# Learning to Write and Writing to Write: Composition Instruction from Habit Formation to Cognition

**Abstract**

Over the last fifty years or thereabouts, there has been an upsurge in SL/FL rhetoric studies that have given rise to a panoply of theories and approaches that have contributed and still contribute to a better teaching and learning of writing. This paper aims at offering a an account of the ingenious methods to teach writing. In actual fact, such theoretical frameworks draw heavily upon the various learning processes which were put forward all along the twentieth century, viz. behaviorism (habit formation) and cognitivism (cognitive science). What truly characterized the evolution of such spectrum is the shift from focusing on the final product to focusing on the composing processes. Indeed, the shift was from a focus on syntactic maturity and grammatical accuracy at the sentence level, to a focus on the different rhetorical functions at the discourse level.

**Keywords:** writing, approaches, methods, product, process.

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**Résumé**

Au cours des cinquante dernières années, on assiste à une recrudescence des études de rhétorique sur les langues étrangères qui ont donné naissance à diverses théories et d'approches qui ont contribué et contribuent encore à un meilleur enseignement et à un meilleur apprentissage de l'écriture. Cet article vise à offrir un compte rendu complet des méthodes développées pour enseigner l'écriture. En réalité, ces cadres théoriques s'appuient largement sur les diverses théories d'apprentissage mis en avant tout au long du XXe siècle, à savoir. le behaviorisme (formation d'habitudes) et le cognitivisme (sciences cognitives). Ce qui caractérise l'évolution de ce spectre, c'est le passage d'une focalisation sur le produit final à une focalisation sur les processus de composition. En fait, le changement était passé d'une focalisation sur la maturité syntaxique et la précision grammaticale au niveau de la phrase, sur une focalisation sur les différentes fonctions rhétoriques au niveau du discours.

**Mots clés:** écriture, approches, méthodes, produit, processus.

**ملخص**

تزايدت دراسات علم البلاغة لدى ذوي متعلمي لغة ثانية أو لغة أجنبية منذ حوالي خمسين سنة مضت، وهذا ما أدى إلى ظهرت العديد من المقاربات التي ساهمت إسهاما كبيرا في تحسين طريقة تدريس الكتابة وتعلمها.يهدف بحثنا هذا إلى تقديم ملخص شامل عن أهم الأساليب المبتكرة وأنجعها في تدريس فن الكتابة. والجدير بالذكر هنا أن هذه النظريات قد استفادت كثيرا من مختلف نظريات التعلم على غرار النظرية السلوكية (أو ما تسمى أيضا بنظرية تشكيل العادات) وكذلك علم الإدراك. وما ما ميّز هاتين المقاربتين عن غيرهما أنهما صبا جل تركيزهما على المراحل الجزئية المكوّنة لعملية الكتابة بدل النِتاج النهائي للكتابة، وكذلك استرعتا الاهتمام إلى الوظائف البلاغية على مستوى الخطاب، بدل الاهتمام بالدقة البنيوية والنحوية على مستوى الجمل.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** : الكتابة ؛ المقاربات ؛ المناهج ؛ النِتاج ؛ العملية.

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## Introduction

In the second half of the twentieth century, a wide range of theoretical frameworks and approaches to teaching writing began to emerge and gain credence. Each of which viewed the concept of 'writing' from a different perspective; nevertheless, they have all contributed to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the distinct nature of writing. Hyland (2003) contends that each of these theories should be accurately seen as another piece in the jigsaw, as complementary and overlapping perspectives. Therefore, it is helpful to understand them as curriculum options organizing the teaching of writing around a different focus as 1. Language structure; 2.Text functions; 3.Themes or topics; 4.Creative expression; 5.Composing process and 6. Genre and content of writing. What follows is a historical sketch of the different approaches to ESL/EFL composition instruction.

## 1. The Controlled to Free Approach

This approach prevailed in the 1950s and early 1960s when second language learning contexts were thoroughly dominated by the audio-lingual approach (focusing mainly on listening and speaking). Back then, language was equated with speech (from structural linguistics), and learning with habit formation (from behaviorist psychology). For that reason, "it is not surprising that from this perspective writing was regarded as a secondary concern, essentially as reinforcement for oral habits." (Silva, 1990, p. 12). As a result, writing sessions were entirely devoted to grammar instruction, in that the students were only encouraged to attain a mastery of different grammatical and syntactic forms.

Raimes (1983) maintains that this approach is sequential: First, students are given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically. With such controlled exercises, the students are given the opportunity to write in profusion without committing errors. Only after achieving certain fluency are the students allowed to perform some free compositions. In brief, this approach, Raimes (1983) says, "stresses three features: grammar, syntax, and mechanics. It emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality." (p.7)

## 2. The Free Writing Approach

Unlike the controlled to free method, this approach is built upon the premise that, when composing, writing students should assign higher priority to content and fluency over form. To put it differently, this approach emphasizes the quantity of writing in preference to the quality. Given that form-related aspects like grammatical accuracy and organization are of second priority, the teacher's interference during the process of writing is, *ipso facto,* fairly limited. The teacher can only read the students' written performance or comment on the way they expressed their ideas. So central to this approach are the two parameters of audience and content, especially since writing students feel strongly motivated to write when they choose by themselves the subjects they desire to write about (Raimes, 1983). Aside from its merits and demerits, this approach tends to fare well so long as the students have already a considerable fluency in writing.

## 3. The Paragraph-pattern Approach

This approach gives paramount importance to the organization of ideas over the other aspects of writing, most notably accuracy, fluency and content. Raimes (1983) argues that one of the central tenets of this approach is that people in different cultures tend to construct and organize their communication with each

other in different ways. Therefore, if students, for instance, are to be fluent writers in English they need to see, analyze, and practice the particularly 'English' features of a piece of writing. Silva (1990) adds that the chief concern of this approach is the logical construction and arrangement of discourse forms, and of primary interest is the paragraph. The attention is not only given to its elements (topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, and transitions), but also to the different options for developing the paragraph: Illustration, comparison, contrast, exemplification, etc.

According to Raimes (1983), in such approach, the students are required to:
-Copy paragraphs, analyze models of paragraphs, and imitate model passages.
-Put scrambled sentences into paragraph order.
-Identify general and specific statements.
-Choose or invent an appropriate topic sentence.
-Insert or delete sentences.

## 4. The Grammar-syntax-organization Approach

As its name suggests, this approach seems to emphasize grammar, syntax and organization, i.e. the form. It stresses the fact that although writing is a composite of various skills, these skills are not to be learned separately. That is, when writing the students must not favor a certain feature but should instead work on all the other features concurrently. By way of illustration, Raimes (1983) states that if students want to write a set of instructions on how a given device operates; they need to go through the following points:
-Using the simple forms of verbs.
-Using an organizational plan based on chronology.
-The use of sequence words like *first, afterwards, then, next, finally*, etc.
-The use of sentence structures like "when…,then…"

## 5. The Communicative Approach

This approach takes into account the fact that writing is a communicative act, and therefore student writers should consider two important aspects when composing*: The purpose* and *the audience*. According to Raimes (1983), students should behave like writers in real life situations and ask the following questions: Why am I writing this? And "Who will read it?

Raimes (1983) adds that, traditionally, the teacher used to be the audience for students' writing. Yet, within this approach the teachers have extended the readership to the other students in the class or even outside the class. Thus, student writers are provided with a context in which to select appropriate content, language, and levels of formality. (*ibid,*.p.9)

However, it is to be pointed out that to Algerian EFL students, writing sessions seem to overlook the importance of taking into consideration the purpose of writing and the audience before the students go about writing. Most of EFL students' written performances sound utterly mundane because, on the one hand, they don't know why they are writing, and, on the other hand, they know that their teacher will be the only one to read what they have written. Hence, the need to incorporate a sense of purpose and audience when writing seems extremely poignant if our students want/are to hone their composition skills.

## 6. The Process Approach

The advent of the process oriented approach, whose prime concern is to discover what writers actually do as they write, had coincided with a growing

dissatisfaction with the product-oriented approaches to teaching writing (White,1988). Basically, Silva (1990) believes that the "introduction of the process approach to [EFL] composition seems to have been motivated by dissatisfaction with controlled composition and the current-traditional approach." (p.15). These model-based approaches were strongly denounced because of their overemphasis on the surface features and formal properties of the texts at the expense of the other key aspects of writing, chief amongst them are purpose and audience. Within the scope of these orientations, writing is viewed as a means to reinforce grammar and speech, and, because there is an obsession with correct form, achieving accuracy in writing is always given precedence over fluency. In no sense is the importance of these approaches to be belittled, nonetheless, fluent and effective writing cannot be attained only through syntactic complexity and grammatical accuracy. Hyland (2011) argues that:

> Many students can construct syntactically accurate sentences and yet are unable to produce appropriate written texts, and an obsessive focus on accuracy may deter them from taking risks which move them beyond their current competence. Simply, students can't simply learn abstract features to produce successful texts but also need to know how to apply their grammatical knowledge for particular purposes and genres. (p.22)

This product-oriented view of writing continued through the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, in 1963, the Conference of College Composition and Communication marked a renewal of interest in rhetoric and composition theory, a revival that generated the 'process' approach to composition that focused on understanding how people write and learn to write. Thenceforth, writing teachers began to embrace a 'process' approach to writing while tossing out their handbooks and grammar exercises. 'Product' became almost a dirty word, whereas the sentence 'writing is a process, not a product' became the mantra. (Clark, 2005, p. 5). It is worth noting here that the 'process approach' view of writing was profoundly influenced by that of the expressive orientation. One of the visionary leaders of the expressivist movement is Elbow (1981) who states that there is "no hiding the fact that writing well is a complex, difficult, and time consuming process." (p.3)

In the process approach, Hyland (2011) claims that, "writing is seen as a problem solving activity rather than an act of communication." (p.18). Along the same line, Badger & White (2000) add that, "writing is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge, such as knowledge about grammar and text structure." (p.155). However, there is not much unanimity amongst 'process adherents' over the stages writers go through to produce a piece of writing, but a typical model usually identifies four stages: prewriting; composing/drafting; revising; and editing (Tribble cited in Badger & White, 2000, p.155).

Of particular interest to the process approaches is the notion of '*recursiveness*', which indicates that writing is not a linear process but instead a recursive one, in that the writer can move back and forth between the stages of writing whenever needed. To Nunan (1989), "in many instances, the writer starts out with only the vaguest notion of this. The ideas are then refined, developed and transformed as the writer writes and rewrites." (p.36). To put it simply, after planning, drafting and editing, the writers can re-plan, re-draft, and re-edit. Even when they get to what they think is their final product, they can change their minds and re-plan, draft, or edit (Harmer, 2004).

Essentially, the different stages of the writing process and the idea of *recursiveness* are demonstrated in the following figure:
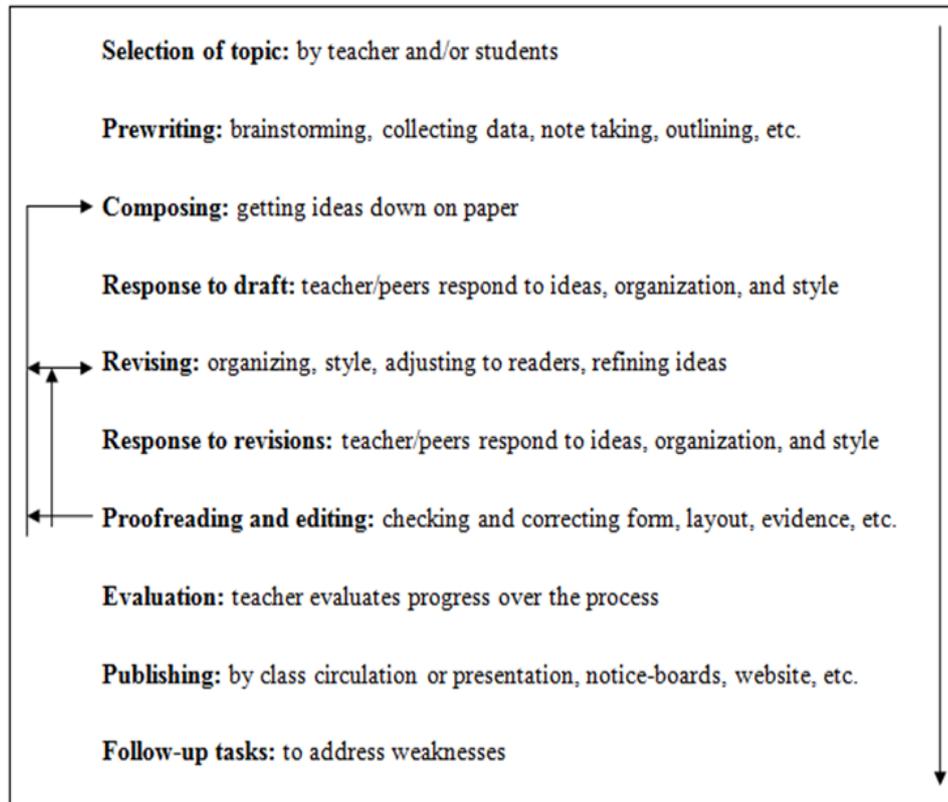
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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                                 ↑  │
│   Selection of topic: by teacher and/or students                │  │
│                                                                 │  │
│   Prewriting: brainstorming, collecting data, note taking,      │  │
│   outlining, etc.                                               │  │
│                                                                 │  │
│ → Composing: getting ideas down on paper                        │  │
│                                                                 │  │
│   Response to draft: teacher/peers respond to ideas,            │  │
│   organization, and style                                       │  │
│                                                                 │  │
│   Revising: organizing, style, adjusting to readers,            │  │
│   refining ideas                                                │  │
│                                                                 │  │
│   Response to revisions: teacher/peers respond to ideas,        │  │
│   organization, and style                                       │  │
│                                                                 │  │
│   Proofreading and editing: checking and correcting form,       │  │
│   layout, evidence, etc.                                        │  │
│                                                                 │  │
│   Evaluation: teacher evaluates progress over the process       │  │
│                                                                 │  │
│   Publishing: by class circulation or presentation,             │  │
│   notice-boards, website, etc.                                  │  │
│                                                                 │  │
│   Follow-up tasks: to address weaknesses                        │  ↓ │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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**Figure 01. The Recursive Nature of the Writing Process. Hyland (2003, p. 11)**

Raimes (1983) argues that the teachers who adopt a process approach provide their students with two crucial supports: Time and feedback. Time helps them in exploring the topic through writing, showing the teacher and each other drafts, and using what they write to read over, think about, and move them on to new ideas. Feedback, on the other hand, helps the students improve the content of what they write in their drafts. Hyland (2003), on his part, stresses the importance of feedback in the process approach when he says that "response is crucial in assisting learners to move through the stages of the writing process and various ways of providing feedback are used, including teacher-student conferences, peer response, audio-taped feedback, and reformulation." (p.20).

## 6.1. Models of the Writing Process

Over the past years, cognitive research has attempted to uncover the mysteries of the writing process. It has suggested that proficient writers' composing process differs greatly from that of less proficient ones. It has also proposed various cognitive models that could account for the complexity of the writing process. Basically, these models (most notably Flower and Hayes,1981; Bereiter and Scardamalia,1987) advance the idea that writing is a complex cognitive activity, and that the quality of a given piece of writing hinges upon how effectively writers maneuver a variety of tasks when composing. More importantly, "These models show some differences in the conceptualization of details and terminology, but the consensus is that writing is a cognitively complex and interactive process made up of multiple processes." (Cho, 2008, p. 166).

### 6.1.1. The Flower and Hayes Model (1981)

Probably, the most widely accepted model of writing processes is that of Flower and Hayes (1981). Their cognitive process theory of writing draws heavily upon theories of cognitive psychology. Supporting Flower and Hayes purport; Clark (2005) sees that the underlying idea of cognitive psychology is that before understanding a particular behavior such as writing. To them, one must first understand the mental structures that determine that behavior, and since language and thought are the primary mental structures that influence writing, to understand then how students learn to write, we must understand how these structures develop.

Flower & Hayes (1981) cognitive theory, which is based on their work with protocol analysis (thinking aloud while solving problems), rests on four key points:

> 1.The process of writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate during the act of composing.
> 2.These processes have a hierarchical, highly embedded organization in which any given process can be embedded within any other.
> 3.The act of composing (writing) itself is a goal-directed thinking process, guided by the writer's own growing network of goals.
> 4.Writers generate their own goals in two key ways: by generating both high level goals and supporting sub-goals which embody the writer's developing sense of purpose, and then, at times, by changing major goals or establishing entirely new ones based on what has been learned in the act of writing. (p. 366)

As reflected in their model, Flower & Hayes (1981) argue that the act of writing involves three fundamental elements: *The task environment*, *the writer's long term memory*, and *thewriting processes*. The task environment includes all those things outside the writer's skin. The second element is the writer's long term memory in which the writer has stored knowledge of the topic, audience, and of various writing plans. Third, the writing processes which include the basic processes of **Planning**, **Translating**, and **Reviewing**. These processes are succinctly explained below:

### 6.1.1.1. Planning

As an operational definition, planning is the process whereby writers form an internal representation of the knowledge that will be used in writing. The act of building this internal representation involves a number of sub-processes, namely generating ideas, organizing, and goal setting. *Generating ideas* includes retrieving the relevant information from the long term memory. *Organizing* helps the writers give a meaningful structure of the ideas which are already in their memory. The process of organizing is affected by rhetorical decisions and plans for reaching the audience, because it is often guided by the goals established during the process of *goal setting*.

### 6.1.1.2. Translating

This process often means putting the ideas generated during the planning process into visible language. Unlike the process of planning, where the

information and ideas are represented in symbol systems other than the language, the process of translating involves translating a meaning into acceptable pieces of writing following the demands of special English writing. In effect, if writers are still grappling with the basic aspects of written English, the process of translating can be somewhat inimical to their process of planning.

### 6.1.1.3. Reviewing

The process of reviewing often involves two important sub-processes which are *revising* and *evaluation*. These two sub-processes can interrupt and occur at any time during the act of writing. In essence, they help the writers read what they have written and allow for new cycles of planning and translating.

## 6.1.2. The Bereiter and Scardamalia Model (1987)

Another equally influential model of writing processes is that of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), which was basically built on that of Flower and Hayes. According to Kellogg (1994), "Bereiter and Scardamalia view writing as an act of problem solving. Specifically, the writer must explore options and decide on solutions as to what to say and how to say it."(p.34). In their model, they distinguished two process models that account for the differences of process complexity of skilled and unskilled writers; they label them as *knowledge telling* and *knowledge transforming*. The former is concerned with the fact that novice writers plan less and revise less often, mostly focus on generating content and have limited goals. The latter, on the other hand, demonstrates how skilled writers use the composing process to analyze problems and actively rework their thoughts to change their own texts and ideas (Hyland, 2003)

Hinkel (2004) adds that knowledge transforming is considerably more cognitively complex than knowledge telling. As regards knowledge telling, the writers do not go much beyond telling what they know by simply retrieving the information already available to them in memory. Knowledge transforming, however, requires thinking, getting and processing the information needed for analysis (mostly from reading), and modifying one's thinking.

As for the pedagogical implications of this model, Hyland (2003) states that this model may well help L2 writing teachers explain the difficulties their students experience while composing. It also stresses the fact that students need to participate in more cognitively challenging writing tasks in order to broaden their composition skills.

## 6.3. Limitations of the Process Approach

There is no denying the fact that the process approach marked the turning point in the history of writing by causing a massive paradigm shift in composition instruction. This approach distracts attention away from only focusing on the 'finished product' to focusing on the complex cognitive tasks that writers take on to produce that finished product. Nevertheless, there are indeed some serious reservations about this orientation. Williams (2003) claims that the implementation of such an approach has had no significant effect on student writing skills.

On his part, Hyland (2011) delineates that this approach is influenced by cognitive psychology rather than by Applied Linguistics. This means that it shines light on what writers think about as they write instead of the language they need to do it. In addition to that, because this approach is very writer-centered, it neglects other forces beyond cognition such as knowing how texts are written for particular purposes and audience.

Despite considerable research into writing processes, more probing questions remain unanswered. The theories underpinning the process teaching methods are still unable to offer a comprehensive idea of how writers go about writing or how they learn to write Hyland (2003). They also never spell out why writers make certain choices, and how they make the cognitive transition to the knowledge transforming model. To put it in a nutshell, Badger & White (2000) point out that:

> The disadvantages of process approaches are that they often regard all writing as being produced by the same set of processes; that they give insufficient importance to the kind of texts writers produce and why texts are produced; and that they offer learners insufficient input, particularly in terms of linguistic knowledge, to write successfully. (p.157)

## 7. The Genre Approach

Despite it dominating most EFL writing classes, many researchers and practitioners still doubt the practicability of the process approach in teaching writing. This is because such approaches are for the most part writer-centered that view writing as a de-contextualized skill (overlooking the fact that writing is a social act). The Genre Approach take full advantage of these deficiencies and advance the idea that writing teachers should draw their students' attention to how and why texts are written in the way they are. Hyland (2011) asserts that "Genre approaches encourage us to look for organizational patterns, reminding us that when we write we follow conventions for organizing messages because we want the reader to recognize our message."(p.24)

The word 'genre' means 'type' or 'kind', and in writing it refers to "the form writers use as structure." (Caroll & Wilson, 1993, p.102). Weigle (2002) holds that genre can be defined in terms of the intended form and the intended function of writing. Form concerns such written products as letters and essays. Function can be thought of in terms of communicative functions (describing, inviting, apologizing, etc.) or in terms of discourse mode (argumentation, narration, exposition, etc.) Traditionally, the concept of genre was perceived as irrelevant to, and even incompatible with, the new ideology and pedagogy of composition. Yet, according to Miller (1984), "the concept of genre has been broadened and redefined as typified social action that responds to a recurring situation." Clark (2005, p.242). In actual fact, Freedman (1999) points out that genres should never be conceived of as text types identified by their textual regularities, but instead as typified actions in response to recurring social contexts. This is based on the assumption that the reader will easily interpret the writer's purpose so long as the latter (writer) anticipates; based on the previous texts they have read of the same kind, what the former (reader) might expect (Hyland, 2011).

Taken in its broadest sense, Badger & White (2000) hold that genre-based approach views writing as "essentially concerned with knowledge of language, and as being tied closely to a social purpose, while the development of writing is largely viewed as the analysis and imitation of input in the form of texts provided by the teacher."(p.156). The Genre-based Approach then requires that students engage with tasks that focus on the organization and structure of some sample text (application letters, reports, essays, etc.) heretofore given to them, in order to be able to create their own texts of the same genre. This suggests that mimicking models is so central to genre approaches as it is the case for product approaches. The genre approaches are then considered as an extension of product approaches, and the only difference is that genre approaches "emphasize that writing varies with social context in which it is produced." (Badger & White, ibid., p. 155). In

essence, Bruce (2008) states that genre based approaches have three major strengths

> Firstly, they make it possible to focus on larger units of language; secondly, they can provide a focus on the organizational or procedural elements of written discourse; and thirdly, they make it possible to retain linguistic components as functioning features of a larger unit of discourse, thereby avoiding atomistic approaches to teaching writing.(p.06)

Moreover, Hyland (2011) adds that by being fully conversant with how texts are structured and meanings are expressed, the teachers will be able to:
- Intervene successfully in the writing of their students.
- Provide more informed feedback.
- Making decisions about the teaching methods and materials to use.
- Approach current instructional paradigm with a more critical eye. (p.26)

Having said all this, it is worthwhile to conclude that the genre approach has indeed broadened the lens through which composition specialists and teachers see the writing skill. This approach views writing as a social act not predominantly linguistic or de-contextualized. In effect, the genre pedagogy is not intended as a panacea for all the problems of composition instruction, but it will certainly help make our EFL writing classes more productive. Yet, one can contend that a subtle blend of genre and process approaches will arguably fare better.

## 8. The Process-genre Approach

Although it is claimed that the manifold approaches to teaching writing have instigated a great deal of confusion and insecurity amongst EFL composition teachers Silva (1993), they have actually propelled towards a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of FL writing. They have also provided writing teachers with a multiplicity of different options to draw upon in order to succeed in their EFL writing classes. In fact, there is not a one-size-fits-all answer to the question *which approach should teachers employ when teaching writing?* Therefore, collectively, "we might see the research as telling us to reject single formula for teaching writing and look at what the different models tell us."(Hyland, 2011, p.32). Raimes (1983) does not go far from that and points out that since approaches to teaching writing tend to overlap, the teachers should not be wholly devoted to one approach, to the exclusion of all the others. She concludes that, "there is no *one* way to teaching writing, but many ways."(p.11). Therefore, because it seems to encompass almost all aspects of the writing skill, one can take it as a given that implementing an eclectic mixture of genre and process approaches will prove far more useful.

The process-genre approach was first proposed by Badger and White (2000) who argue that this approach is a composite of the main features of both the genre approaches and process approaches. That is to say, writing in this approach involves: "knowledge about the language (as in product and genre approaches), knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the purpose for the writing (as in genre approaches), and the skills in using the language (as in process approaches)"(Badger & White, 2000, pp.157-158). Essentially, the main aspects of the process genre approach are illustrated in the following diagram:
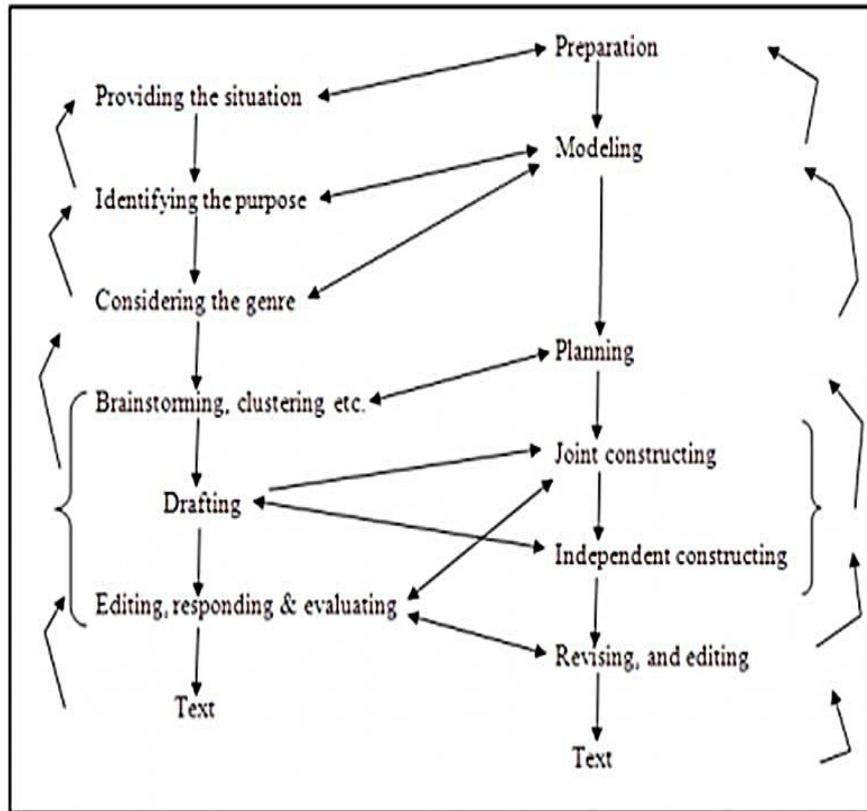
**Figure 02.Application of the Process Genre Approach. Belbase (2012).**

**Adapted from Badger and White (2000).**

Belbase (2012) contends that the teaching procedures for the process genre approach, as proposed by Badger and White (2000), is divided into six steps: Preparation, modeling, planning, joint constructing, independent constructing, and revising. These steps are sketched below.

## 8. 1. Preparation

In this stage, the teacher prepares the students to write by defining a particular situation and placing it within a genre, such as a persuasive essay arguing for and against an issue of current interest. This allows the students to anticipate the structural features and organization of this genre.

## 8. 2. Modeling

In this stage, the teacher provides students with a model of the genre and has the students take into account the purpose of the text. Then, the teacher starts elaborating on how the text is structured and how its organization contributes to accomplishing its purpose.

## 8. 3. Planning

The aim behind this stage is to help students develop an interest in the topic by relating it to their experience. This stage involves the following meaningful activities: *Brainstorming*, *discussing*, and *reading associated materials*.

## 8. 4. Joint Constructing

The key word in this stage is collaborative work in that students are prepared to work individually through working together. The students in conjunction with the teacher use the information generated via brainstorming, drafting, and revising to write a text on the board. This final draft presents a model for the students to refer to in their individual compositions.

## 8. 5. Independent Constructing

At this juncture, students will have examined model texts and have collaboratively constructed a text in the genre. Later on,  students can carry out their own tasks of composing. During this process of composing, the teacher can interfere to help, clarify, and consult about the process.

## 8. 6. Revising and Editing

In this last stage, students will come to polish their draft through revising and editing. With the help of the teacher, students go about peer editing, discussing and evaluating their work with their classmates. The teacher may also publish written performance with the aim of boosting the students' self-esteem and motivating them to become better writers.

## Conclusion

This paper has tentatively shed some light on the major paradigm shifts in composition instruction, more specifically in the second part of the last millennium. It traced back the special circumstances wherein each approach to teaching writing was originated. There was a special focus on the process approach because it is by far the most dominant approach to teaching writing in most EFL contexts. In essence, in order to bring the EFL writing classes to fruition, these approaches should be viewed as complementary and overlapping, and not necessarily incompatible. That is, being eclectic is probably the one of the most optimal solutions to the various difficulties both teachers and students have in their writing classrooms.

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