have varied proficiency in writing skills. The majority of the students have serious problem in grammar, mechanics, content, organization, syntax etc. As a consequence, I

was professionally obliged to imbibe more conducive ways of teaching to the existed classroom teaching for the development of writing skills.

3.2.1.4 First Progress Test

The scores obtained by the students on the first progress test can be presented in the following ways:

Table No. 18
Individual Scores on the first Progress Test

S.N	F.M	Scores	No. of students	Percentage
1.	10	6	18	45
2.	10	5	13	32.5
3.	10	3	7	17.5
4.	10	2	2	5
Total			40	100

Average score: 4.95 percent.

The above table shows that the average score is 4.95. Out of the total, 77.5 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and 22.5 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Similarly, 6 is the highest marks and 2 is the lowest marks obtained by the students.

Monitoring over the scores of the pre-test of the students, what I found was that their scores were distributed around the average scores of 8.75 out of 40 as full marks on the pre-test, whereas, on the first progress test, 77.5 per cent of the students have scored around the average level of marks 4.95. So, it is plausible to say that active participation of the students and regular assignment of homework seemed to have progress effect in developing writing skills.

3.2.1.5 Second Progress Test

The scores of the students on the second progress test were tabulated as follows:

Table No. 19
Individual Scores on the Second Progress Test

S.N	F.M	Scores	No. of students	Percentage
1.	10	7	17	42.5
2.	10	6	12	30
3.	10	3	1	2.5
4.	10	5	10	25
Total			40	100

Average Score: 6.1

The above table shows that the average score is 6.1. Out of the total, 42.5 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and 57.5 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Likewise, 7 are the highest score and 1 is the lowest score obtained by the students.

What is noticeable in this test is that 42.5 per cent of the students have successes in getting 7 marks in comparison to the first progress test.

The gradual progress in getting highest marks by the students has really galvanized me to take additional action on the forth coming classroom teaching and assigning homework. As the matter of fact, it has further firmed my determination to continue assigning homework in order for developing writing skills.

3.2.1.6 Third Progress Test

The score of the students on the third progress test were recorded as follows:

Table No. 20

Individual Scores on the Third Progress Test

S.N	F.M	Scores	No. of students	Percentage
1.	10	7	18	45
2.	10	6	14	35
3.	10	4	2	5
4.	10	5	6	15
Total			40	100

Average score: 6.2

According to the above table, 6.2 are the average score. Out of the total, 45 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and 55 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Likewise, 7 are the highest score and 4 is the lowest score. In comparison to the second progress test score, 45 per cent of the students have secured 7 marks and 5 per cent of the students have secured 2 marks in the current test whereas in the previous test, 42.5 per cent of the students have secured 7 marks and 2.5 per cent of the students have secured 1 mark.

The reasons behind the majority of the students (i.e. 55 percent) not achieving above the average score are scattered catchments areas of the school, poor socio-economic background of the students and so forth. Despite this, students have revealed a positive sign of developing writing skills through well designed and calculated homework

3.2.1.7 Fourth Progress Test

This score of the students on the fourth progress test were recorded as follows:

Table No. 21

Individual Scores on the Fourth Progress Test

S.N	F.M	Scores	No. of students	Percentage
1.	10	7	21	52.5
2.	10	6	13	32.5
3.	10	4	5	12.5
4.	10	5	1	2.5
Total			40	100

Average score; 6.25

According to the above table, 6.25 are the average score. Out of the total, 52.5 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and 47.5 per cent of the students have scored highest score and 1 is the lowest score obtained by the students.

It is clear that the number of students achieving above the average level of score is gradually increasing and vice versa is true. Looking at this gradual progress, what can be claimed is that assigning properly designed homework and regular checking can be a boon in developing writing skills of the students.

3.2.1.8 Fifth Progress Test

The scores of the students on the fifth progress test were tabulated as follows:

Table No. 22

Individual Scores on the Fifth Progress Test

S.N	F.M	Scores	No. of students	Percentage
1.	10	8	23	57.5
2.	10	7	10	25
3.	10	6	5	12.5
4.	10	4	1	2.5
5.	10	5	1	2.5
Total		40	40	100

Average score: 7.32

According to the above table, 7.32 are the average score. Out of the total, 57.5 per cent of the student has secured above the average score and 42.5 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Likewise, 8 is the highest score and 4 is the lowest scores obtained by the students.

This distribution of the score is different from the previous one. Almost 57.5 per cent of the students have succeeded in achieving 8 out of 10, whereas, in previous one only 52 per cent of the students could achieve. Viewing the above interpretation, it can be predicted that active classroom activities, regular homework assignment and positive feed back to the written tasks can breed constructive progress in writing skills.

3.2.1.9 Post-Test

After finishing the action teaching, I administrated the post-test. The scores of the students on the post-test were recorded as follows:

Table No. 23

Individual Scores on the Post-Test

S.N	F.M	Scores	No. of students	Percentage
1.	40	35	2	5
2.	40	20	5	12.5
3.	40	33	6	15
4.	40	25	5	12.5
5.	40	31	7	17.5
6.	40	23	4	10
7.	40	28	2	5
8.	40	27	5	12.5
9.	40	24	4	20

Total		40	100
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Average score; 26.52

According to the above table, 26.52 is the average score on the post-test. Out of the total, 55 per cent of the students have secured above the average score and only 45 per cent of the students have secured below the average score. Similarly, 35 is the highest score and 20 is the lowest score obtained by the students.

While comparing post-test scores with the pre-test scores, a significant progress can be sorted out in developing writing skill through homework. On the pre-test, the highest score achieved by the students was 15 out of 40 as full marks, 3 out of 40 was the lowest score and the scores were hovering around the average score of 8.75 per cent whereas, the scores on the post-test hovering around the average score (i.e. 26.75) which is for greater than the average score of pre-test. Eventually, what can be confidently claimed that the proper handling of homework can have tremendous positive effect in the development of writing skills.

3.3 Aspect-wise Correct and Incorrect Responses of the Test Results

Testing free writing has posed serious problem in reliability as it needs writer to perform lower level and higher level components of writing skills. To overcome the colossal nature of free writing and its unreliability, I have used analytic method which requires a separate score for prominent aspects of writing skills. So, I have operationalized the following aspects of writing skills on the basis of which a piece of writing was evaluated.

- i. Content
 - Good: Substantive and knowledgeable
 - Tolerable: Correct subject matter but awkward.

Weak: grammar, vocabulary inadequate to reflect the content

Poor: does not show knowledge of subject matter, inconsistent

- ii. Organization
 - Good: fluent expression, idea clearly stated
 - Tolerable: simple but inconsistent
 - Weak: non-fluent, idea confused
 - Poor: incoherent, does not communicate, messy

- iii. Mechanics
 - Good: demonstrate mastery of conventions.
 - Tolerable: Some errors of spelling, punctuation etc.
 - Weak: Frequent errors of spelling punctuation, capitalization etc.
 - Poor: no mastery of convention, dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization etc.

- iv. Handwriting
 - Good: legible, visible
 - Tolerable: limited visible and legible
 - Weak: not straight
 - Poor: Messy

- v. Grammar
 - Good: correct, rule embedded
 - Tolerable: correct but some errors in subject verb agreement
 - Weak: inadequate in grammar and vocabulary
 - Poor: errors in basic rules.

3.3.1 Pre-test

Aspectwise configuration of writing skills of the test results are recorded as follows:

Table No. 24**Activity wise Correct and Incorrect Responses on the Pre-Test**

S.N.	Activities	No. of Activity	Correct Responses	Correct Responses in %	Incorrect Responses	Incorrect Responses in %	Total Responses
1.	Conversation completion	2	18	22.5	62	77.5	80
2.	Rearrangement	1	5	12.5	35	87.5	40
3.	Substitution table completion	1	4	10	36	90	40
4.	Expressing future plan	1	5	12.5	35	87.5	40
5.	Parallel routine writing	1	2	5	38	95	40
6.	Leave application writing	1	3	7.5	37	92.5	40
7.	Paragraph writing	1	1	2.5	39	97.5	40
Total		9	38	100	282	100	320

In the process of conducting action research related class, I administrated the pre-test in order to record the initial proficiency of the students.

As the above table shows, the activity 1 has the highest number of correct responses (i.e. 22.5 per cent), the activity 7 has the lowest number of correct responses (i.e. 2.5 per cent). Almost all activities have lowest correct responses and highest incorrect responses. This clearly reveals the fact that the distribution of responses on each activity indicates the grade nine students of Mahakali Secondary school Mugu have very poor proficiency in writing skills. Analyzing the scores that the students have secured on pre-test, I planned to orchestrate my lesson plan inconsonance with the level of the students. The following table introduces the component wise qualitative description of the scores of the pre-test.

Table No. 25

Component wise Qualitative Statement on the Pre-Test

S.N	Components of writing	Nature of writing activity	Qualitative statement
1.	Grammar/mechanics	Controlled/Completion writing	Poor
2.	Mechanics Handwriting	Controlled/combining writing	Poor
3.	Grammar, Mechanics/Handwriting	Controlled/reproduction	poor
4.	Grammar, Mechanics Handwriting	Guided activity	poor
5.	Organization/ Mechanizes Grammar/Handwriting	Guided/ Parallel writing	poor
6.	Content, organization, Mechanics diction, Handwriting	free writing activity	very poor

Before starting the action, I administrated pre-test for recording the initial proficiency of the students in writing skills. The above table shows that the entire students have very poor knowledge on different components of writing skills.

The qualitative interpretation of the students proficiency on the pre-test was really depressing and challenging, Apart from this, the achievement level of the students have encouraged me to meditate seriously over this very poor result.

3.3.2 First Progress Test

Aspect wise configuration of writing skills of the first progress test result is recorded as follows:

Table No. 26

Activity wise Correct and Incorrect Responses on the First Progress Test

S.N.	No. of Activities	No. of Activity	Correct Responses	Correct Responses in %	Incorrect Responses	Incorrect Responses in %	Total Responses
1.	Conversation completion	1	4	10	36	90	40
2.	Rearrangement	1	5	12.5	35	87.5	40

The above table shows that the students have been shown progress in controlled writing activities. The students have secured 4 correct responses out of 40 responses in controlled conversation completion activity and 5 out of 40 correct responses in controlled rearrangement activity. Still a majority of the responses (i.e. 90 per cent and 87.5 per cent) of the completion and derangement responses respectively are incorrect. This poses a big challenge to the students and teacher as well.

Table No. 27

Aspect wise Qualitative statement on the First Progress Test

S.N	Components of writing	Nature of writing activity	Qualitative statement
1.	Grammar/ mechanics/ Handwriting	Controlled/Completion completion	Poor
2.	Grammar, mechanics Handwriting	Controlled/ Rearrangement	Poor

The above table shows that still the students have problems in Grammar, spelling, capitalization, sentence construction and so on. But in comparison to the pre-test, the students have struggled in order to develop writing skills through homework.

3.3.3 Second Progress Test

Aspect wise configuration of writing skills of the second progress test result can be recorded as follows:

Table No. 28

Activity wise correct and Incorrect Responses on the Second Progress Test

S.N.	No. of Activities	No. of Activity	Correct Responses	Correct Responses in %	Incorrect Responses	Incorrect Responses in %	Total Responses
1.	Substitution table writing	1	6	15	34	85	40
2.	Question and answer that shows intention hand planning	1	7	17.5	33	82.5	40

The above table shows that only 15 per cent of the correct responses have been achieved, whereas, 85 per cent of the incorrect responses are still underachieved in controlled substitution table writing. Similarly, 17.5 per cent of the correct responses have been achieved and 82.5 per cent of the incorrect responses are still underachieved. While analyzing the above table, it can be said that the students have a little bit less difficulty in question and answer activity than in substitution table activity. This may be the cause of question and answer activity in their regular activity. In comparison to the pre-test and the first progress test, the progress in controlled writing skills has been gradually improving.

Table No. 29

Aspect wise Qualitative statements on the second Progress Test

S. N	Components of writing	Nature of writing activity	Qualitative statement
1.	Grammar / mechanics/ Handwriting	Substitution table writing	weak
2.	Grammar/ Mechanics/	Question and answers	weak

	Handwriting/ Syntax	that shows intention or planning	
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From the above qualitative table, what can be said is that, the students are gradually improving their controlled writing skills. In comparison to the pre-test and the first progress test, the students have shown improvement in hand writing, punctuation, spelling, Grammar, capitalization the so on through homework.

3.3.4 Third Progress Test

Aspect wise Configuration of writing skills of the third progress test result can be recorded as flows:

Table No. 30

Activity wise correct and Incorrect Responses on The Third Progress Test

S.N.	Activities	No. of Activity	Correct Responses	Correct Responses in %	Incorrect Responses	Incorrect Responses in %	Total Responses
1.	Guided parallel writing	1	8	20	32	80	40
2.	Completion of telephone conversation	1	10	25	30	75	40

The above table shows that the students have improved in controlled conversation completion writing having got 10 correct responses than in guided parallel writing in which 8 correct responses have been secured by the students. In comparison to the second progress test result, the students have made slightly improvement in spelling, handwriting, punctuation, subject verbs agreement syntax and so forth. Thus, what can be claimed is that students feel comfortable in controlled type of writing than in guided or parallel type of writing and the students can improve their writing skills by providing homework regularly.

Table No. 31

Aspect wise Qualitative Statements on the Third Progress Test

S.N	Components of writing	Nature of writing activity	Qualitative statement
1.	Grammar / mechanics/ Organization/Handwriting, syntax	Guided parallel writing	Tolerable
2.	Grammar/ Mechanics/ Handwriting	Completion of telephone conversation	Tolerable

From the above qualitative table, what can be said is that students of grade nine feel easy in controlled writing than in guided writing. In comparison to the second progress test, the students have moved forward from weak to tolerable stage. Though some problems in grammar, organization, mechanics and so on have still been hurdle in the development of writing skills. As a whole, assignment of home work has improved in some aspect of writing skills, such as spellings, capitalization, subject verbs agreement and so forth.

3.3.5 Fourth Progress Test

Aspect wise configuration of writing skills of the fourth progress test result can be tabulated as follows:

Table No. 32

Activity wise Correct and Incorrect Responses on the Fourth Progress Test

S.N.	Activities	No. of Activity	Correct Responses	Correct Responses in %	Incorrect Responses	Incorrect Responses in %	Total Responses
1.	Level application writing	1	10	25	30	75	40

While analyzing the above table, it is axiomatic that the students from the grade nine feel more uncomfortable in free writing. The progress test result and

pre-test result show that this feeling of uncomfortable in free writing is lack of vocabulary power and organizational capacity. Nonetheless, in comparison to the previous progress test results and pre-test results, assigning homework, liberal and direct checking can have paramount importance in developing writing skills.

Table No. 33

Aspect wise Qualitative Statements on the Fourth Progress Test

S.N	Components of writing	Nature of writing activity	Qualitative statement
1.	Grammar / mechanics/ formats, organization, /Handwriting,	leave application writing	Weak

From the above qualitative table, what can be said is that the students of Grade 9 have great difficulty in free writing. The majority of the students have committed errors in subject verbs agreement, organization, context, fluency and so on. But there is still a ray of hope that in comparison to the previous progress test results and pre-test performance, most of the students have reduced errors in spelling, capitalization, subject verbs agreement and so on.

Fifth Progress Test

Aspect wise configuration of writing skills of the fifth progress test result can be tabulated as follows:

Table No. 34

Activity Wise Correct and Incorrect Responses on the Fifth Progress Test

S.N.	Activities	No. of Activity	Correct Responses	Correct Responses in %	Incorrect Responses	Incorrect Responses in %	Total Responses
1.	essay/ paragraph writing	1	12	30	28	70	40

As the above table shows, 30 per cent of the correct responses have been achieved by the students in free writing and still majority of the students have problems in free writing type of activities. During my experimental classes what I happened to know is that most of the students have the habit of memorization of free writing text. They need and often ask the teacher to write an essay or other free writing activities in advance for rote learning (i.e. memorization). The students rarely do free writing consulting supplementing material own their own. However, If the students are given ample exposure, more rigorous classroom activities, regular providing home work and direct checking could breed positive result.

Table No. 35

Aspect wise Qualitative Statements on the Fifth Progress Test

S.N	Components of writing	Nature of writing activity	Qualitative statement
1.	Grammar / mechanics/ formats, organization, /Organization content, , syntax, handwriting	paragraphs writing/ essay writing	Tolerable

From the above qualitative table, it can be claimed that the students of grade nine have difficulty in free writing type of activities. While evaluating students, free writing on the basis of liberal and qualitative system, most of the students have problems in subject verbs agreement, mechanics, fluency, organization and so forth. At does not mean that the students have not seen in progress in comparison to the previous progress test and pre-test, students really have been striding ahead interims of spelling, punctuation, handwriting, grammar and so on.

3.3.7 Post-Test

Aspect wise configuration of writing skills of the post-test result can be tabulated as follows:

Table No. 36**Activity wise Correct and Incorrect Responses on the Post-Test**

S.N.	Activities	No. of Activity	Correct Responses	Correct Responses in %	Incorrect Responses	Incorrect Responses in %	Total Responses
1.	Conversation completion	2	35	43.75	45	56.25	80
2.	Rearrangement	1	15	37.5	25	62.5	40
3.	Substitution table completion	1	12	20	28	70	40
4.	Expressing future plan with clues	1	14	35	26	65	40
5.	Parallel routine writing	1	11	27.5	29	72.5	40
6.	Leave application writing	1	10	25	30	75	40
7.	Free/paragraph writing	1	9	22.5	31	77	40
Total		9	106/33.12%	100	282	100	320

As the above table shows, out of 8 test activities, conversation completion has the highest number of correct responses (i.e. 43.75 per cent), the activity free writing has the highest number of incorrect responses (i.e. 77 per cent), likewise, the activity rearrangement has the second highest number of correct responses (i.e. 37.5 per cent), the activity leave application writing has the second lowest number of incorrect responses (i.e. 75 per cent). While considering over the above analysis what can be claimed is that the students of grade nine feel difficulty in free writing type of activities. This may be the cause of far settled geographical factor, poor socio-economic background of the students, lack of ample supplementary learning materials and poor environment of the school. Comparatively, more correct responses have been gained in controlled and guided type of activities. This clearly shows that most

of the government aided schools especially for the remote areas like Mugu are still confined in the grip of rote learning, traditional methods of teaching and so on. Despite this, active classroom activities, affirmative evaluation, properly designed homework, teacher's attitude towards the profession do have constructive effect on the development of writing skills. Eventually, whatever progress in writing skills has been achieved through homework is difficult to maintain in the normal classroom teaching.

Table No. 37

Aspect wise Qualitative Statements on the Post-Test

S.N	Components of writing	Nature of writing activity	Qualitative statement
1.	Grammar/Mechanics	Controlled/Completion writing	Tolerable
2.	Grammar, mechanics Handwriting	Controlled/combining writing or rearrangement	Tolerable
3.	Grammar, Mechanizes Handwriting	Controlled/ reproduction writing	Tolerable
4.	Grammar/mechanic, Handwriting	Guide writing	Tolerable
5.	Organization/ Mechanizes Grammar Handwriting	Guided/ Parallel writing	Tolerable
6.	Content, organization, Mechanics punctuation, diction, Handwriting	free writing activity	Tolerable

During my action teaching to the Grade 9 students of Shree Mahakali Model Secondary school, Gamgadhi, Mugu, I administrated pre-test, daily assignment of homework and five progress tests in the interval of five days, then I administrated the post-test. Observing the above table on the basis of qualitative system of evaluation, I have found that most of the students have succeeded in controlled and guided type of writings and a little bit less progress has been found in free type of writings. In comparison to the pre-

test, the post-test result has shown progress in subject verbs agreement, handwriting, spelling, punctuation marks, sentence construction and organization. Thus, it can be concluded claiming that properly designed homework, affirmative checking do have progress effect on the development of writing skills compare to the normal understanding of homework.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While analyzing the development of writing skills through homework, the use of homework was found to have striking effect in improving writing skills of the students. Although the homework has been used since the time immemorial, its real spirit and effect have not been realized properly. Most of our teachers assign homework without understanding its usefulness. As it has been used as a part of formal education system, it has wider scope of benefits; it consolidates the learning which has happened in classrooms, reinforces learning and facilitates mastery of specific skills, improves retention and understanding. Homework also improves non-academic qualities of the students; it fosters independence and responsibility and helps to build a link between school and community.

Written feedback is an essential aspect of any English language writing course. The goal of checking homework and providing feedback is to help students improve their writing proficiency so that the students produce minimal errors and maximum clarity in writing.

Instead of providing homework related to course book, it should be more extensive and in accordance with the level and interest of the students. In order to boost up students writing skills, well-deigned homework, sympathetically checked answer and constructive feedback, and proper amount of homework have paramount importance.

4.1 Findings from Homework Analysis

While observing the scores of the students on homework out of 40 only 8 students were able to get 3 (i.e. 60 per cent) out of 5 as full marks which is the highest score achieved by the students in the first assignment and

unfortunately, 3 students (i.e. 7.5 per cent) got 0 marks, whereas, on the last homework, 5 students were able to get 4 (i.e. 80 per cent) likewise, only 1 student got 1 mark and 24 students (i.e. 60 per cent) were able to get 3 out of 5. So, the claim can be made is that proper handling of homework can have striking effect on develop students' of writing skills.

4.2 Finding from Progress Test

On each progress test, the students have shown perceptible progress in developing writing skills in comparison to their performance on the pre-test. Moreover, only 45 per cent of the students have secured 6 marks, out of 10 on the first progress test. Likewise, only 5 per cent of the students have secured 2 marks whereas, on the fifth progress test, 57.5 per cent of the students have achieved 8 marks out of 10 and only 2.5 per cent of the students have achieved 4 marks. So, this analysis clearly supports in favor of using homework to develop writing skills.

4.3 Finding from Pre-Test and Post-Test

In comparison to pre-test, post-test result has entailed notable progress in writing skills. To be more specific, the average score of pre-test is 8.75, out of 40, whereas, on the post-test, the average score is 26.52 out of 40 which was secured by 55 per cent of the students. Similarly, 15 marks is the highest marks achieved by 8 students on the pre-test whereas, on the post-test, almost all the students have secured 20 to 35 marks.

The above findings ushered me towards advocating in using homework in order to improve writing skills of the students.

4.3.1 Qualitative Finding from Pre-Test and Post-Test Score

The performance of the students on post-test exceeded to the performance of the student on pre-test. This can be clearly shown in the following table.

It can be said that most of the students have got poor in controlled writing and guided writing, very poor on free writing on the pre-test whereas, on the post-test, most of the students have got tolerable in controlled writing and tolerable in free writing. Viewing this, what can be claimed is that in subject verb agreement, punctuation, spellings, sentence construction, hand writing, content and so forth have been improved on the post-test result in comparison to the pre-test result. Overall, assigning well-designed homework, its proper amount and sympathetic checking can be proved a powerful means of developing writing skills.

4.4. Recommendations

Pedagogical implications of the research study can be listed as follows:

- a. A moderate amount of homework (i.e. 30 minutes to 45) can be useful for the students as there are many demands on young children from society.
- b. Regular checking and providing positive feedback play pivotal role in boosting up achievement motivation which ultimately leads to syntactic development of the students.
- c. Setting goal (i.e. which aspect of writing skills you want to improve) and reflection (i.e. remedial option for underachievement) are indispensables in developing writing skills.
- d. Properly understood, skillfully planned, intelligently assigned and sympathetically checked homework is invaluable in order to enhance problems solving skills (i.e. students can use available resources).

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APPENDIX 1

Tools for data collection (Pre and post-test)

F.M: 40

School: Mahakali Higher Secondary School,

Time: 40

Name of the student:

Sex :

Roll No:

- 1. Read the conversation between Arati and Neelam. Put the verbs into the correct form. 5**

Neelam: Hello, Arati. What do you plan to do during the holidays?

Arati: I _____ (plan to/plan) go to Rara with my aunt.

Arati: How about you Neelam ?

Neelam: I'm _____ (go to/going to) Lumbini with my parents.

Arati: Where will you stay in Lumbini?

Neelam: We _____ (stay/will stay) in a hotel there. Dad says there are very nice and clean rooms.

Neelam: How long will you be in Rara ?

Arati: I _____ (will be/will) there for a week.

Neelam: What will you do there ?

Arati: I _____ (will see/see) the Rara lake and snow-covered mountain peaks.

- 2. Rearrange the following words into sensible sentences. 5**

a. businessman / Hariram / is / wealthy / a

b. don't / like / to the police / I / going

c. Rara / how about / going to

d. don't / please / to bring / forget/ my book.

e. you done/ your homework / have

3. Make four questions from the following table. One is done for you.

Example: Would you please stop making noise for a while? 4

Would you	please	pass that book	The way to Talcha airport?
		tell me	to me ?
		bring your note book	for an hour ?
		read your book	for a day?
		stop making noise	for a while

4. Write down what you are going to do in the future. The first one is done for you. 6

- a. This evening? I am going to watch TV this evening.
- b. Tomorrow morning? _____
- c. On Saturday ? _____
- d. In winter vacation? _____
- e. On New Year's Eve? _____
- f. After completing SLC? _____
- g. On your birthday? _____

5. Read Ram's daily routine. And write a daily routine of your own. 5

Ram studies in grade 10. He gets up at 5 early in the morning. Then after, he brushes his teeth and washes his mouth. Then he goes to toilet then after he goes for morning walk. After returning from the morning work, he takes tea and he goes for study for two hours. He gets ready for school and have food. He goes to school at 9.30 and returns from the school at 5. And he plays with his

friends for sometime and does homework and he goes to bed at 10 at night.

- 6. Two friends are talking on the phone. Fill in the blank spaces in their conversation with your own words. 5**

Sita: Hello !

Hari: _____ it's me _____

Sita: Hi, Hari. _____

Hari: I'm fine. What's the plan today?

Sita: I'm planning to go _____. Do you have time _____?

Hari: I'd love to but _____.

Sita: Ok then, we will go next time. Bye.

Hari: Bye, thanks for calling.

- 7. Imagine that today is Sunday. You have to go to school Unfortunately, you are suffering from headache. You are unable to go to school. Write a leave application to your class teacher for one day leave. 5**
- 8. Do you like Dashain? Why? Why not? Write a couple of paragraphs, giving reasons.**

APPENDIX 2
Lesson Plan No 1

Subject: English

Date:

Class: Nine

Time:

Unit: One

Language focus: Writing

Teaching item: Holiday plan

1. Objectives:

- i. To prepare the students develop plan of their day to day activities in advance.

2. Instructional materials:

- a. daily used materials
- b. dialogue card
- c. phrase card and
- d. Completion paper

3. Teaching- learning activities

i. Perspective: (5 mins)

I will impart some information and comprehension questions related to the previous lesson. If students are found unable to respond, I would summarize.

ii. Stimulation: (5 mins)

The students will be asked whether they have plan for coming Saturday. If they have, two or three will be requested to share.

iii. Instruction/ Participation: (25 mins)

- a. I will present my own plan for coming Saturday.
- b. The students will be divided into groups. Then, each group will be provided with a dialogue card. And the students will be asked to read the given dialogue silently in their respective groups. After silent reading, the groups will be provided completion exercises. And the role of the teacher will be as a monitor and a resource person.
- c. Each student from the each group will be asked to present their respective group work.

iv. Closure: (10 mins)

The student will be divided into pairs and will be given phrase card and they have to do as per the instruction given.

v. Follow-up:

Write your parent's plan for winter vacation.

Lesson Plan No 2

Subject: English

Date:

Class: Nine

Time:

Unit: One

Language focus: Writing

Teaching item: Requests and responses

1. Objective:

- i. To prepare the students apply in their day to day lives.

2. Instructional materials:

- a. daily used materials
- b. half dialogue completing with clues
- c. Pictures and clues
- d. Situation cards

3. Teaching learning activities

a. Perspective: (5 mins)

I will ask some question related to previous lesson. If students are found unable to respond, the teacher would summarize.

b. Stimulation: (5 mins)

I will show some pictures and will ask some is the students to read what is written.

c. Instruction/Participation: (25 mins)

- i. The teacher will request to some of the students to close the door, to bring chalk and duster and will encourage to provide appropriate responses.
- ii. I will divide the student into manageable groups and will provide half dialogue completing tasks to each group and the each group will have to finish and present within the stipulated time. And the role of teacher will be as a resource person and a monitor.

d. Closure: (10 mins)

The students will be divided into pairs and will be given situation cards. The pairs have to write requests and responses on the basis of situation given.

e. Follow-up:

Make a dialogue of request and response between you and any of your family member.

Appendix 3
Progress Test

Progress Test 1

F.M.: 10

1. Choose the correct forms of verbs and fill up the gaps.
 - a. I'm _____ (go to/going to) Rara with my aunt.
 - b. We _____ (stay/will stay) in a hotel there.
 - c. I _____ (will /will be) there for a week.
 - d. I _____ (will /will see) the Rara lake and snow covered mountain peaks.
 - e. I _____(will /will be) call you after returning from Rara.
2. Write a short paragraph about Rara Lake.

Progress Test 2

F.M.: 10

1. Make five requests from the following substitution table.

Would you		mind telling me	to me ?
Could you		pass that book	for an hour ?
Can I	Please	have a cup of tea?	the way to Talcha ?
I wonder if		tell me	for a while ?
		lend me	

2. Answer the following questions.
 - a. Where are you going tomorrow ?
 - b. Who you are going with ?
 - c. What are you doing this evening ?
 - d. When you are celebrating your birthday ?
 - e. With whom are you going to Rara ?

Progress Test 3

F.M.: 10

1. Prepare your daily routing with the help of following clues.
 - study in grade nine
 - get up early in the morning at 6
 - brush teeth and wash face
 - go to toilet
 - go for morning work
 - have tea
 - go for study
 - have food and ready for school
 - go to school at 9:30
 - return home at 4:30
 - play with friends
 - have dinner and do homework
 - go to bed at 10 pm

2. Two friends are talking on the phone. Complete the conversation using your own words.

Shiva: (dialing number)

Ram : hello ! who is this ?

Shiva : I'm Shiva _____ Ram ?

Ram : I am fine _____ ?

Shiva : I'm also fine. Do you have any plan today ?

Ram : I'm _____ to Lumbini. Do you have time ?

Shiva : I'm _____ to Pokhara with my mother.

Ram : Ok then, we _____ next time. Bye.

Shiva : Bye.

Progress Test 4

F.M.: 10

1. Suppose, today is not holiday. You have to go to school. Unfortunately, you feel a little bit ill. Write a leave application to your class teacher for one day leave.
2. Rearrange the following words/phrases into sensible sentences.
 - a. Ram/my best/ is /friend
 - b. I/ listening to / love / folk music/Nepali
 - c. Rara/ beautiful place/ is / a / to visit
 - d. I // at 6/always/ early in the morning/ get up
 - e. I/English subject/like/very /much

Progress Test 5

F.M.: 10

1. Write a short paragraph on Dashain along with its positive and negative aspects.
2. Fill in the spaces with help of words in the box.

a prison, a human being, feelings, get out, seven years

The story is about _____ freedom. It describes _____ of the writer. He is put into _____ and beaten. He has been there for _____. He wants to _____ of there.