

Study of Writing Instruction in Reading and Writing Textbooks of Primary School Based on the Process Approach and the Intended Curriculum

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Abstract

In each country, educational systems play an important role in moving ahead of their goals to adapt to the changes in society. Language skills are the main objectives of the primary curriculum. Clearly, competence in them requires education and any education needs a program while program needs to be evaluated for improvement.

Writing is an integral part of contemporary education because of its relation to thinking and reading. Writing is a valuable factor both for the current education reform and for individual success at school and at work; therefore, it is essential for educators to define the strengths and weaknesses of the current school curriculum. However in the field of writing, there has been much less research in the country and no changes are offered in writing as a result of the transformation of philosophical and theoretical foundations. Therefore, in this research, it was attempted to evaluate the written curriculum of primary writing instruction based on the theoretical foundation and written curriculum.

There are two main approaches to writing: Product Approach and Process Approach. The Product approach is derived from the behavioral theory and the positivism philosophy, wherein the emphasis is on the teacher and the lower-level cognitive functions. In this approach, educational methods are more one-dimensional and teacher-centered. Writing in this perspective is based on grammar and the regularization is through direct teaching. Students write in one step and teacher also scores in another step to the final writing. Therefore, in this approach, the emphasis is on basic skills such as handwriting, spelling and linguistic

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knowledge –i.e. word-formation and grammar. By the change in the philosophy of teaching from positivism to post-positivism, the process-writing approach transformed the old approach –i.e., the product approach. In this approach, the emphasis is on the student, problem, and process. The process of writing transforms thoughts and ideas into the final text and emphasizes the construction of meaning and its transition. Over time, the process approach evolved and introduced other dimensions.

This research is based on the process approach merged with other approaches. Effective elements derived from other approaches are well combined with the writing process and show positive results in research. Thus, a pattern of writing education is used that takes into account the training and opportunities of writing for high-level skills such as strategies, goals, criteria of evaluation and growth of self-regulation strategy as well as basic skills in an interactive and collaborative context. Since the process of writing is the central element in this approach, the theoretical foundation of this research is called the process-oriented approach.

The textbook is one of the most important references and resources for the students' learning in our country's educational system. In Iran, most educational activities are carried out within the framework of the textbook and the most educational activities and experiences of students and teachers are organized around it. So, in this study, it is tried to investigate writing skills in primary school's reading and writing textbooks and the writing approach used in that according to teacher guidebook. This research seeks to answer the two fundamental questions: "Is the approach of reading and writing textbooks to the writing instruction based on modern teaching methods?" and "Is the approach of reading and writing textbooks to writing instruction coordinated with the intended approach in the teacher's guidebook?"

The method of measurement in this research is guided content analysis or analogy-based content analysis. In a guided or analogy-based approach, the basis of the analysis is the existing theory or the results of previous research as initial codes. Content of these textbooks were analyzed based on basic or micro level skills as well as high or macro level skills, writing opportunity for these skills and access to writers community. The statistical population of the study is reading, writing textbooks and teacher guidebook for primary school. In grade selection, it is expected that higher grade will become more advanced in writing; therefore, the sixth grade as the final year of the selected period was targeted and the data were collected. Descriptive statistics was used to obtain the results.

The results showed that in sixth-grade reading and writing textbooks, there is more attention to basic and micro level skills and low or no attention is paid to macro and high-level skills. Results showed that the writing instruction model is not based on the process approach, but has the traditional approach components and there is no balance between the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of writing instruction in written content. The highest value is for the behavioral dimension and the lowest value is for the affective dimension. In addition, in the cognitive and behavioral dimension, the higher attention was to basic skills. Findings also showed that the written curriculum is coordinated with the intended curriculum.

Keywords: Teaching writing skills, Content analysis, Process Approach, Product Approach, Process-based Approach, Basic writing skills, High-level writing skills