

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) first appeared in 1980. It aims to test the English language skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing to extend the standard of English of non-English speakers. Before the appearance of IELTS, EPTB (English Proficiency Test Battery) was dominant in the field of language testing which could not last since IELTS replaced it with several corrections and new strategies of language testing.

The new test that started after 1960s had innovative changes in language learning and teaching. In particular, the IELTS was influenced by the “Communicative language learning” and “English for specific purposes”. The tasks were based on an analysis of the ways in which language was used in academic context and were intended to reflect the use of language in the real life situation.

According to Yadav and Yadav (2011, p. 234). “IELTS is a test of academic and vocational English, produced by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES), and jointly managed by the British Council and IDP Australia”.

On the other hand IELTS is a test of academic English i.e. academic module which tests student’s competence on English language on the other hand it is a test of vocational English i.e. general training module which tests the performance of English. it is popular in many countries to test whether academic or vocational competences of students in English language.

1.1.1 International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

In particular, the IELTS was influenced by growth of ‘communicative’ language learning and ‘English for specific purposes’. The test tasks were based on an analysis of the ways in which language was used in academic contexts and intended to reflect the use of language in the ‘real world’.

The new test which replaced the EPTB, had an innovative format that reflected changes in language learning and teaching theory and developments in language testing. Barrass (1982, p. 14) argues:

IELTS tests all four languages skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. The speaking test is a face to face interview with a certified examiner. It is interactive and as close to a real-life situation as a test can get. Researchers show that IELTS motivates test-takers to develop real and well rounded English rather than learning by rote. This means their understanding of English is improved and be valid for real life in an English-speaking country. It has the highest quality control and security procedures. More than 6000 organizations, including many government departments and universities, rely on IELTS. The IELTS scoring system is recognized globally, giving a truly IELTS test takers and the organizations which rely on IELTS test results benefit from IELTS continuing investment in quality assurance, research and development to ensure that the test remains robust and relevant. Since 1989, IELTS has been proven and tested worldwide to provide a secure, global, and authentic and customer-focused test

which measures true to life ability to communicate in English.

(Retrieved from: www.ieltshelpnow.com/academic-writing-test-2.html)

Hence we can say that the life span of the IELTS is not so long, even though it has various issues. The users of the IELTS were sincerely more concerned to make its process more accessible, easier, effective and efficient. Those academic personalities who were working for the sake of English language development shake throughout the entire world had researched and applied various forms of testing by this way recent testing system has been appeared.

1.1.2 Language Testing and IELTS

Language testing is the practice and study of evaluating the proficiency of an individual in using particular language effectively.

The purpose of the language test is to determine a person's ability from that of others. Harrison (1981,p.27) as cited in Jakeman & Mc Dowell 2006, p. 24) says that it is a natural extension of the classroom work, providing teaching, teacher and students that can serve each as a basis for improvement. Testing is an essential and integral part of education. Education involves both teaching and testing and before, we can say that there is whole part relationship between evaluation and teaching. Evaluation is one of the most important facets of language education and teaching. Davis (1968, p. 5) says, "The good test is obedient servant since it follows as apes of teaching".

We use test to obtain information. The information that we hope to obtain, of course, vary from situation to situation because the appropriateness of a test is largely determined by purpose. Why a test is needed at a particular stage in the student's learning and what use will be made for the results? Different scholars have carried test differently using various procedures but most of them have agreed with proficiency test, achievement test, diagnostic test and placement test. Among them proficiency test is one of the areas of research. The tests like

IELTS, TOFEL, entrance examination at different colleges or universities, Cambridge Examinations and the Oxford EFL examinations are some examples of proficiency test.

Hughes (1989, p. 73) says that proficiency test is designed to measure people's ability in language regardless of any training they may have had in the language. The aim of proficiency test is to assess the student's ability to apply in actual situations what s/he concerned with the students in relation to its further needs.

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is widely reorganized as a reliable means of assessing the language ability of candidates who need to study or work where English is the language of communication. These tests are designed to give future IELTS candidates an idea of whether their English is at required level. IELTS is owned by three partners: The University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council and IDP Education Australia.

There are two modules; one for academic module and one for general training module. Students should use appropriate addition for their needs. The academic module is for candidates wishing to study at undergraduate and graduate levels and for those seeking professional registration, certification and licensure. The general training module is for candidates wishing to immigrate to an English Speaking Country (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and UK) and for those wishing to train or study.

As Hughes stated IELTS is merely designed to label the competence and performance level of non-english speakers. It measures the specific capability of the person to handle the English environment within academic premises or non-academic i.e. vocational premises.

Proficiency tests test the global level of proficiency but it may not always do so because it can be specific in some cases. It tests what aspect of language i.e.

content of proficiency test looks forward, defining a student's language proficiency with reference to particular task which s/he requires to perform.

In this way; we can say proficiency test and IELTS are related to each other. IELTS is one of the examples of proficiency test.

1.1.3 IELTS Test Structure

The IELTS is a systematic and effective testing system. It tends to measure the possible four skills of person in English language. Here is the structure for IELTS for both academic module and general training module:

a) Listening

The listening component takes around 30 minutes to complete. There are 40 questions in four sections. A variety of question types is used in order to test a wide range of listening skills. These include ability to understand main ideas and detailed factual information, ability to understand the opinions and attitudes of speakers, ability to understand the purpose of an utterance and ability to follow the development of ideas.

Mostly, listening test of IELTS is given to the candidates through the recordings of native speakers' voice. The cassette is played and on the basis of that, the candidates have to complete the exercises.

b) Reading

The reading component takes 60 minutes to complete. There are 40 questions in three sections. A variety of question types is used in order to test a wide range of reading skills. These include reading for gist, reading for main ideas, reading for detail, skim reading, understanding detailed logical argument, recognizing writer's opinions, attitudes and inferences. The candidates get 1 minute 30 second time for completing each exercise. These different types of skills are selected through reading test.

c) Writing

The writing component takes 60 minutes to complete and consists of two tasks. Task 1 requires candidates to write at least 150 words and Task 2 requires candidates to write at least 250 words. For both tasks, candidates need to demonstrate their ability to write a response which is appropriate in terms of content, vocabulary and organizations of ideas.

d) Speaking

The speaking component takes between 11 and 14 minutes to complete. Every IELTS candidates have a face to face oral interview with an examiner. The speaking test is recorded. There are three parts to the speaking component; introduction, topic and discussions.

1.1.4 Test format

As stated in CUP (2009, p. 4) the earlier version of the IELTS test offered a choice of six modules covering five broad areas of UK tertiary education, plus one non-specific area. The six modules are respectively below:

- Life science
- Social study
- Physical sciences
- Technology
- Medicine
- General academics

The candidates get an option to choose mainly from these six modules, they can choose either pure science or social science or the test related to the modern technology or the general academics. Especially there were different tests for those who wanted to work in English speaking country. Each candidate was required to take three sections in there subject area or module and two common tests in general section:

M1 Study skill	G1 general reading
M2 Writing	G2 General listening
M3 Individual interview	

A further feature of the test was that the three subject area modules were thematically linked: candidates were required to write on topic connected to one of the texts in the study skill paper. Similarly, in the interview the candidates would be asked to discuss a topic already covered in M 1.

1.1.5 The IELTS Revision Project

During the 1980s the test numbers were quite low (4000 in 1981 rising to 10,000 by 1985), and it was clear that there were practical difficulties with the administration of the test, relating to the numbers of test items and the time taken to complete the test; there were also powerful reasons for change on the grounds of test redundancy.

In 1987 British Council commissioned Edinburgh University to conduct a validation study (Criper and Davies, 1988; Hughes, Porter & Weir, 1988). Following this report the IELTS Revision Project, Under the academic direction of Professor Charles Alderson of Lancaster University, was set up to oversee the design and construction of the revised test (Alderson & Clapham, 1993).

There was consensus to broaden the international participation in the revision project and in response to this the International Development Program of Australian Universities and colleges (IDP), now known as IDP Education Australia, joined British Council and UCLES to form an International partnership, reflected in the new name for the test: The International English Language Testing System. The immediate outcome of this partnership was led by an Australian academic, Professor David Ingram of Griffith University, to the revision project.

The recommendations of the revision team to simplify and shorten IELTS were accepted and a compromise was sought between practicality and maximum predictive power. Regarding this issue Clapham & Alderson (1997, p. 157) asserts:

“The number of subject-specific modules was reduced from six (the six modules were life sciences, social studies, physical sciences, medicine, general academic and technology) to three and the Non-Academic test for vocational candidates was replaced by the General Module. IELTS (the International English Language Testing System) first became operational in 1989”, (Retrieved from www.ielts.org).

A brief summary of the 1995 revision of IELTS can be found in charge and addressing this issue, Head & Taylor (1997, p. 34) asserts:

In keeping with this history of innovation, the IELTS partners continue to be committed to the ongoing development of the test. A revision project for the Speaking Test was launched in 1998 and the revised IELTS Speaking Test was introduced in July 2001. New assessment criteria for the Writing Test were operational from January 2005. A computerized version of IELTS was also introduced in 2005 at a number of IELTS centers. Information on all these projects can be found in past issues of the IELTS annual review, and in Cambridge ESOL’s quarterly publication – Research Notes.

The current test retains many of the features of the 1980 IELTS including the emphasis on the comprehension of extended text in the receptive papers (Reading and Listening), and the direct testing of performance through a face to face speaking test and the use of the essay and report formats in the Writing test. Other innovations such as the links of theme and content between papers and the experiment with subject specific modules have proved less successful have not survived into the current incarnation. However, the distinction between academic and vocational purposes has stood the test of time and is still reflected in the choice of Academic and General Training Modules. In recent years, the candidature has continued to grow rapidly, and by 2003 the total number of Academic and General Training candidates had exceeded half a million.

1.1.6 Writing Skill and Stages of Teaching Writing

Writing is the productive skill in the written mode of communication. It is a complete process of requiring many composite skills viz. mental, psychological, rhetorical, and critical. Writing is an extremely cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. According to the White and Arndit (1991), it is better to go through the stepwise process i.e. planning, making an outline, preparing the first draft and revising, editing and producing the final draft while teaching writing skill.

Planning

Teaching writing will not succeed unless the teacher prepares an overall plan of it. Planning is a pre writing activity that encourages the students to write. The following activities provide the learning experiences of students at this stage.

- a. Brain storming: It is the process of quick thinking without inhibition and fertile means of generating ideas. complex
- b. Consulting resources for information: Students share the information in a group by visiting library and refers to resources.

- c. Making notes: student makes structured and unstructured notes and gets ideas by means of spidergrams.
- d. Organizing notes: Student maintain unity and coherence by dividing ideas into paragraphs and using translational devices. He also writes topic on sentence and provide supporting sentences (details).

Making an outline

In this stage, the organized ideas are to be set in certain order and relationship by using notes and deciding paragraphs and sequence. It might be written in short phrases, incomplete sentences, but must be legible

Preparing the first draft

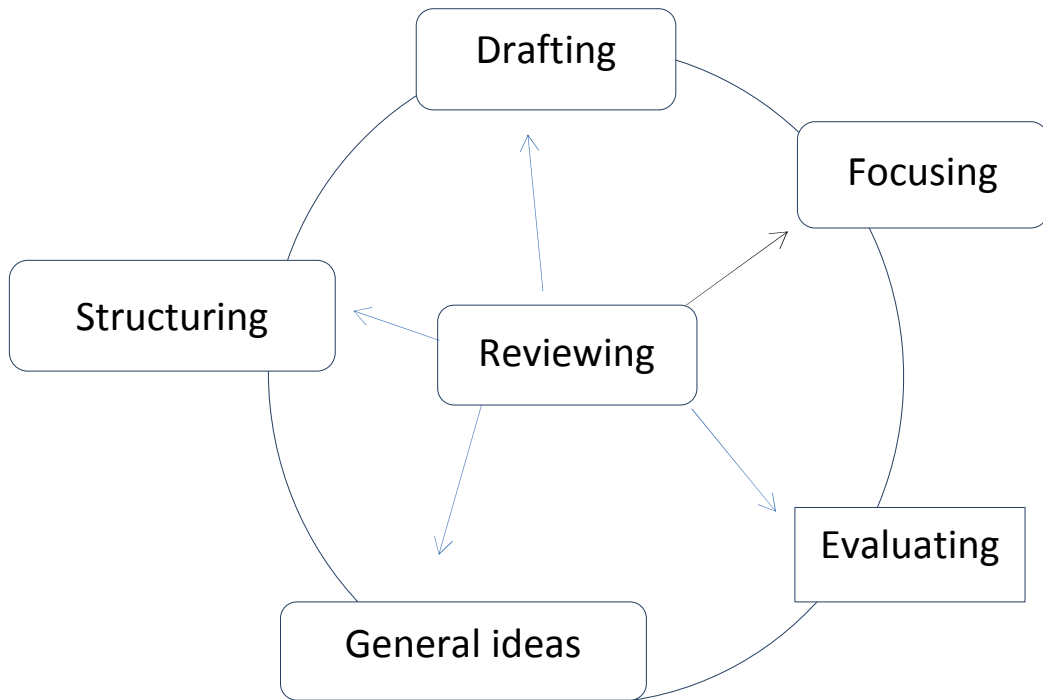
According to the White and Arndt (1991), drafting activities involve the process from pre-writing activity to actual writing process. They are moving from writer based writing to reader based writing. One important dimension of good writing is that the writers' ability to visualize the audience in terms of level, age, purpose, linguistic background interest depending on the genre of writing i.e. narrative, descriptive, expository, argumentative and reflective. The students deletes and adds something if essential.

Revising, Editing and Producing the Final Draft

First draft cannot be the final product. The writer can change the words, sentences or even some part of organization. S/he can judge the overall components of writing text. Production of the final copy is the goal of writing. This is the post writing activity where the students read carefully makes proofreading and makes final drafts for publication.

The term process writing has been bandied about quite a while in ESL/EFL classroom. Processes writing in the classroom may be constructed as a program of instruction which provides student with a series of planned learning experiences to help them understand the nature of writing at every point. While White and Arndt (1991) presents the model for writing process as:

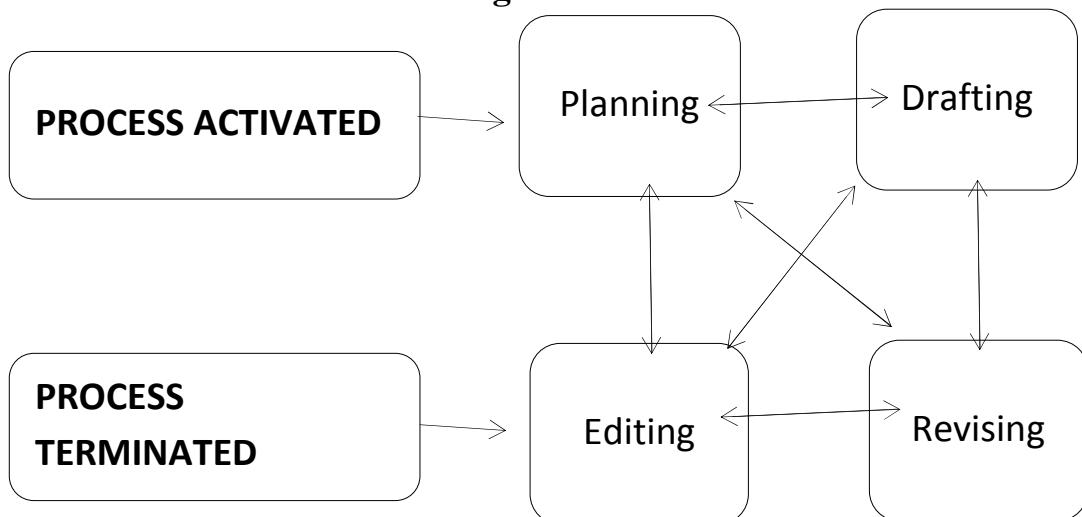
Figure No: 1



This figure shows the cyclical relationship of the writing processes. All processes are equally significant while teaching writing skills by IELTS instructor to the students/learners. He/She couldn't neglect the processes.

Similarly, Richard & Renandya (2003, p. 315) make the following figure for writing process.

Figure No: 2



This figure also shows a process of the writing. The process is activated with planning and continuous in drafting, revising, editing and terminated. If writing is not correct the process again restarts and continues. This process sometime follows random and interconnected path.

1.1.7 Testing of Writing

Khaniya (2005, p. 210) defines, “The best way to test people’s writing is to get the learners write. Indirect testing of writing cannot be accurate. Even if it is accurate there will be a problem of washback”. Murray (1987 p.21) states, “Writing is a process, not product and the process of writing can be studied and understood”. Writing is productive skill of language. It requires the students to be elicited for the production.

Testing of writing largely depends upon the purpose and context of testing. In this connection, (Bachman & Palmer 1996, as cited in Khaniya 2005) state that, the primary purpose is to test the abilities of the learners and the secondary purpose is to make decision on the basis of those inferences.

Khaniya further considers three problems in testing writing as:

- i. Setting writing tasks properly representative of the population of tasks that student should be able to perform.
- ii. The tasks that elicit samples of writing (set as many as possible) which truly represent the students’ ability.
- iii. The writing should be scored reliably (Holistic- Impressionistic, Analytic and a Combination of both).

The writing ability is tested usually in the form of essays, letters and reports.

The general technique of testing varies according to whether they deal separate factors such as punctuation, spelling, structure or vocabulary.

The writing skill in general has various sub skills. Heaton (1975, p. 47) has made an attempt to group the many and varied skills necessary for writing good prose into five main areas.

a) Grammatical Skills

It is the ability to write correct sentences.

b) Mechanical Skills

It is the ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to the written languages e.g. punctuation, spellings.

c) Treatment of Content

It is the ability to think creatively and develop thoughts, excluding all irrelevant information.

d) Stylistic Skills

It is the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraphs and use language effectively.

e) Judgment Skill

It is the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience.

1.1.8 Techniques of Teaching Writing

Harmer (1991) presents the following techniques which encourage the students in written practice. They are:

- a. Sentences writing
- b. Parallel writing
- c. Cohesion
- d. Oral composition
- e. Dictation

a. Sentence writing

Sentence writing aims to give students practice in specific written language.

For example;

i) The Fill- in

One way of providing controlled written practice is to get students to fill in blanks in sentence. This is extremely restricted, of course, though it is often useful during presentation stages and as controlled homework practice. The students get a lot of good sentence-writing practice, and the task is made more involving and challenging by having them choose between all the alternatives in the various boxes.

ii) What are they doing?

Such types of exercises contain pictures of peoples' different activities and the learners are asked to describe what the people are doing. This exercise has advantage of getting the students to use specific language to make their own sentences. It is thus slightly more challenging than the first example.

b. Parallel Writing

In this technique, students will first see a piece of writing and their use as a basic for their own work. The original piece that they look at will show them how English is written and guide them towards their own ability to express themselves in written English.

Examples of this writing can be presented in following techniques.

i) Description of Persons

In this technique, students have to write description of persons based on the first letter as in the model.

I am auspicious/altruist Prem Karki. I am from Dhankuta district. I always drink Aloe Vera Juice. I love athletic most. I love to listen creation of AC DC band.

ii) Hotels

Students have to write descriptions of hotels based on a guide book after first seeing how the symbols are used in a written model.

The teacher starts by getting the students to look at the 'key to symbols' either single or pairs. He or she finds out if there is any vocabulary the students do not understand. When it is clear that the students understand all the symbols they study the entry for the Everest hotel. They are then asked comprehension questions to check they have understood the text.

If necessary the teacher can then elicit similar sentence about. For example: Solti Hotel as a further check that they can apply the symbols to the model. Students are then asked to write (either singly, or in pairs, or in groups) a similar paragraphs about one of the other hotels. They might write something like the following.

The Danphe Hotel in Dhankuta is a simple hotel. It has no telephone. It is in the countryside.

This kind of writing which the students have to do here is very controlled; the activity is very like on oral substitution drill. Nevertheless the fact that students have to interpret symbols and relate them both to the original text and to the one they wish to write makes the activity extremely involving for them.

c. Cohesion

In this technique, number of exercises is designed to help the students to organize their writing clearly and coherently. This involves not only the ordering of sentences but also the use of cohesive devices (i.e. languages that is used to join the sentences together).

i) Coordinators Sunshine

In this technique, simple exercise for elementary students is designed to teach them how to join sentences with 'and' and 'but'.

Join the following pairs of sentences using 'and' or 'but'.

- i. Sunshine makes people happy. Sunshine can be bad for you.
- ii. Sunbathing feels good. People with light skins can get skin cancer from sunbathing.
- iii. People are more careful in the sunshine. People are friendlier to each other when the sun is out.

The students will not only had to select 'and or 'but', 'they' will also have to change 'sunshine' and sunbathing to 'it' and 'people' is changed into 'they'

d. Oral Composition

Oral composition has been popular in language teaching for a long time. The idea is that the teacher and the class together build up a narrative before the students are then asked write it. This process allows the teacher and the students to focus in on a variety of language items from verb tenses to cohesive devices, etc.

Oral composition can be handled with visual or aural stimuli. In other words, the teacher can show the students a series of pictures, presents an outline of a story, or play them with a series of sounds. For example;

The teacher shows the pictures of a person's sequential activity. The teacher starts by getting students to look at the first picture in the sequence.

The students are encouraged to say what the man is doing, e.g.

T- So What can you say about the man

S1 - The man sitting?

T - Ok but when ?

S2 - last night!

T - Hmm A bit before that

S3 - Last Monday.

T - Ok. So can someone give me a sentence?

S1 – Last Monday evening a man was sitting on his porch. He was smoking a pipe, etc.

The teacher then produces the next picture and elicits the same kind of language until the first four pictures have been dealt with. Students could then be given the last four postures as homework.

Oral compositions are useful for the teaching of narrative style and the use of various past tenses. However, they take a long time and should therefore, be used sparingly.

e. Dictation

Like many teaching techniques that go completely out of fashion for a time dictation is making a comeback. This is largely due to the work of Paul Davis and Mario Rinvolucri who have looked at the subject and changed it out of all recognition by asking the question, who should dictate what and to whom?

Two examples show how dictation can be a useful way of getting in to a topic

i) Text Dictation

In this techniques teacher tells the students to get out the pen and paper then dictate the following:

One of the most beautiful things I have ever seen is.....

Then the teacher tells them to complete the sentences themselves. They may do it seriously or superficially.

ii) Poetry Dictation

In this technique, the teacher brings one copy of poem into the classroom and either keeps it on the desk or pins it to a board. The students are put into groups. Each group sends a member up to the poem where they read only first line. They take this line back to their group and dictate it. Now second member of the group goes to the poem and reads the second line so that it can be dictated to the group. A third student goes up for the third line and so on.

The technique works beautifully because the students are kept guessing about what the next line(s) will be. They are far more involved in the meaning of the poem than they would be if they were just reading it, and they are getting writing practice.

What is important to note here is that we can also use dialogue and prose passages instead of poetry.

1.1.9 Writing Module in IELTS

As stated in Jakeman and McDowell (2006, p.58), the writing module in IELTS is designed for 60 minutes long and it has two sections.

Task- One

In task one, students are asked to write approximately 150 words in 50 minutes. It is important to remember that they are not stopped after 20 minutes and told to go on task two. It is their job to manage timing the test themselves. In other words, they have 20 minutes time to write about 150 words describing the visual representation given. In task one; they are given a ‘visual representation’ of some information. This could be given in a number of formats like table, graph, pie chart, diagram and illustration.

Students are usually asked to write some form of report to a teacher or a university lecturer using the information given. Less frequently they are asked to perform process based activities, to describe diagrams or illustrations.

Task- Two

In task two students are asked to write approximately 250 words in 40 minutes. They will be asked to write a short essay that expresses their opinion on an issue, or shows how to solve a problem, or requires them speculate about future trends. Again, like the reading module the topics they are given are of 'general interest' meaning that even if the question is related to a specific area of knowledge (e.g. Science do not need specialist scientific knowledge to write about it).

Task two is more important than task one in that there is more 'weightage' towards task two. If their performance in task one is not as good as it is in task two, they can still receive a good writing score. Candidates' task will be marked in three areas. They will get a mark from 1 to 9 on arguments, ideas and evidence, communicative quality and vocabulary and sentence structure. Their final band for task 2 will be effectively an average of the three marks awarded in these areas. Task 2 writing is more important than task 1 and to calculate the final writing mark, more weight is assigned to the task 2 than task 1. To get a good overall mark though, both tasks have to be well answered.

While addressing these two modules in IELTS writing test, the candidates have to focus on some main points and they are:

a. Arguments, ideas and evidence

Candidates writing should focus on the content to get a good band score. The 'arguments' is how the candidates present the issue. The 'ideas' part is how many and how good the candidates' ideas are in helping their argument. The 'evidence' is that facet which is used as back-up ideas in writing. Evidence is very important in task 2. The candidates need to bring in facts from their own experience in order to support their ideas in writing for IELTS test. The three parts really present the content and substance in candidates writing.

b. Communicative quality

This point focuses on how the candidates are making themselves understood and whether the reader of their writing understands what they are saying. It is also about are they (candidates) communicating well with the reader and are their ideas what they want to present understood by the reader? Therefore, communicative equality is also another important component of a good writing.

c. Vocabulary and sentence structure

This area refers to the grammar and choice of words used by candidates. It is concerned about whether the correct grammar and right words are used and whether they are used at the right time, in the right place and in the right way in the candidates' writing. However, IELTS is much more interested in communication rather than grammar accuracy; grammar is also a half of one section of three; and most of the candidates predominantly worried about their grammar.

1.1.10 Strategies for Writing

Writing is obviously a basic skill. The question remains what is the proper balance among processes, skills and content? Barrass (1982, p. 4) argues, "More writing is needed rather than more information." Barrass (1982, p. 1) further emphasizes "The numerous type of writing is undertaken as an undergraduate, and the importance of quality writing particularly when taking notes and answering examination question."

Student need to develop thinking skill because memorized facts would rapidly become obsolete. Risinger (1987, p. 3) regarding learning and writing writes:

Writing requires knowledge and focuses on thought. In order to write, students must have something to say However, student do not merely express knowledge by writing, they also discover knowledge.

Writing is inherently an integrative process, combining the total

intellectual capacities of the writer. Writing enhance critical thinking . . . writing shifts the responsibility for learning away from the teacher and towards the student with the sense of efficacy and achievement Writing leads to more questions and to the discovery of connections between events, people and ideas.

Risinger (1987, p. 3) insisted that in order to write effectively one should have knowledge, matter and means. He also predicts that if the students involve in writing they not only get the knowledge but they also discover the knowledge. Writing also involves and enhances the critical thinking, a writer become more critical to the subject if the writer involves in writing process. Writing empowers the students and leads to discover the connection between events people and ideas. Sometimes, writing also makes one strong in his/her opinion, the opinions and the attitudes are more vividly expressed if the writing is involved with strategies.

Writing is a powerful instrument of thinking because it provides students with a way of gaining control over their thoughts. Writing shapes their perceptions of themselves and the world. It aids in the personal growth and their effecting change in the environment. Students are often unwiring of the power of the written word. Greenberg and Rath (1985, p.12) states:

. . . enables the writer, perhaps for the first time, to sense the power of . . . language to affect another. Through, using, selecting, and rejecting, arranging and rearranging language. The student comes to understand how language is used.

Adolescents' writing ability develops gradually with incremental and uneven progress. In order to become empowered in writing, students need

concentration, instruction, practice, and patience. The teacher mandate is to assist adolescents to gain control over the written word.

In the writing process, one should:

-) Develop an explicit knowledge of phrases of the writing process.
-) Write frequently on a variety of topics for a variety of purposes and audiences.
-) Develop and understanding of the structures and conventions of language.
-) Know the appropriate use of punctuations and other non linguistic expressions.
-) Develop explicit knowledge of paraorthographic representation of the task as well as description and interpretation of paraorthographs.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

A number of research works have been carried out on ‘Proficiency of students in writing skill’ at the Department of English Education.

Ghimire (2004) carried out a research on ‘Proficiency of Students in Writing Skill’. He was interested to find out students’ writing proficiency in terms holistic analysis, cross-stream comparison and their performance in textual and non-textual writing. He selected 60 students using purposive sampling procedure and ranked them into four groups according to their writing performance. The data was collected using checklist. He found that most of the students were found to have dissatisfactory writing performance. He concluded that it is very difficult to get good marks in writing.

Shrestha (2007) carried out a research on ‘IELTS based Listening Proficiency of Bachelor First Year Students’. She was interested to find out IELTS based listening proficiency of bachelor first year students of TU affiliated and TU constituent campuses. The sample population of the study consist randomly selected 50 students. The required information was collected using checklist.

She found that the average listening proficiency of bachelor first year students was 57% that is 5 band score level according to the IELTS score which was below the level specified in the standard test, IELTS for the academic studies in the English speaking countries. She has also shown in the findings that the students of T.U. affiliated campuses were more proficient than those of the T.U. constituent campuses.

Malla (2008) carried out a research on 'IELTS writing proficiency of Bachelor Level Students'. The objective of his research was to find out the IELTS writing proficiency of Bachelor level students. This research only included the purposively selected 35 students of Tribhuvan University studying on different institutes and faculties in Kathmandu. It only studied academic writing module of IELTS. The students from Humanities and Education (majoring in English) were taken for the study. He found that students of T.U having good writing ability was not adequate in terms of IELTS standard since IELTS score is 5.68.

However, this study is different from previous studies because here have tried to find techniques used by IELTS instructor while teaching writing skill. Moreover, the study mainly focused on writing skill. In the case of IELTS, in order for others to learn the strategy of IELTS teaching and testing.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were

- a) To find out the techniques used by IELTS instructors while teaching writing skill.
- b) To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Significance of the Study

IELTS is one of the universally valid testing systems. IELTS is designed to evaluate the English language of the candidate whose native language is not English. Because IELTS test is independent of any curriculum or teaching method, the proficiency level of any test taker can be compared with that of any other student regardless of academic background or English training. Sometimes, very fluent students are found to be disappointed on the writing component of IELTS.

However, the study will give an insight into the techniques used by the instructor. Thus, this study not only provides the insight related to the IELTS techniques but also draws the attention of the concerned people such as text book writers, syllabus designers and other related persons. Moreover, this study provides techniques to create conducive environment for teaching writing skills. The pedagogical implications of this study will be quite considerable in Nepalese context for English language teaching. It will also be useful to the students who want to take IELTS exam for abroad study and also for those who want to go for abroad work.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

The methodology that was used to carry out this study is presented here.

2.1 Sources of Data

The study was based on both the primary and secondary sources of data.

2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data

IELTS instructors of Kathmandu valley were the primary sources of data.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data

The materials available in print and electronic media such as books, theses, articles, journals, reports, internet etc, which are related to proposed study, were consulted for the required information. Some of them are Wenden and Rubin (1987), O'malley & Chamton (1990), Stern (1992), Sahanaya, Lindeck and Stewart (2000), and so on.

2.2 Sampling Procedure

Ten IELTS instructors from the 10 different institutes of Kathmandu valley were selected utilizing purposive sampling procedure.

2.3 Tools for Data Collection

I have used questionnaires as the tools of data collection.

2.4 Process of Data Collection

I followed the following stepwise process while collecting data.

- 1) I visited the different institutes of Kathmandu valley and met IELTS instructors and concerned authorities.
- 2) I explained the instructors about the purpose of the study.

- 3) I distributed the questionnaire and requested them to fill in the questionnaire.
- 4) I collected the responses from the informants as the data of this study.

2.5 Limitations of the Study

- 1) The study was limited to the institutes of Kathmandu valley only.
- 2) The study was further limited to only to instructor of 10 different institutes of Katmandu valley.
- 3) It was limited to only writing skills in IELTS.
- 4) It was further limited only to the techniques used by IELTS instructor.
- 5) It was limited to only on descriptive and analytical approaches of interpretation.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

This section mainly deals with the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the 10 different instructors to fulfill the required objectives. The main objectives of this study were to find out the techniques used by the IELTS instructor while teaching writing skills the data collected through questionnaires are analyzed and interpreted in this chapter. They are described, analyzed, and interpreted in this section.

Being a researcher to ensure scientific quality of my study considering the ethical issue, I informed my research purposes and processes through written covering letter to informants and administrators of the selected organizations. In order to ensure the confidentiality in the research, private data identifying subject were not reported. Attention was paid to the protection of subjects' privacy by changing the names of individual subject. The research subjects were guaranteed that their view would be treated confidentially.

3.1 General Strategies Used by the Instructor

Firstly, the respondents were asked some informative questions about their overall practice of instructing writing skill in IELTS. As per my request the instructors from different IELTS teaching institution provided valuable information. The responses to the particular questions by the particular respondents are presented under different subheadings.

3.1.1. Materials Used by IELTS Instructors

Teaching requires materials to guide and facilitate the learning process. As the general language teaching process, the IELTS also requires some materials. In the context of IELTS, instructors use various supportive materials as the nature and situation of classroom and text. Generally these materials consist of Cambridge books, newspaper and magazine, maps, charts, diagrams, cards, information technology based devices like OHP, multimedia and internet based

online materials. Similarly in some cases instructor used contemporary social issues as materials for teaching writing.

Table No: 1

Materials used by IELTS instructors

SN	Instructor	Materials
1	I ₁	Books, Social (hot) issues
2	I ₂	Cambridge books
3	I ₃	Diagrams, Maps, List of technical words, Connectives words, Linking words
4	I ₄	Diagrams, News paper articles, Grammar book, CD/DVD
5	I ₅	Flash card, OHP
6	I ₆	Cambridge texts, other online materials, Magazines
7	I ₇	Pen, Pencil, Eraser, Paper chart, Diagram
8	I ₈	Books, Magazine (social issues) Flash cards, Multimedia
9	I ₉	Cambridge books, and test series, News paper and magazines
10	I ₁₀	Cambridge books and test series , News paper and magazines

By analyzing data of this table, I found that most of the instructors preferred to use authentic written materials such as Cambridge books, newspapers and magazines as the nature of the task. Some of them preferred to use maps, charts, diagrams, cards, etc like para-orthographic texts and some of them preferred to use information technology based materials like OHP, Multimedia and internet based online materials. Similarly in some cases instructor used contemporary social issues as the matter of writing practice.

Hence the overall responses show that the techniques of using advanced scientific technology and para-orthographic text materials were shadowed by traditional materials like text book, grammar book.

3.1.2. Use of Extra Writing Exercise by the Instructors

I had questioned the instructors that whether they gave any extra writing exercises (eg. Giving directions, daily diary writing, daily memo and note making and so forth) in the case of developing writing skill or not? And the answers by all 10 instructors were similar.

Table No: 2

Use of Extra Writing Exercise by the Instructors

S.N.	Responses	Instructors	Percentage
1	Yes	10	100%
2	No	0	0%
3	Other	0	0%
	Total	10	100%

By analyzing the collected data from above table, I found that they preferred to give more extra writing exercises. All instructors used more extra exercise in order to develop the students/learners competence level.

3.1.3. Teaching Punctuations Separately

Written language itself is not complete with letters, words, sentences, phrases. It requires the use of punctuations (capitals, commas, apostrophes, hyphens) as necessary. Perfect use of punctuations has great importance in writing skill of IELTS. So that the instructors has to instruct the student these punctuations either through written task or separately

Table No: 3

Teaching Punctuations Separately

S.N.	Responses	Instructor	Percentage
1	Yes	10	100%
2	No	0	0%
3	Other	0	0%
	Total	10	100%

Analyzing the data of the table here I found that all instructors taught the punctuations separately in the IELTS classroom.

3.1.4. Correction of Mistakes

Student learns by correcting their mistakes themselves or by the instructors. Normally the student's mistakes are corrected by the instructor in IELTS classroom. The creative correction of mistakes by the instructors or students plays the great role in learning.

Table No: 4

Correction of Mistakes

S.N.	Frequency	Instructor	Percentage
1	Daily	07	70%
2	Occasionally	01	10%
3	Sometime	02	20%
4	Never	0	0%
	Total	10	100%

Hence by analyzing the collected data from above table, I found that 70% of instructors preferred to correct the student's mistakes daily, 20%, instructors

preferred correct sometime and 10% preferred to correct occasionally. So that this data from given table shows that the mistakes correction technique is mostly prevailing in IELTS class to teach writing skill.

3.1.5. Student Penalizing in Making Mistakes

Reward and punishment are important in teaching skills. Teacher has to give more reward than punishment to motivate the students in learning. While my research works the instructors were asked if they penalized students in their mistake. The purpose of this question was to know the use of reward and punishment techniques by instructors while teaching writing skill in IELTS.

Table No: 5

Student Penalizing in Making Mistakes

S.N.	Responses	Instructor	Percentage
1	Yes	05	50%
2	No	05	50%
3	Other	0	0%
	Total	10	100%

As the table shows 50% of the instructors said that they preferred to penalize the students by giving extra exercises and tasks to perform, and on the other hand 50 % did not penalize and they did not use any other option in this case.

3.1.6. Use of Free Writing Exercises by Instructors

There are several types of writing strategies and techniques to develop writing skill of students such as guided writing, free writing etc. Among them free writing is one of the most used technique. It helps the learners to develop their composition ability.

Table No: 6

Use of Free Writing Exercises by Instructors

S.N.	Responses	Instructor	Percentage
1	Yes	09	90%
2	No	01	10%
3	Other	0	0%
	Total	10	100%

The above table shows that most of the instructors i.e. 90% preferred to use free writing exercises in IELTS classroom. Remaining 10% of the total instructors did not prefer to use free writing and there were no use of any more other techniques.

3.1.7. Orientation, Trainings, and Refresher Class Taken on the Regards of Teaching

The scholars have developed some standard techniques of instructing writing skills to the learners. To learn these techniques instructors have to take trainings, orientations or any refresher class either before or in regular interval of the session. It is most essential part of professional development of instructors.

Table No: 7

Orientation, Trainings, and Refresher Class Taken on the Regards of Teaching

S.N.	Responses	Instructor	Percentage
1	Yes	05	50%
2	No	02	20%
3	Partially	02	20%
4	Reject	01	10%
	Total	10	100%

Hence analyzing the collected data I found 50% of the total instructors were fully oriented, trained, and refreshed but 20% were only partially trained. Remaining 20% instructors had not taken any refresher trainings. So we can conclude that the half of the instructors were wellnoriented for their career.

3.1.8. Helpfulness of these Programs in Teaching Writing Skills

After asking aforementioned question I had asked were these programs helpful to learn techniques for teaching writing skills in IELTS? The responses were as below.

Table No: 8

Helpfulness of These Programs in Teaching Writing Skills

SN	Responses	Instructor	Percentage
1	Yes	07	70%
2	No	0	0%
3	Reject	03	30%
	Total	10	100%

This table shows that most of the instructors said the orientation and refresher programmes were helpful in teaching writing skill in IELTS. In total respondents 70% of the instructors agreed in the case of helpfulness. 30% of the instructors did not want to respond.

3.1.9. Ways of Evaluating Students Writing

Evaluation is an important part of teaching learning process. It plays a vital role in teaching writing skill of IELTS. No output could be measured unless we measure the activities using proper techniques, devices as well as methods. So the instructors were asked to choose the evaluation techniques whatever did they use in writing skill teaching process from given option in questionnaire.

Table No: 9

Ways of Evaluating Students Writing

S.N.	Responses	Instructor
1	Just by making sure that students have done the writing exercise	01
2	By pointing out the spelling, grammar, punctuation and conceptual mistakes	04
3	By making suggestive correction in their mistake	08
4	By asking their friends to correct	0
	Total	10

Analyzing the views of all the respondents the above table shows that 8 instructors preferred to evaluate by making suggestive correction in their mistakes. On the other hand, 4 instructors preferred to evaluate the writing by pointing out the spelling grammar, punctuation and conceptual mistakes. Similarly 1 instructor preferred to evaluate the writing skill of student by

making sure that students have done the writing exercises. And no instructors wanted to evaluate the student's mistakes by asking their friends to correct.

Hence this data shows the instructors merely preferred to evaluate writing skill in IELTS class by using easier and appreciative way of evaluation that is by making suggestive correction in the mistakes.

3.2 Overall Techniques Used in Instructing Writing Skill in IELTS

Collected data is analyzed and interpreted in subsequent headings separately.

3.2.1 Amount of Time Allocated for Teaching Writing Skill

IELTS has four different skills. All skills are equally important for language development of the students. Among these four skills speaking and writing are productive skills rest of these listening and reading are productive skills. All skills are difficult to learn for non-English speakers and this difficulty stage may be different for person to person and skill to skill. Expert instructors most know the time division for all skills, on the basis of the learner's knowledge and performance level. By analyzing the collected data I found the following facts.

I₁ believed that all the skills are equally important to secure good band score. However, he gave more time for reading skill because he mentioned that the students are comparatively weak in reading. I₂ on the other hand, wanted to take all skills as equally important ones and he stated, "Equal time should be distributed". That means he provides equal time to all the skills while teaching IELTS. I₃ mentioned that more time should be given for reading skill of about one and half week for a learner whereas the same learner should be given with one week for writing and the same for speaking and listening too. Similarly I₄ believed that all the skills are equally important so he allocated equal time for teaching all the skills in order to make students perfect in all skills and score good band. I₅ replied that he allocates more time in teaching reading and writing compared to listening and speaking as he found reading and writing are

quite tough than other skills. However, I₆, on the other hand preferred to decide the amount of time for particular skill on the basis of students' ability in different skill. He stated, "Allocating time is affected by student's capacity". I₇ preferred to allocate more time for reading and writing than speaking and listening and I₈ and I₁₀ also replied the same where as I₉ prefers to distribute equal time for four skills.

By analyzing the data, I found that most of the respondents agreed that all the skills are equally important. Some of them preferred to focus reading largely and some of them also preferred to focus writing as well. Only one respondent replied that the amount of time depends on particular students' level and likewise few of the respondents allocated equal time for all the skills though they all agree that all the skills are equally important.

3.2.2 Use and Effectiveness of Supportive Materials in Developing Writing Skill

In the context of IELTS, instructors use various supportive materials. Generally materials consist of Cambridge books, newspaper and magazine, maps, charts, diagrams, cards, information technology based materials as like OHP, multimedia and internet based online materials. Similarly in some case instructors used contemporary social issues as material for teaching writing.

I₁ usually preferred to use books, social issues as materials. He also believed that the supportive materials are quite useful for the students in developing writing skill. I₂ usually preferred to use Cambridge books as materials in teaching writing skill and he believed that different references are equally supportive to sharpen the skill of students in writing. I₃ used diagrams, maps, list of technical words, connective words and linking words in teaching writing skill. He further stated, "I do use supportive material of different examples. I₄ usually preferred to use diagrams, newspaper articles, grammar books; CD/DVD's to involve students in more practice. I₄ believed that the use of certain segments of English newspapers ('intuition' published in the Kathmandu

post) is one important strategy for teaching writing skill. I₅ preferred to use flash card and over head projector as usual materials. He replied that he often use supportive materials or different publications for teaching writing because they are effective in developing writing skill.

Similarly I₆ believed that the use of daily newspaper as supportive material has a huge impact in developing writing skill so he has chosen the newspaper 'The Himalayan Times' as a supportive material in teaching writing skill. I₇, I₈ and I₁₀ also believed that they are effective in developing writing skill so they prefer to use such materials. Similarly I₉ replied that such materials help to give more exposure to the students.

Regarding the use and effectiveness of supportive materials in writing skills, almost all of the respondents agreed that is the common strategy in teaching writing skill and quite helpful too. Varieties of materials were found to be used in teaching writing skills from daily newspapers to internet and from Cambridge publications to Nepalese newspaper like The Himalayan Times and The Kathmandu Post. Likewise, the materials used in teaching writing skill were vary from paper and printed material to digital and electronic materials like OHP, from flash cards to books and magazine. In conclusion, all the respondents agreed that the use of materials from the different source and publication is the most in teaching writing skill in IELTS.

3.2.3 Use of Writing Exercises in Teaching Writing Skill

Instructors may use different written tasks to practice the students in various writing activities. Generally they use report, essay, letter or written tasks from Cambridge books in writing skill.

Regarding practicing different exercises for writing skill, I₁ said that different topics are given to the students and made them to explore the issues. I₂ answered that essays, report writings etc. are the exercises that he provides students for writing skill. I₃ believed that report writing and essay writing are useful for academic test and letter writing and essay writing for general writing

as exercises in writing skill. I₄ mentioned that he used exercises from Cambridge publications' IELTS-1 to IELTS-8. He also added, "Furthermore I suggest them to go through the videos of YouTube.com to develop writing skill and practice following the given instructions". I₅, on the other hand, stated that he prefers to describe the 'pictures and diagrams' exercises for Task I and 'view giving' exercises for Task II. I₆ mentioned that the exercises on report, essay and critics are given to his students as exercises for writing skill. Likewise, I₇ mentioned that he preferred to use exercises like describing maps, charts, diagrams, bar diagrams for the task-1 and the writing relate to contemporary issues for task-2. I₈ and I₉ stated that he asks the students to explore issues providing with different topics. I₁₀ stated that he prefers to involve his students in different forms of writing and different activities to extract the factual information and report writing for figures.

From the above data it is found that most of the respondents preferred to use report writing, essay writing, letter writing for developing writing skill. Some instructors preferred to use diagrammes and pictures with exercises for writing skill. The use of exercises for explaining the issues from different topics and use of exercise following 'YouTube' instructions from internet are rarely used by the instructors. So the varieties of exercises can be used in teaching the both writing general writing and academic writing in IELTS.

3.2.4 Use of 'Filling the Blanks' in Cloze Set in Guided Writing

Use of the task could depend on the choices of the instructors. As the practice of activities cloze set is more helpful to engage them in writing exercises and practices. The condition of using filling the blanks in cloze set is as below.

As he respond 'not very often' to the question "How often do you use filling the blanks in a close set to teach guided writing?", I₁ does not believe in the role of filling the blanks in teaching guided writing. Similarly, I₂ also agreed with I₁ and mentioned "we do not use such exercises". I₃ however mentioned that he prefers to use 'filing the blanks' exercise for two to three periods. I₅, on the

other side, stated, "I use filling the blanks in a close set rarely to teach guided writing to the students" whereas I₄ agreed with I₁ and I₂. Similarly I₆ mentioned that he occasionally used this technique where as I₇, I₈ and I₁₀ rarely do the activity and I₉ deny the activity and stated that he does not think such activity is helpful in IELTS.

Analyzing all the responses, it can be concluded that they rarely use 'filling the blanks' strategy to teach guided writing in IELTS.

3.2.5 Use of Completing Sentences in Guided Writing

As a technique of teaching writing skill in IELTS, the instructors used free writing and guided writing activities. In guided writing some instructors used complete sentences as the hints for students but some instructors do not preferred to use this complete sentences. The information from collected data is as follows.

I₁ stated that the use of completing sentences in guided writing is fruitful. He mentioned, "In my opinion, students will have the proper knowledge about the sentence pattern, structure and grammar." I₂ also agreed with I₁. He believed that it helps the students to have knowledge about how to make a sentence. I₃ also mentioned that he uses 'completing sentences' technique for guided writing. He further added that it helps the students to be familiar with new words as well as technical words. I₄, on the other hand believed that the use of completing sentences does not make guided writing meaningful because there is the chance of frequent repetition of the same words. I₅ agreed that 'completing sentences' exercise helps the students to give the accurate description and enhance their language and accuracy. However, I₆ strongly put disagreement with the technique and mentioned, "I don't agree, completing blanks is not sufficient and that never make guided writing meaningful and effective. I₇ believed that it is useful for the beginners of IELTS course and in view of I₈ and I₁₀ it helps the students to have proper knowledge about language structures. However, I₁₀ stated that it is insufficient.

Except strong disagreement of only 3 respondents, most of the respondents prefer to follow 'use of completing sentences in guided writing' strategy to teach writing skill in IELTS. By analyzing the data it can be claimed that this strategy helps the instructor to deal some accuracy, sentence pattern selection, vocabulary building (use of new words) by repetition, accurate description.

3.2.6 Use of Picture Cards and Picture Cues in Teaching Guided Writing

Picture cards and picture cues are also used in guided writing. The technique of using this type of supportive materials is more effective while teaching writing skill in IELTS. In this type of task instructors provides pictures or picture cues and students are asked to describe.

Regarding the effectiveness and practice of using picture cards and picture cues, I₁ believed that it helps the students to generate the ideas be elaborative. I₂ on the other hand stated, "These things of activities are used while teaching English language, not in IELTS." I₃ believed that the use of such technique is beneficial in teaching guided writing. He added that the students can get the access to describe the diagram in a technical way with the limitation that such technique is helpful and the benefit of giving true description is gained through the use of it. I₆ stated that students get skill to write report or to describe real situation with help of using picture cues and picture cards in teaching guided writing. I₇ replied that it is useful for developing accuracy in factual writing. Similarly, I₈ believed that the students can generate ideas through the use of picture cues and they are useful for building descriptive skill. I₉ also agreed that those picture cards and picture cues bring variation and make learning process memorable as well as effective. I₁₀ preferred to use picture cues and picture cards to make the students to get real information.

The use of picture cards and picture cues is also one important and essential strategy in teaching guided writing. Though one respondent denied the use of picture cues in IELTS, others advocated the usefulness of this strategy for

developing student's skill to generate the ideas to be elaborative, to get access to describe diagrammes in technical way with the limitation of words, to write report, to describe real situation and so forth.

3.2.7 Activities used in Task-1 test

Language learning could not be sustained unless the adequate activities are not performed. So IELTS have 2 types of tasks i.e. task-1 and task-2 both tasks have different activities designed by the instructors.

For the question "What kind of activities do you perform while teaching writing skill for Task -1 test", the respondents gave different responses. I₁ stated he preferred to use description of different figures like pie-chart, bar diagram, line graph and flow diagram. I₂ mentioned that he guides the students how to make writing complex and where to use linking words appropriately. I₃ mentioned that he prefer to use in Task-1 test. He stated that he teaches them technical words and he makes the students aware of technical words information, body and conclusion (if required). I₄ on the other hand mentioned that Task-1 is the pictorial type of question so that he preferred to involve the students in compare and contrast the given the data from the diagram and explain about the process briefly. I₅ on the other side did not mentioned any specific activities for the question rather he mentioned that he makes the students practice the task related to skill used in Task-1. I₆ stated that in this test students should report or compare and extract he preferred to give rules or ideas for reporting. I₇ replied that he used pictures diagrammes, and other visual materials frequently for task-1 test. Similarly, I₈ preferred to gave some rules and techniques for reporting for task-1 test. I₉ tries to prepared his students to be able to handle guided writing technically, whereas, I₁₀ replied that he often involves his students in developing skills to give the factual information based on the figures.

In conclusion, varieties of activities are used in Task-1 test by the instructors. Most of the instructors use description of different figures such as pie-chart,

bar-diagram, line graph, flow graph etc. Likewise, compare and contrast activity is also widely used by the instructors 'extracting information' activity is also used by the instructors.

3.2.8 Activities used in Task-2 test

As like in task-1 the IELTS instructors also have to pay more attention to design task-2 to teach writing skills in the classroom. How much the task-1 is important task-2 also same in teaching. The techniques to design task-2 and its activities are varied in instructor to instructors.

In this category I have analyzed what kind of activities the respondents perform while dealing with Task-2 test in writing. Regarding this matter, I₁ stated that he involves his students in practicing different sorts of writing like argumentative, discursive and descriptive. I₂ on the other hand stated that he guides the students on length of writing Task-2. He further added that the use of correct ideas according to the questions should be focused. I₃ preferred to teach the students the planning and writing procedure of argumentative essay for Task-2 test. I₄ on the other hand mentioned that he prefers to provide some specific strategies to the students like; the paragraph should be 4 to 5; first of all make plan and favors the suitable idea with example and explain about it avoiding the mistake of grammar. Similarly, I₅ mentioned that while teaching writing skill for Task-2 test, he preferred to ask the students to give the answer being specific to the question and ask the students to give their views at the end of the writing. He further stated that he asks them not to write less than 250 words. I₆ stated that in this type of task, students should show their creativity with effective composition so he suggests them how to write effective and creative writing. I₇ on the other hand, stated that he teaches the students to heat on the head of the questions and elaborate the answer according to the demand of question and words limit. He further added that he taught his students not to over generalize their answer. I₈ mentioned that he involves his students in writing answers being specific to questions and he also preferred to involve them in different styles of writing such as argumentative, analytical, descriptive

and so forth. I₉ replied that he focuses on special techniques for the proper organization of writing according to the topic and issues for Task-2 test, whereas, I₁₀ suggests the students to make writing effective and standard in terms of vocabulary, accuracy of sentence structure, illustration and arrangement.

In nutshell, whatever activities they choose to use for Task-1 test, all the instructors are largely concentrated on giving technical ideas to their students.

3.2.9 Strategies Used in Teaching Free Writing

There are several types of writing strategies and techniques to develop writing skill of students. Among them Free writing is one of the most used technique. Generally students are given a topic or asked to choose their favorite topic and write about it. The instructors facilitates the student and provides appreciative corrections and constructive feedback while and after the writing.

For the question what kind of strategies do you use while guiding your students in free writing, the respondents give different answers. I₁ stated that he mainly followed two strategies i.e. proper use of vocabulary and proper word selection and transition of words. Regarding the strategies used in teaching free writing, I₂ mentioned that he focused on grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure. I₃ on the other hand stated that he preferred to make the students able to write the points in clear-understanding point along with relevant examples and experiences. I₄ mentioned that the most important strategy for writing is to make plan. He further added other strategies like making students aware of selecting 3 to 4 reason for argument and giving examples to each reason. He preferred to suggest his students to write free writing within 4 to 5 paragraphs. Similarly I₅ mentioned that he asks the students to write the free writing in more than two paragraphs. He added that in the first paragraph, he asked the students to introduce the topic, then in the succeeding paragraphs, he asked them to give their logics and in the concluding paragraph, he asked them to give their views. I₆ mentioned that strategies depends on the topic but

generally paragraphing, reasoning, comparing and contrasting etc are major strategies for it. I₇ stated that he taught his students to become imaginative and ask them to brainstorm that by doing so, their free writing seems logical and sound. I₈ mentioned some strategies that he followed while dealing with free writing as, vocabulary selection and proper use of vocabulary, dividing paragraphs with at least an idea in each such as topic, logic and detail information, and conclusion.

Analyzing the view of all the respondents, making plan can be taken as the basic strategy for teaching free writing and it involves different activities like selection of words, proper use of vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, logical presentation with relevant illustration, and required limitation of words, arrangement of paragraph and brainstorming, and organizing the ideas in writing mainly.

3.2.10 Similarities and Differences between Free Writing and Guided Writing in Terms of Activities

Students need more practices with varieties of activities. Regarding this fact the instructor used to design and set different types of activities. Among them free writing and guided writing are also practiced. Generally free writing develops their composition ability and guided writing develops their performance ability so they are important in teaching writing in IELTS. Both have some similarities and some differences in terms of their activities.

I₁ believed that students are more bound to certain issue or subject matter in guided writing than in free writing. Regarding this matter I₂ mentioned nothing but I₃ stated that in free writing the supportive points differ from the another whereas in guided writing the points are almost similar. I₄ mentioned that reading the question carefully, avoid the mistake in grammar in writing are some similarities. He further mentioned that difference between them is free writing contains 4 to 5 paragraph with reason and example but guided writing is 3 paragraph with descriptive. Regarding the similarities and differences in

terms of activities used in free writing, I₅ stated that teaching free writing and guided writing are completely different because writing consists of giving views. I₆ mentioned that both are composition but guided writing consists of descriptions of facts but free writing consists of reasons or creative compositions. I₇ stated that teaching free writing and guided writing is completely different. He added that free writing is spontaneous while guided writing is instructional. He further mentioned that there are limitations in guided writing where students are bound to follow certain rules and regulations. I₈ mentioned that the students are not allowed to write their own ideas and views freely in guided writing whereas they are allowed in free writing. I₉ stated that free writing is subjective while guided writing is objective one. I₁₀ stated that the concentration on the subject matter or issue as the main similarity between free writing and guided writing. He further added that they are different in terms of their nature, since guided writing is more bound one.

In a nutshell, the respondents took free writing and guided writing as different tasks in terms of activities used in them. Almost all the instructors argued guided writing is somehow restricted in comparison to free writing.

3.2.11 Differences between Task-1 and Task-2 Test in Terms of Teaching Techniques

People believes that task-1 and task-2 are similar in more cases but these only similar but not exactly similar. Both tasks are designed keeping the communicative activities in core and more practiced. I had questioned to my research respondents whether these are different or not? I got the following information in terms of techniques used to designing tasks.

I₁ believed that in terms of teaching Task-2, students must be taught to explore certain issue in its depth or similar sorts of pattern. I₂, on the other side, states, “One is subjective and another is objective.” I₃ believed that in Task- 1, technical words to describe the diagrams are taught. I₄ stated that Task -1 is the

pictorial type of question i.e. descriptive where as Task-2 is the free style of writing. I₅ mentioned that there are differences like managing time, making actual descriptions and giving views, forming and changing of paragraphs etc. I₆, on the other side stated that Task -1 is descriptive type test and Task -2 is creative type. I₇ believed that Task-1 and Task-2 are somehow different in terms of teaching techniques. He stated that Task-1 writing demands factual description while the Task-2 does not demand it. He further added that Task-2 rather has more weightage regarding scores and time. I₈ stated that the focus is given to generalize the idea and explore the in-depth detail. I₉ also agreed with the view of I₈ and stated that ideas for extracting factual information and presenting the information with selection of proper words technically is taught in Task-1. In Task-2 idea of flowing message and opinion with appropriate length, use of selected vocabularies properly, advance way of writing with proper arrangement is focused mainly.

Due to the differences in nature of Task- 1 and Task- 2 test, the different techniques are used in teaching them, despite the similarity in mechanics of writing.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Findings

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the data, the following findings have been drawn.

- 1) Almost all the respondents told that they use text book and grammar book as supportive materials for teaching.
- 2) All the instructors used extra writing (giving direction, daily diary, memo, note making) while instructing writing skill.
- 3) Punctuations were taught separately by all the instructors.
- 4) Seventy percent of the instructors were found to correct students' mistakes daily.
- 5) Ninety percent of the instructors were found to use free writing exercises.
- 6) Most of the respondents were found to give more time for teaching reading skill and some of them give equal focus in writing skill among the four skills.
- 7) Describing the diagrammes and pictures were the more common exercises used in guided writing.
- 8) 'Fill in the gaps' exercise for guided writing was found as rarely used strategy.
- 9) Most of the respondents preferred to use 'completing sentences' for guided writing.
- 10) Almost all of the respondents were found to use picture cards and picture cues while teaching guided writing.
- 11) Most of the instructors told that the activities like describing diagrammes, graphs, pie charts, were used in task-1 test.

- 12) 'Making plan' in writing with selection of words, grammatical accuracy, logical presentation with illustration, proper organization were found as widely used strategies by the instructors in teaching free writing.
- 13) More bound activities were suitable for guided writing and conversely students can express their views in free writing.
- 14) Task-1 test and Task-2 test are different in terms of their nature so different types of activities used separately.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of above mentioned findings, I would like to make the following suggestions. This study shows these implications to the instructors, students and those who are concern with the field of teaching IELTS.

- 1) The instructors should use as more supportive materials as possible and all the materials should be genuine in the case of language used in them.
- 2) Modern means of supportive materials could be more effective and relevance if they had used in more scientific way.
- 3) It would be effective if the punctuations were taught through the text.
- 4) Most of the EFL, L2 and SL learners have weak performance in writing so more time should be given for writing skills.
- 5) The instructor should pay concern to involve the students to generate ideas, describe and elaborate diagrammes on technical way, write report and so forth.
- 6) "Fill in the gaps" for cloze set type activities should be emphasized to develop their practice.
- 7) Instructors should involve their students practicing not only describing different figures such as; pie chart, bar-diagram, line-graph, flow-graph etc but also comparing and contrasting them too.
- 8) Students should be encouraged for 'making plan' for their writing largely. Instructors should make them aware by preparing them to follow certain strategies in writing such as; selection of words,

grammatical accuracy, logical presentation of ideas with appropriate illustration and proper organization of writing.

- 9) Instructors should involve their students in more bound activities for guided writing and conversely hot issues should be provided for free writing frequently.
- 10) Task-1 and Task-2 are different activities based on learner's previous knowledge. Pictorials, graphics, maps and diagram, types of activities should be focused separately for task-1 and free compositions graphical representations and pictorial presentations types of activities should be designed separately.

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APPENDIX I

Questionnaire

Personal Information of the Respondent

Name:

Name of the Institute:

Educational Qualification:

Answer the following questions on the basis of your personal experience and practice

1) What materials do you use in teaching writing?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

2) Do you give extra writing exercises?

- a) Yes
- b) No

3) Do you teach students the use of capitals, commas, apostrophes, hyphen etc. separately?

- a) Yes
- b) No

4) How often do you correct their writing?

- a) Daily
- b) Sometimes
- c) Occasionally
- d) Never

5) Do you penalize students' mistakes in writing?

- a) Yes
- b) No

6) Do you conduct any free writing exercise?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If 'Yes how often are they organized?

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13) What sort of writing exercises do you make the students do in practicing writing skills?

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14) How often do you use filling the blanks in a close set to teach guided writing?

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15) Do you agree that completing sentences can also be used to teach guided writing in IELTS? Justify your answer with reasons.

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16) What benefits can be achieved through the use of picture cards and picture cues while teaching guided writing?

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17) What kinds of activities do you perform while teaching writing skill for task-1 test?

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18) What kinds of activities do you perform while teaching writing skill for task-2 test?

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19) What kinds of strategies do you use while guiding your students in free writing?

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20) In what ways the activities used in teaching free writing and guided writing are similar or different?

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21) What is the difference between task-1 test and task-2 test in terms of teaching techniques used in them?

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Respected Sir/Madam,

I am doing my research on “Techniques used by IELTS instructor while teaching writing skill”. I would like to request you to assist me with information enclosed in form of questionnaire.

Information provided by you would be of great help to me in making my research as one of the best and a major increase in the knowledge in terms of research study. I would like to assure you that the information you provide would be confidential and would only be used for the purpose of this research.

Thanking you,

Best regards,

Suresh Adhikari

APPENDIX-II

List of Instructors

S.N.	Fictitious Name Given in this Thesis	Actual Name of the Teacher	Academic Qualification
1	I ₁	-----	M.A.
2	I ₂	Nabaraj KC	M.A.
3	I ₃	Bikash Khanal	M.A.
4	I ₄	Indra Bhadur Rai	M.Ed.
5	I ₅	Dil Kumar Deuja	M.A.
6	I ₆	Kabiraj Dhakal	M.ed
7	I ₇	Dinesh Karki	M.Ed.
8	I ₈	Kapil Pd. Timilsina	M.A.
9	I ₉	Suman Rajbhandri	M.A.
10	I ₁₀	Bibek Joshi	M.A./ B.ed.

APPENDIX - III

Name of Institute

S.N.	Name of Instructor	Name of institute
1	I₁	OLC International Education Bagbazar
2	I₂	Garden Int'l Education Kathmandu
3	I₃	Euro Link Intl Kathmandu
4	I₄	OZONE Int'l Educational Consultancy, Bagbazar Kathmandu
5	I₅	Newton Int'l Education
6	I₆	Linkage Education, Bagbazar Kathmandu
7	I₇	NIEC Educational Consultancy Kathmandu
8	I₈	Wise Owl Edu. Con. Kathmndu
9	I₉	Rohini Intl. Bagbazar Kathmandu
10	I₁₀	Four Nation Int'l Education Kathmandu