The Role of the Course of Advanced Reading and Writing in Developing Teacher Trainees’ Writing Abilities: Opinions of Teacher Trainees

İleri Okuma ve Yazma Dersinin Yazma Becerisinin Gelişimine Olan Katkısı: Öğretmen Adaylarının Görüşleri

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Abstract
Turkish teacher trainees enrolled in English language teaching departments are required to take the course titled Advanced Reading and Writing, a three-hour credit course, when they are in the freshman year of their four-year formal training. The present study investigates the trainees’ opinions on the content of this course (with a special emphasis on the writing component), their expectations from the instructors, and their recommendations for the improvement of the course content. A total of 267 teacher trainees from four different state universities participated in the study, and the data for the study was collected through a two-part questionnaire. In the first part, which was designed on a four-point Likert scale, teacher trainees were asked to state their opinions about the content of the lesson. The second part included three open-ended questions to elicit the participants’ recommendations for improving the course content. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the participants wanted to practice more reading activities, work on sample essays, and study grammar, vocabulary and punctuation. The participants stated that they expected more feedback and tutorials from their instructors. The majority of participants recommended integration of both reading activities and visual materials into the syllabus.

Keywords: writing in English, teacher trainees, syllabus, materials, professional development

Öz

Anahtar Sözcükler: İngilizce yazmak, öğretmen adayları, izlence, materyal, mesleki gelişim

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Introduction

Most foreign language learners have negative attitudes toward writing, as they have either limited knowledge or experience (Diab, 2005) or they are familiar with good writing which inhibits the strategies of outlining, revising, writing for a specific audience, drafting or free writing to achieve composition goals (Lavelle et al., 2002; Rollinson, 2005). When the learner’s goal is to comply with task demands, the learning activity, adopting a surface approach, involves a low level of cognitive engagement (e.g. memorizing or repetition) and a superficial, linear outcome (listing or organizing). However, when the aim is to engage with the task with an intention to learn, the focus is at a higher conceptual level adopting a deep approach geared toward manipulating layers of meaning (Zuercher & Lavelle, 2001). According to Daud (2012:23), ‘good writing is the reflection of good critical thinking which entails the ability to understand key concepts and ideas; distinguish the main ideas and arguments from the subordinate ones; judge their relevance and provide reasons; judge the credibility of sources of information; and be able to paraphrase them and later draw conclusions based on all the justifications made’. Engaging oneself in all these tasks both exercises and heightens thinking. For Cohen-Sayag and Fischl (2012:21), writing is a powerful medium, mediating between the pre-service teacher’s existing and new knowledge, promoting meta-cognition thinking, increasing awareness to tacit knowledge, while encouraging self-reflection in order to propose solutions to problems.

Writing for product or writing through process?

The literature in the related field classifies approaches to teaching writing in two types: the product-oriented and the process-oriented approaches. The former approach focuses on the end-product, and development of writing skills can be achieved through the imitation of input, and in the form of texts provided by the teacher (Badger & White, 2000). In the product-oriented approach, in which the teacher is responsible for providing necessary guidance, feedback and evaluation, learners are assumed to follow the writing process through the stages such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing (Kim & Kim, 2005; Xu, 2005; Soles, 2005). Steele (2004) classifies this model in four stages: studying of the model texts and then highlighting the features of the genre; practicing the highlighted features in isolation under control; organizing the ideas; and writing as an end product of the learning process.

In the process-oriented approach to teaching writing, what is expected from the learners is that they should develop their creativity, express ideas and practice writing without imitating any given model (Tribble, 1996; Westervelt, 1998; Matsuda, 2009). The process approach tries to provide meaningful support for the learners (Hedge, 2011). The main purpose of this approach is to assist learners to achieve greater control over the cognitive strategies involved in composing, thereby prioritizing fluency over accuracy (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Hedge (2011) suggests some basic principles that can be attributed to this approach as follows: providing practice in planning, contextualizing tasks to develop a sense of audience, encouraging students in revision strategies, and supporting them with technology. As Tribble (1996) states, process
writing provides the sense of meaningfulness with learners who are involved in making a personal connection to the topic and the processes related to it. With regard to the meaningfulness of the process approach, Daud (2012) suggests that this approach meets the requirement of effective peer evaluation by using a rubric which aims to provide feedback to students as they work on improving their piece of writing.

Educationally speaking, both the traditional approach and the contemporary approach to writing entail challenges and difficulties which deserve to be investigated. To date, several studies conducted to investigate the difficulties and problems that foreign language learners face while writing in a foreign language have proved that writing is not an easy task to achieve (Sengupta & Falvey, 1998; Peacock, 2001; Shi, 2001; Chen, 2002; Kim & Kim, 2005; Atay & Kurt, 2006; Busch, 2010; Hisham, 2008; Erkan & Saban, 2011; Daud, 2012). In a study conducted by Foster and Russel (2002), undergraduates’ views on writing were investigated. The results showed that writing was obviously a difficult and challenging skill for the participating students. In another study, Gambell (1991) examined the perceptions of 48 elementary education pre-service teachers of their own writing skills vis-à-vis the written demands of their courses. The results of the study proved that the major difficulties attributed to writing stemmed from reliance on the ideas and language of others, an inability or unwillingness to conceptualize an audience, and the lack of understanding of a process approach to writing. Negari (2011) investigated the effect of the concept mapping strategy on EFL learners’ writing performance. In the study, the instruction of concept mapping strategy was found to be an effective tool by sixty intermediate-level learners. Additionally, in their research with nine English language teachers, Bilal et al. (2013) aimed to highlight the problems which hindered the teachers in developing writing skills in English. Generally speaking, the research proves that factors such as linguistic inefficiency, motivation, lack of training in teaching writing lead to unsatisfactory results in writing.

**Institutional Context**

In Turkey, in both private and public institutions, all prospective teachers of English enrolled in the English language teaching departments across the country are required to take a course titled ‘Advanced Reading and Writing’ (ARW) in the first year of their four-year formal training. ARW course is offered for three credit hours for 14 weeks in the first and in the second semester of the freshman year. There is no prerequisite to the course and no follow-up course throughout the four-year pre-service training. As all education-related decisions are centralized in Turkey, the content of the course has been detailed and prescribed by the Council of Higher Education (CHE), leaving only the decision regarding the selection of the teaching material and the type of assessment to the teaching staff. The prescribed content assigned to the ARW course offered in the first semester aims to equip student teachers with intensive and extensive reading habits through a wide range of authentic reading materials, teaching critical thinking skills such as synthesizing information or analyzing a problem. Along with sub-skills of reading, the course is also expected to familiarize the student teachers with different types of paragraphs such as expository, descriptive or narrative...
and also sub-skills of writing such as summarizing, outlining and paraphrasing. In the second semester of the freshman year, the prospective teachers of English are expected to master higher order sub-skills of reading such as making inferences, reading between lines, reacting to reading assignments. What needs to be noted is that student teachers are also expected to learn how to write five types of essays; comparison and contrast, classification, process analysis, cause and effect and argumentative. In addition to the aforementioned topics, the course also aims to teach basic research skills and basic research report-writing skills such as citing, paraphrasing and referencing (CHE, 2010).

The present study aims to present an evaluation of ARW by prospective English language teachers, and to put forth their views on what makes for an effective writing course. Therefore, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the opinions of the teacher trainees about the content?
2. What are their expectations from the instructors of the course?
3. What are the student teachers’ recommendations to improve the content of the lessons in terms of developing writing skills?

Material and Method

Research Group

This study was conducted with the participation of 267 prospective English language teachers enrolled in English language teaching departments of four universities located in different parts of Turkey. They were randomly drawn and their ages ranged from 18 to 22. Of the participants, 28.8% (n=77) were male and 71.2% (n=190) were female.

Research Instrument

In order to collect data for this descriptive research, a survey method was utilized. A questionnaire was developed by the researchers. The items included in the questionnaire were developed based on extensive reading in the related literature and within the framework outlined by the CHE. During the design of the research instrument, it was assumed that the teaching staff was supposed to follow the syllabus dictated by the CHE in the lesson regardless of the type of the course materials used in the related course. After receiving expert opinions from experienced teacher educators who were teaching this course over a period of time the questionnaire was piloted with a group of students to identify possible problems which might occur in the actual data collection process. Some minor modifications were then made in the interest of clarity. The finalized questionnaire was administered to the student teachers enrolled in English language teaching departments at four higher education institutions in the 2012-2013 academic year. Data collection lasted almost for a month.

The first part of the questionnaire included 26 items aiming to elicit students’ opinions and preferences on a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Additionally, the participants were required to respond to three open-ended questions in order to reflect their personal views and suggestions for fostering their own writing skill in the related part of the course.
Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire was computed by using SPSS 17. In this study both qualitative and quantitative method were used. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data obtained in the first part of the research instrument. In analyzing the open-ended questions, content analysis technique was used. Content analysis was defined by Cooper and Schindler (2006) as the way of figuring out the significance of certain words and concepts within a survey. The findings were presented in tables using the percentage and frequency technique.

Significance of the Study

ARW is the only course in which student teachers of English in Turkey are exposed to both writing and reading simultaneously. This is a required course integrated into the curriculum of pre-service training of prospective Turkish teachers of English and offered 3 hours per week in 14 weeks in the first and the second semester of freshmen year. The prescribed course content aims to equip student teachers with reading and writing skills. Although it is an important course, to the best of the researchers’ knowledge, there is no empirical study on any aspect of the course. Therefore, it is assumed that the present study will fill in a gap in this area of research.

Findings

The results are examined based on the data obtained from three parts of the research instrument. First, the participants’ views on the implementation and content of the related course with focus on its writing component are presented (Table 1). Second, expectations from the instructors of the related course are displayed in Table 2 along with the analysis of the findings. The third research question asks “What are the student teachers’ recommendations to improve the content of the lesson in terms of developing writing skill?” Findings regarding the third question are grouped below according to which of the three sub-questions they have addressed. The data gathered for the second research question are given in Tables 3, 4, and 5, and some of the significant findings are analyzed below each table.

Research Question 1.

What are the opinions of the teacher trainees about the content?

The primary aim of the survey was to determine the needs related to the lesson offered in the English language teaching departments. In this respect, the participants were required to circle the answer that best described how well they agreed with each of the following statements.
Table 1. Participants’ views on the content and implementation of the course ARW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>DS</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar should be integrated into writing classes.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This lesson should provide students with enhanced vocabulary practice activities.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation should be taught separately.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>17.37</td>
<td>48.26</td>
<td>30.50</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The topic to be written should be handled orally first either in pairs or in groups.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics for writing activities should also include issues in ELT.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This lesson should prepare me to write research papers in ELT.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be peer-editing activities in writing classes.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>12.69</td>
<td>61.94</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0.619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This lesson requires more class time than it is assigned in the current program.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This lesson should teach us the type of writing that we will need in our future profession of language. teaching</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>41.04</td>
<td>35.82</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This lesson should teach us how to write different types of letters.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td>42.64</td>
<td>45.28</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This lesson should teach me how to write papers in my field.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The contents (syllabus) of this lesson should be revised (changed).</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>41.13</td>
<td>52.83</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the writing instruction I have received in my department</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We should not have a coursebook. Instead, the lesson should be designed based on our needs.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>33.85</td>
<td>31.13</td>
<td>30.74</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>33.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This lesson should include more class time to write extensively.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This lesson is useful for my future profession.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>35.69</td>
<td>38.82</td>
<td>19.61</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DS: Descriptive Statistics, SD: Standard Deviation, Mean = 1-1.75 (Strongly Disagree), Mean = 1.76-2.50 (Disagree), Mean = 2.51-3.25 (Agree), Mean = 3.26-4 (Strongly agree)
Presenting writing lesson effectively

The participants were required to determine the ways of presenting the writing lessons. They generally (231 out of 267) believed that writing topics need to be handled first orally either in pairs or in groups. In order to be able to express their ideas about the topics they will work on the student teachers stated preference to have background knowledge by reading related documents (92.35 %). Furthermore, the topics to be chosen for writing should be familiar topics such as issues in ELT (n=239). They thought that they should be provided with sample essays or writing products (n=257) before starting to write. Additionally, the participants believed that they need guidance not only in class but also individually (n=216). They also wanted to be informed about how to write various types of essays (n=261), different types of letters (n=233), and types of writing activities to be used in their future careers (n=253). As regards to instructional materials to facilitate writing, the participants stated that the writing course should be provided with additional materials such as visuals (n=226), magazines, and newspapers (n=247).

The need of grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and organization in writing

In this part of the study the participants (N=267) were asked to state their views about the course by circling the suitable options in the questionnaire. While analyzing the results the parts of Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA) will be evaluated as a whole considering the fact that these two factors are very close to each other. Based on the results, 222 (A& SA) students (82.75%) believed that grammar should be integrated in writing classes. It is clear that one of the difficulties that most of the students face while writing is lack of grammatical knowledge. Due to inadequacy in expressing themselves using the correct grammar in writing, many students lose their motivation to write. That is to say, the participants tend to prefer to be equipped with structural aspects of the target language.

Apart from including grammar in writing lessons, almost 93% of the participants (A=151, SA=98) think that they need to be provided with the necessary lexis. Thus, it is thought that they will be able to express themselves better. However, having certain amount of grammatical and lexical knowledge would not always end up with a successful writing product. What is needed, of course, is to know how to organize ideas in writing. In this respect, nearly all of the participants (96.47%) stated that they need to be supported with the information about how to organize their ideas in writing. Furthermore, as is clearly seen in the table above, 78.7% (n=204) of the participants reported having difficulty in the correct usage of punctuation while writing.

Giving feedback for writing products

It is a fact that providing corrective feedback in instructional settings has a crucial role for learners. The participants were requested to specify their needs in writing courses in terms of correcting their papers. The results for the statement about the peer correction reveal that 86.94 % (A= 61.94 %, SA=25.00 %) believed the importance of peer editing activities during and after writing sessions. Apart from peer editing, the participants expected to be evaluated with the detailed feedback to be given by the instructor (A=98, S=153). However, as displayed in Table 2, they agreed to say that
(SD=15.7%, D=42.8%) they would not be satisfied with only correcting the major errors. Additional aid and guidance would facilitate writing task and encourage learners to write.

**Overall analysis of the course content**

The responses to the statement of “The contents (syllabus) of this lesson should be revised” revealed that almost half of the participants (n=136) were not very satisfied with the content of the course. On the other hand, most of the participants (n=204) seemed to be satisfied with the writing instruction they have received. Unlike 98 participants, 159 of them agreed that they did not need a specific coursebook, stating that instead, the lesson could be designed depending on their needs and flow of the course. The findings suggested that time devoted to write in the class needs to be increased (n=149). Finally, it can be concluded that for a great proportion of the participants the lesson was beneficial for their future profession (n=239).

**Research Question 2.**

*What are their expectations from the instructors of the course?*

**Table 2.** Expectations from the instructors of the course of ARW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>DS</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher should teach us the types of essays.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher should frequently assign various writing activities.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher should give detailed feedback on my papers.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect the teacher to correct only my major errors.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initially, the teacher should provide us with sample essays to lead us to accomplish the actual writing tasks</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher should bring extra materials to the classroom to help us to do tasks (e.g., newspapers, magazines)</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher should use visual aids in the writing course.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher should teach how to organize ideas.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DS: Descriptive Statistics, SD: Standard Deviation, X: Mean, X=1-1.75 (Strongly Disagree), X=1.76-2.50 (Disagree), X=2.51-3.25 (Agree), X=3.26-4 (Strongly agree)
The participants were also required to identify their expectations from the course instructors to improve their writing ability. The results above indicate that instructors in writing courses had a great role in motivating and encouraging learners to reach a fruitful ending. In this respect, they agreed to state that detailed feedback (SA=96%) and conferencing with the students for effective writing (SA=91%) needed to be focused on. They strongly agreed (61.80%) that the instructor should teach the different types of essays. Furthermore, the participants expected the instructors to provide sample essays in order for learners to be able to have ideas on the topic and format of the essay. Thus, it is seen that instructors in writing courses need to be well-prepared, filling the roles of input provider, prompter, and guide throughout the writing process.

**Research Question 3.**

*What are the student teachers' recommendations to improve the content of the lesson in terms of developing writing skills?*

This section included three open-ended questions through which the participants’ beliefs and learning experiences about the writing component of the course were analyzed. With regard to students’ views on the writing course, several themes emerged from these responses such as; the need for alternative writing topics, more stress on a variety of writing activities, more instruction about the details of writing, doing more pair and group work, increasing the time allocation for writing, and so forth. The results suggest that the content of the course needs to be reviewed and redesigned in line with the recommendations and instructors’ views.

**Sub-question 1**

*If you were the instructor of this course how would you teach?*

Although all of the participants were requested to respond to the questions in this part, only 119 completed the questions. Based on the analysis of the data, the findings below were determined.

**Table 3.** Participants’ views on the writing part of the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I would provide more attractive topics for writing lesson.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I would directly teach how to write in English.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I would use additional materials to assist writing activities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I would give more information about the details of writing process.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I wouldn’t use supplementary materials.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I would use different methods and techniques in writing.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I would support writing activities with reading materials.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I would often do group and pair work activities in writing.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I would devote more time to writing in ELT curriculum.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results prove that participants generally agreed to revise the course for the sake of variety. Out of 119 responses, 18 stressed that they would provide more attractive topics for writing. They believed that they need to be guided and taught to write properly (Items 2 and 4). 18 of the responses indicate that additional materials would make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the course. It is clearly observed that the statements selected among the most stressed ones validate the results of the questionnaire that are displayed in Tables 1 and 2.

**Sub-question 2.**

*In your opinion what kinds of activities can be added to the writing course?*

After analyzing the responses given to the question, the themes below were considered to be evaluated. Out of 266 participants, the following statements were repeated by 152 of them more than four times.

### Table 4. Participants’ suggestions for developing and motivating writing lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>We need to have more writing activities</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Types of writing activities should vary.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Writing should be supported with reading activities.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Products need to be evaluated by the instructor effectively.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Games might be used to motivate writing.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Audio materials can be used in writing lessons.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>We need to write to students from other universities abroad.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Visual materials can be used before and while writing activities</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Group and pair work activities would facilitate writing.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Additional vocabulary activities need to be included.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>152</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This part of the research also supports the statements in Table 1 in many ways. Thus, it is intended that open-ended questions would be a great help in validating the data from the first part of the research. The results reinforce the suggestion that participants would like to be supported with (Item 3) reading activities before or while writing (29.6%). In this sense, it is apparent that writing on its own right brings several difficulties for learners. Apart from reading materials, visual materials are also considered as of vital importance in motivating to write (19.07%). Some students (25 out of 152) conceded that they need more practice to be able to write fluently. Additionally, it is admitted that giving feedback to learners’ production, game based activities, audio materials, having pen friends, doing pair work and group work activities, and vocabulary activities would be beneficial for motivating to write and developing the participants’ writing skill.
Sub-question 3

*In your opinion what helps you improve your writing skills?*

The other open-ended question was about gathering the participants’ further opinions to develop writing skill in general. Almost all of the participants (2 missing values) expressed their ideas most of which were consistent with the ones in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3. The following are the representative dominant statements collected from the data for this question.

**Table 5. Factors contributing to develop writing skill.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Writing activities need to be conducted both in and out of the class.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>47.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>More reading and vocabulary-based activities need to be required.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>45.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Audio-visual materials can be used to foster writing skill.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>There should be more corrective feedback for writing products.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Grammatical accuracy should not be considered as an ultimate goal.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>265</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is seen that, as in the previous tables, almost half of the participants (n=125) were in favour of writing both in and out of the class. Thus, it can be inferred that learners do not want to limit their writing activities to the classroom. They believe that writing should also continue beyond the walls of the class independently. In this respect they should, of course, be trained enough to work autonomously. The role of reading and vocabulary based activities in writing classes seemed to be vital for learners (45.28%). Audio-visual materials, corrective feedback and fluency in writing were the other factors to be focused on in order both to foster writing and to make writing courses more enjoyable.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This study aimed to explore the content of Advanced Reading and Writing in terms of its writing components. With the data driven from the responses to the open-ended questions, it also intended to present the views of the participants on having an effective writing course, together with the role of instructors in such a course. Based on the results of this study, it appears that ARW does not offer the primary requirements for success in its present form, and that the current syllabus or curriculum needs to be revised in order to develop writing the skills of the prospective teachers of English. From the findings of this study, a range of conclusions can be drawn. First, it is seen that time constraint is regarded as one of the prominent factors inhibiting the development of the writing skill of the participants. This fact is supported by the findings that the participants need to be provided with more writing activities (16.44%), visual materials (19.07%), and reading activities (29.6%). From the views of the instructors, it can be concluded that it is impossible to address these needs within the 3-hour limit of the programme. To support this fact, a great majority of the participants
(47.16%) agreed that writing activities need to be conducted both in and out of the class.

The second basic conclusion for the current study includes the role of the instructors who will conduct the writing activities. As Kruse (2013:48) attests, probably the most effective part of instruction for student writers comes from supervision or tutoring activities connected with feedback. As in all lessons, instructors in writing courses need to have some features such as prompter, resource, input provider, guide, sometimes participants (Harmer, 2007). As documented in the literature (Lavelle et al., 2002; Diab, 2005; Rollinson, 2005; Daud, 2012), the students in the current study generally were in need of the guidance of the course instructors. They strongly agreed that the course teacher should teach them what and how to write. It is clear that the participants were in favour of guidance and process while writing rather than completing the product in a limited period on their own. In this regard, the process writing approach would be a great help for them as this approach aims to aid learners to use their cognitive strategies as it offers students longer time than the traditional approach.

Giving satisfactory feedback, interviewing or conferencing with the students, and supporting writing lessons with various activities and materials can be listed as the significant findings that a majority of the participants agree with in order to motivate and encourage to write (Matsuda, 2009; Hedge, 2011). In line with the findings of the present research, Hedge (2011) suggests that learners need to be supported in planning, in contextualizing tasks, in encouraging students in revision strategies, and in supporting students with technology. One of the drawbacks of conducting writing in EFL settings is that the teachers mostly force students to write accurately rather than fluently (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005).

In brief, the current findings reveal that ARW, which has been designed to teach both reading and writing skills, does not offer satisfactory opportunities for writing. The participants clearly have revealed their opinions in Table 3, 4 and 5. According to the participants in this study, ARW should:

1. be devoted longer period of time;
2. include various techniques to write;
3. involve pair and group work activities;
4. motivate learners to write;
5. be under the guidance of teacher initially;
6. be aided with a lot of audio-visual materials;
7. involve teachers actively during and after writing;
8. practice firstly vocabulary and reading activities;
9. provide opportunities to exchange writing products with other students abroad;

This study, which displays the general reflections of the participants on ARW, aims to figure out to what extent the participants benefit from the course in the development of their writing skills. However, it does need to be stated that it is not possible to reach a definite decision for the efficacy ARW in terms of its writing component by using only the survey technique with the limited sample group. For that reason, it is
suggested that further in-depth studies should be conducted. Apart from the students’ views and suggestions, further research which reflects the views of the instructors at different universities would validate the findings of this study and contribute to the field.

Özet

Giriş


1. Öğretmen adayı öğrencilerin dersin içeriği konusundaki görüşleri nelerdir?
2. İlgili ders öğretim elemanlarından beklentileri nelerdir?
3. İçeriğin yazma becerisinin geliştirilmesi konusunda öneri nelerdir?

**Materyal ve Yöntem**

Bu betimsel çalışmaya Türkiye’de bulunan dört farklı üniversitenin İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümünde okuyan 77’si erkek, 190’ı bayan olan toplam 267 öğretmen adayı öğrenci katılmıştır. Araştırma her iki elemanın üçlü likert tipinde hazırlanmış 26 sorunun yer aldığı ve üç tane de açık uçlu sorudan oluşan anket 2012-2013 öğretim yılında katılımcılara uygulanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler SPSS 17 programı ve içerik analizi (Cooper ve Schindler, 2006) yapılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular yüzde ve frekans tablolarında gösterilmiştir.

**Bulgular**

İOY dersinin içeriği hakkında öğrenci görüşlerine yönelik sorulara verilen cevaplarda öne çıkan bulgular şu şekildedir. Katılımcıların 231'i yazma konusunun, sözel veya yazılı olarak ikiili veya grup halinde çalışılmasıının uygun olacağını belirtmektedir. Yazılacak konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılacak konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğunu belirtmekte, yazılan konu hakkında arka plan bilgilerinin olmasının önemli olduğ
nıkların kullanılmasını sağlayacaklarına dair vurgu yapmaktadır. Ayrıca katılımcıların yarısı (n=125) yazma çalışmalarının hem sınıf içinde hem de sınıf dışında yapılması gerektiğini belirtmektedir. Bu dersin okuma ve kелime etkinlikleriyle desteklenmeyi önemi de vurgulanmaktadır (% 45.28).

**Tartışma ve Sonuç**


**References/Kaynaklar**


05.04.2015


