

**Needs analysis to improve secondary level students' writing skills**

**Samia Mahmud**

**BRAC University**



**Department of English and Humanities**

**BRAC University**

**August 2017**

**Need analysis to improve secondary level students writing skills**

**A thesis submitted to the  
Department of English and Humanities  
of  
BRAC University**

**By**

**Samia Mahmud**

**ID: 15363001**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of Master of Arts in English**

**August 2017**

**Keywords**

English, Writing, Needs, classroom, Lacks, Writing process, Class room environment, Writing test, Administrative facility, education policy.

## Table of contents

Keyword .....	iii
Table of contents.....	iv
List of figures.....	viii
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations used.....	ix
Dedication.....	x
Acknowledgement.....	xi
Abstract .....	2
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	3
Rationale of the study.....	4
Statement of the problem .....	4
Scope of the study.....	4
Objective of the study .....	5
Thesis outline.....	5
Chapter 2: Literature review.....	6
The impact of the standard –based movement on writing instructions .....	10
The impact technology has had on instruction .....	11
Effective instruction strategies for improving students writing .....	13
The importance of teachers ‘role .....	14
Characteristics of writing material .....	15
Chapter 3: Research design.....	16
Research Methodology.....	16
Research design .....	16
Objective .....	17
Research questions.....	17

Participants .....	17
Instruments.....	18
Students' Questionnaire.....	18
Focus Group Discussion .....	18
Teachers' Interview .....	19
Classroom Observation .....	20
Data collecting procedure .....	20
Data Analyzing Procedure .....	21
Reasons for Selecting the Areas .....	21
Ethics .....	21
Limitations of the study .....	22
Chapter 4: Results.....	23
The findings of the close-ended questions.....	23
Figure 1. Usage of English in classroom.....	23
Figure 2.Students writing capability .....	24
Figure 3. Findings error in students writing .....	25
Figure 4 Followed academic style and tone .....	26
The findings of students' open-ended questions.....	27
The impact of the students' number in practicing English.....	27
The importance of having English writing test.....	27
The importance of following modern technology .....	27
The importance of following writing process .....	28
Findings of the students' focused group discussion.....	28
Students usage of English .....	28
Teachers feedback .....	28

Seating arrangements .....	28
Modern technology .....	29
Findings from teachers' response.....	29
Necessity of learning written English .....	29
The Education system in teaching written English.....	29
The strategies used in teaching written English.....	30
Students' willingness to learn written English .....	30
Students' mistake in written English.....	30
Technological problem .....	30
Institutional support and teaching aid.....	31
Chapter 5: Analysis of the finding and discussion .....	32
Chapter 6: Recommendation, Suggestions and conclusion .....	35
Recommendation.....	35
Suggestions of the study.....	36
Conclusion.....	36
References .....	38

Appendix A.....40

Appendix B.....41

Appendix C.....42

Appendix D.....43

**List of figure**

Figure 1. Usage of English in classroom.....	23
Figure 2. Students writing capability .....	24
Figure 3. Findings error in students writing .....	25
Figure 4 Followed academic style and tone .....	26



### List of Acronyms and Abbreviations used

<b>Acronyms/ Abbreviations</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Expressions</b>
<b>S.S.C</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Secondary School Certificate</b>
<b>F.G.D</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Focus group discussion</b>
<b>S.B.W</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Standard based writing</b>
<b>CO</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Classroom observation</b>
<b>CCSS</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Common core state standard</b>
<b>GI</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Grammar instructions</b>
<b>WI</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Writing Instruction</b>
<b>POW</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Pick ideas, Organize the notes, write and say more</b>
<b>WAC</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Writing across the curriculum</b>
<b>TT</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Teachers training</b>

### **Declaration**

I declare that the Dissertation titled Needs analysis to improve secondary level students writing skills is submitted to BRAC University in partial fulfillment of the MA degree in English . This paper is the result of my personal investigation; it has not been presented and submitted wholly or in part for any other degree.

Samia Mahmud

August 2017

### **Acknowledgements**

The teaching practicum was a challenging task unlike I have ever previously experienced. Firstly, I would like to thank my Internship supervisor Asifa Sultana for the valuable guidance and advice throughout the research process. Even with other significant responsibilities, she made sure I was on schedule with this research endeavor and with her help; I was able to complete this task.

Also I would like to thank Mr. Zahangir under whom I did my observation and for providing me the necessary resources/information to fulfill the teaching practicum requirement. Furthermore I would especially like to thank Mr. Nazmul having the patient and permitting me to observe after contact with the management.

Finally, I cannot but help from being thankful and gratitude to all the participants who have spent their time and energy to support me by providing data and as well as to all who have directly and indirectly contribution to my study.

Needs analysis to improve secondary level students' writing skills

Samia Mahmud

BRAC University

### Abstract

The study attempt to analyze needs, wants and lacks of students of secondary level of concerning writing skills. Two section of class 7 and 9 where in total 50 students in these two classes who are the sample of this study and cover 30.365% of the target population.

To complete this report effety, combination of teaching and observation has been made along with taking writing test among students and in-depth interview among teachers.

In addition, focus group discussion applying projective technique has been used as a tool to find the students wants. Writing is an important skill required in school education since assessments done in are mostly based on writing performance. Yet, teachers lack opportunity for receiving training in writing instruction and with the result, they feel constrained to foster writing skills in students. Keeping this consideration in mind, the study makes an attempt to assess secondary school teachers' perceptions at class nine & seven with regard to their pedagogical difficulties, pedagogic present needs, wants and the target areas in which teachers wish to receive training. The study found out that need regarding writing skills, the area where the students lack and needs to improve along with giving light to their wants, which often remains out of focus. At the end, along with conclusion, the study has provided some recommendation based on data analyses and findings from the observation through teaching result of diagnostic test (based on writing skills). Student's feedback through questionnaire and formal and informal interview with teachers.

## **Introduction**

This study can be relevant for the researcher to understand what is happening in the educational sectors, especially in the case of English writing, has always been a problematic case in the Bangla Medium institution. This report can also help the researcher to analysis how to make students competence with help of students 'different writing needs, wants and lacks to improve secondary level student's writing skills.

This study can be useful for researcher's future career as the researcher intends to work for the welfare of the educational sector. This study will help the researcher to understand how the teaching quality can be improved so that it can also increase the students 'level of understanding and how the teaching methods can enhance the motivation of the students, so that they can acquire the efficiency of writing and learn the lessons based on their understanding, not memorization. The classroom activities should be designed in accordance to the students' weak points, needs and learning targets.

The target of the study is to explain the teaching pattern that the teachers have resigned due to the change in the system and what those students learn through writing. Most of the schools of different boards follow the same teaching pattern and they prepare their students with the help of the test paper.

This study can be relevant for the students of secondary level too as it provides the importance of acquiring the knowledge of writing rather than learning as this particular lack would affect future studies. This study can present useful insights for the teachers and

respective persons who are involved with the education board. This research shows how teachers teach inside the classrooms and how consequently students learn from that teaching.

### **Statement of the problem**

-What writing skills are required in the secondary level English examination

-How do the students benefit from the writing skills being taught?-Do the

teaching method followed by the teacher, help students of various proficiencies' in

English improve or not?

-How has the change in secondary level syllabus affected the teaching methodology?

Are they still the same or have they changed?

-Is there any scope of improvement in the methodologies used to develop writing skills

or not?

### **Scope and Delimitation of the study**

The study will perform observation in a prominent School .The researcher is being and observes the students English writing needs, wants and lacks to improve writing skills particularly how the teachers demonstrate the writing activities and how the students take part in the activities.

-English language teaching focusing only on the skills required in writing in preparation for the examination as well as writing skill development in secondary level will be interviewed

the head of the administration staff to understand why they use certain approaches and its benefit.

-Data from internet, alongside books focusing on writing skills, pdf files etc has used.

### **Objectives of the study**

#### **The study has the following primary/broad objectives:**

A study on the development of English writing needs, wants and lacks to improve secondary level student's to improve writing skills along with the activities included in the S.S.C syllabus. A comparative analysis whether these are enough to fulfill students writing needs.

#### **The study has the following secondary /specific objectives:**

\*Identify Student's necessities. (according to demands of situation, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in that situation)

\*Identify student's demands and wants.

\*Identify student's lack. (according to what the learner already knows, what necessities are missing? and there is a gap between existing proficiency and the target proficiency)

### **Thesis outline**

This study examines the secondary level students' needs, wants and lacks to improve their writing skill. The outline of the study is here in brief for the quick overview.

Chapter I is about the introduction of the study. Here, I have shown the background of the study and also have contextualized the study in term of Bangladeshi classroom and education



system . This section includes the reasons and purposes of the study and shows the significance and scope of it as well.

Chapter II is an insight of the literature review that is relevant to the needs of writing skills like as the Bangladeshi context. At the end of the chapter, there is a summary based on the literature review, which will lead to the implication of the findings.

Then, chapter III is about the information on the research design and research methodologies, Including the research tools and instruments, analysis, ethics and limitation of the research. The systematic and thematic results of the findings are given in *chapter IV*.

The last but not the least Chapter V is the analysis of the results where a connection is maintained between the findings and the literature reviews.

Finally, the *chapter VI* is the conclusion of the study culminating the result and the discussion of the study and providing the recommendation for the further improvement of the Bangladeshi students' writing in the English classroom.

### **Literature Reviews**

Writing is an essential skill that students need in order to become successful in their educational life. According to (Kiuvara, Graham and Hawken, 2009) writing is not an optional skill for students; it is essential. Several factors influence the reasons why students have difficulty in learning to write well. This literature review will describe-

\*The impact of the standard-based movement on writing instruction.

\*The impact technology has had on instruction.

\*Effective instruction strategies for improving students writing.

\*The role of teacher

\*Characteristics of good writing materials.

For literature review I have used some research article that was published between 2000 - 2012. The sources is used in this study because they are the most relevant to the topic of practice for writing instruction.

According to (American college testing,2011)...In a word of rapidly developing technology and global unification efforts, students must be prepared to enter the workforce with strong writing communication skill. The NCW reported that business required employees to “create clearly written documents, memoranda, technical reports and electronic messages” (kiuhara, 2009, p.13).

(Cooker and lewis,2008) told that, In order to help students become proficient in different writing modalities, which can range from text messaging to evaluative report writing, schools must review writing instructional practices to determine if students are prepared for graduation and beyond.

Many universities require written essays to evaluate students’ writing abilities for admission, and students who are considered to be poor writers might not be eligible to attend college (Graham and Perin, 2007). According to (cooker and lewis, 2008) the value of writing instruction is not confined to the school setting because the need for writing skills persists when individual enters the Workforce. (Susan Margaret,2011,p13) suggests that Poor writing habits in the Workforce can delay a promotion or advancement, and can affect hiring practices, on the other hand Weaker writers are at a disadvantage in school and in the professional working world.

(Susan Margeret, 2011, p16) and (Graham and Perin, 2007, p11) proposed some strategies to improve writing skill.

\* Strategy instruction has been defined as methodically teaching strategies for Planning, revising, and editing text. Writing strategies can be related to brainstorming or to the broader topic of how to write in a certain genre such as essay writing or persuasive writing. Susan (2011) described how specific strategy instruction is designed to help students become independent writers by giving students the strategies to be used during the different stages of the writing process.

\*Summarization is the process of summarizing texts or readings (Graham & Perin, 2007). For students, writing a summary is a way to remember what was Read and to build summary skills in other subject areas.

\*Peer assistance is a method for students to share writing samples and ideas (Graham and Perin, 2007). Susan (2011) also defined peer assistance as an effective way to teach writing, but called the process peer conferencing.

\*Setting product goal is a method to help students set short-term goals for Writing assignments (Graham and Perin, 2007).

\*Word processing is the act of using a computer or computer programs to Compose writing (Graham and Perin, 2007).

\*Sentence combining involves specific instruction on how to combine simple sentences to make more complex sentences (Graham and Perin, 2007).

\*Inquiry or research involves tasks or activities that engage students to Increase content knowledge related to the writing topic (Graham and Perin, 2007). This process can involve

comparing and contrasting a topic or collecting evidence to support the writing topic (Graham and Perin, 2007).

\*Prewriting, the stage that comes before composing, is a process for gathering thoughts or ideas, typically called brainstorming (Susan Margaret,2011).

\*Process writing is a more complex approach, as this method involves differentiated methods of teaching writing such as having students write for areal audience; developing stages of the planning process with opportunities to review, translate, and revise; helping student develop a sense of personal ownership of and responsibility for writing projects; providing opportunities for peer collaboration in a safe and supportive environment; giving time for self-reflection; giving specific and targeted feedback or assistance as needed; and giving time for other ways to differentiate instruction (Graham & Perin, 2007). Susan (2011) provided a simple version of the process approach with the components organizing, drafting, and reviewing, but a detailed description was warranted because there are several components within the planning, drafting, and revising stages.

\*Grammar instruction involves the study of the parts of speech (Graham & Perin, 2007). Susan Margerat (2011) suggested that grammar instruction is not a strong evidence-based practice for teaching writing because grammar produced a negative effect size in the meta-analysis; however, grammar instruction has been included as direct instruction model of teaching basic writing skills.

Graham (2007) specifically recommended that teachers guide students through the steps of the writing process, provide students time to practice writing skills, and interactively converse with students to help improve writing performance.

Since the time of pictographs or hieroglyphics, the purpose of writing has remained the same: to express thoughts, feelings, experiences, and knowledge (Graham and Perin, 2007). Writers need to express personal thoughts or feelings, be able to organize ideas, and provide a mental picture through words that can take the reader to a different time or place (Susan Margerate,2011).

**The impact of the standard-based movement on writing instruction:**

According to (McCarthy,2008),With the onset of NCLB, states, districts, and classroom teachers have implemented standardized instruction to meet the goals and demands set forth by the federal government .

Unfortunately, the standards-based movement has led publishers and instructional leaders to standardize the curriculum and script instruction, which devalues teaching and devalues “opportunities to embed best writing practice in the classroom” (NCW, 2006, p. 13). The standards-based movement overlooks writing instruction because the standards are not measured under NCLB’s Adequate Yearly Progress benchmarks even though “reading and writing skills play a significant role in the achievement scores obtained on standardized and no standardized tests” (Atwell, Maxwell & Romero, 2008, p. 22).

Teachers face daily challenges to develop writing skills in young students in the era of high stakes testing and accountability because more focus has been spent on reading and mathematics versus writing ( Zeisel and Fannin, 2010). Even though school districts have been seeking ways to improve academic achievement, writing has often been pushed to the side or has been poorly taught. Teachers lack sufficient time to effectively teach writing and may neglect the subject altogether due to school interruptions or curricular demands (Susan Margaret,

2011). Teachers are also forced to spend more time preparing students for tests versus creating authentic writing exercises (McCarthy, 2008).

According to (Theresa A. Dean-Rumsay, 1998) Despite the weakness the standards-based movement has also had positive effects on classroom instruction. For example, schools have been more aware of what matters and there is a greater focus on how to help students become better prepared for graduation or postsecondary education .

Rumsey (1998) focused more on the negative and unwanted effects of a standards-based movement. He suggested students have been expected to have more targeted skills and there has been a greater emphasis on accountability versus overall student development. A second negative effect of the standards-based movement has been students were expected to come together and have similar learning results; however, students have differing learning styles and developmental levels, which the standards-based movement does not address ( Sims and Nelson, 2010).

Teachers need to balance the standards-based movement with effective teaching practices in many subject areas, including writing (McCarthy, 2008). McCarthy went on to suggest writing curriculums need to expand in order to include more genres, writing forms, and technology.

### **Technology**

According to (Lisa Sandalo, 2010, p16) Proper use of technology enhance writing skills. If teachers change how they teach writing to become more meaningful for Students, then writing have to move beyond a requirement and into an environment that promotes writing across the curriculum.

(Cutler and Graham, 2008) says that, In order for teachers to move writing beyond an obligation, writing needs to become a daily, personable, and meaningful activity that blends strategy, process, skill, genre, and technology for students to improve .

Teachers are faced with new challenges to incorporate technology into classroom instruction and to improve the educational performance of students. Students need to benefit from educational technology and instructional resources. Software programs have been available for educators to help scaffold writing instruction and to help support writing development (Lisa, Sandalo, 2010, p18).

Computer software programs offer immersive learning environments to increase student motivation and to provide scaffold resources for teachers. These programs go beyond basic word processing or grammar instruction and use a constructivist, problem based approach to writing, which increases student writing development. The software programs that allow teachers to focus only on grammar, word processing, concept mapping, or word analysis are non-instructional and should not be used to teach writing (Lisa, Sandalo, 2010, p18). Many of these basic programs do not help teachers track student progress or provide constructive feedback, which limits the capacity and impact.

However, if programs are research-based, provide a way for teachers to track and monitor students, and give students specific feedback, then incorporating this type of technology into writing instruction would increase student motivation and time spent on writing (Lisa sandalo, 2010, p19). When implemented properly, software programs can complement classroom instruction because students can work independently, receive immediate feedback, have time to practice skills, and gain a sense of accomplishment.

Teachers need to be flexible when working with technology because there could be obstacles in scheduling computer lab times, and technology issues related to equipment malfunction. Many times teachers see these obstacles as a minor nuisance, and part of the learning process (Andes & Claggett, 2011). According to Lisa (2010), Regardless of the type of computer based programs teachers blend into writing instruction, a key factor in increasing writing performance is to “increase student time on-task practicing writing”. Students are able to become independent writers by practicing the process, skills, and strategies through collaboration with teachers and classmates (Lisa, 2010). According to Word processing is one of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as identified from (Graham and Perin, 2007,p15) and many states are going to an online word processing platform for assessing students . As schools explore the integration of technology in writing instruction, district officials need to support teachers by providing on-site and hands-on practice for successful implementation (Lisa Mandalo,2010,p18).

### **Effective instruction strategies for improving students’ writing:**

(Theresa A. Dean Rumsey,1998,p28) suggested four main modes of composition instruction.:1)the presentational mode,characterized by teacher-led discussion,specific assignments imitating a pattern or following rules,feedback from the teacher.2)the natural process mode, characterized by general assignments,emphasis on student-chosen topic and free writing,response from peers, and oppurtunities to revise writing.3)The individual mode,in which students receive individual instruction through tutorials and 4)The environmental mode,



characterized by specific objectives, short lecture time, engaging students in concrete, students tasks, and activities involving high levels of peer collaboration.

### **Importance of teachers' role**

Writing is a complex skill which most students actually need in order to successfully go through their educational life. Because everything is based on writing during academic years , a student who possesses good writing skill automatically do better at everything .Exams, essays, assignment , and so on.

As a teacher he/she must play role to help each and every student improve themselves, acquire new skills and become a better individual by the end of the year. What most teachers don't actually realize is that they should be carrying way more responsibility when it comes to helping students improve their writing skill .

According to (Antonete Ramaj,2011) teachers should play following role -

### **Teach students strategies for the various components of the writing process:**

Students need to acquire specific strategies for each component of the writing process .Students should learn basic strategies ,such as (Pick ideas, Organize the notes, write and say more ),in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. More complicated strategies , such as peer revising, should be introduced in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade or later. Many strategies can be used to assists students with more than one component of the writing processFor example,as students plan to write a persuasive essay,they may set goals for their writing,such as providing three or more reasons for their

beliefs. Students should then devise a plan for periodically assessing their progress toward meeting these goals as they write. As students evaluate their draft text, they may reread their paper to determine whether they have met the goals they articulate during planning. If not, students may revise their writing to better meet their goals.

### **Guide students to select and use appropriate writing strategies:**

When students initially learn to use writing strategies, teachers frequently should discuss when and how to use the strategies throughout the writing process, as well as why the strategies are helpful. To help students select the appropriate writing strategy, teachers might consider posting strategies on a wall chart in the classroom and students also can identify opportunities to apply strategies in different content areas.

### **Characteristics of good writing materials**

(Lee Watanabe Crockett, 2012) suggested that-

**A.** Materials should be learning-centered rather than teaching-centered. They should focus on helping students to develop their own strategies for learning.

**B.** Materials should be creative. They should provide stimulating activities to focus students' attention on the things to be learned. Audiovisual aids such as tapes, pictures, and diagrams should be used to activate the students' awareness of the content as something real.

**C.** Materials should be interesting. They should be related to students' interests. Moreover, there should be a variety of text types and activity types in the materials to motivate the students' interest in writing.

**D.** Materials should be task-based. They should use purposeful tasks to motivate students' learning and to make students see the usefulness of writing.

**E.** Materials should be practical. They should deal with real-life communication

### **Research design**

This aim of the research was to find out the secondary level students 'needs, wants and lacks of their writing skill. With a view to unearthing the challenges, a volume of methodologies was followed to conduct the research. A student survey, focus group discussion, teachers interview and classroom observation were the research tools for this paper. I had visited different schools situated in and outside the Dhaka city to collect the data.

### **Research Methodology**

In the research methodology, I followed the research tools like; students' survey, teachers' interview, focus group discussion and classroom observation. All the four methodologies were given an equal importance in the research with the equal contribution to the found data.

### **Research design**

A mix methods combining with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies had been used to analyze the research data.

To design the quantitative data, I used Likert scale to collect and analyze the numeric data. However, the items in Likert scale ranges were 'Always', 'Most of the time', 'Sometimes', 'A little bit', and 'Never'.

Also to measure the participants' personal opinion about the quality in English using, I used Likert Scale's 'Level of quality' which ranges from 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Fair', and 'Poor'.

**Objective**

To find out the secondary level students' needs, wants and lacks for improving their writing skill.

**Research questions**

1. What classroom activities can be applied to teaching and learning writing English?
2. How the teachers are motivated to increase students' English writing skill?
3. How do the teachers give feedback on students' mistakes in writing?
4. How technology can help to improve students' writing skill?
5. To what extent the classroom environment and class size affect students' writing English?
6. What are the administrative and logistic supports that the institution provides their students to enhance the English writing skill?

**Participants**

The participants were randomly chosen from 3 secondary schools. The schools were chosen from different parts of Dhaka city and 1 was from a suburb named Pabna. The only school was also from that suburb. The participants did vary in their classes and ages. For example, there were the participants from class 7 and class 9. On the other hand, the pabna's participants were from class 9. The schools had a co-education system of both the boys and girls. However, the total numbers of these participants were 50.

Among them, 30 were from Dhaka and 20 were from pabna. From Dhaka, there were 18 girls and 12 boys where it was 11 girls and 9 boys from Pabna.

Furthermore, there were total 3 interviews; 1 from cities school and 2 from villages' school. Along with this, I had conducted 2 FGD; 1 from cities students and 1 from the villages' school. On the other hand, I had observed in total three classes; 2 from the Dhaka's schools and 1 from village's school to collect the research data.

The number of the students in classroom was different from 35-65. When I observed the classroom the average attended students were 40.

### **Instruments**

The methods used to collect data were students' questionnaire survey, focus group discussion, teachers' interview and classroom observation. The chief methodologies used in this study include:

- (1) Students' survey,
- (2) Focus Group Discussion,
- (3) Teachers' interview and
- (4) Class observation.

### **Students' Questionnaire**

In students' questionnaire there were 13 close-ended questions and 9 open-ended questions. The close-ended questions had (3-5) options which varied according to the question type .

On the other hand, the open-ended questions had no option and therefore the participants had an option to provide the opinion.

However, at the end of the questionnaire, there was a concluding question where I asked their suggestions that may be effective to overcome the challenges in learning English writing in the classroom.

### **Focus Group Discussion**

To get the qualitative data I conducted two focus group discussions of students both in Dhaka city's school and village's school . There were 15 students from cities school who took part in the discussion and 10 village's school students were the participants. I made a positive environment by a smiley face and friendly introducing with them.

However, my concentration was on to drag the answers of the preselected questions. The numbers of those questions were 8 and I took about 25 minutes to conduct the FGD with the cities students. On the other hand, it was about 30 minutes to conduct the FGD with the village's school students.

In both of the cases, I used the Bangla and English language to conduct the FGD.

### **Teachers' Interview**

The number of teachers' interview I had taken was 3 where 2 were from cities schools and 1 was from the village's school. I asked the teachers to know about the medium of the language I will ask the questions or go with the conversation. Except the village's teacher, the rest two invited me to choose any language (Bangla or English) and I preferred English though in some cases I used Bangla.

However, both the cities school teachers were male, while the village's teacher was a female. I conducted the interview with the female teacher at her home requesting a preset time

from her while the other two interviews were conducted in the respective schools. The duration of the interviews were about 20 minutes per.

The total number of the focused questions for the interview was 9. But, I tried to maintain a conversational environment from where I had mixed the preset questions and later filtered the required information.

### **Classroom Observation**

I observed total 3 classes, including 2 city's schools and 1 village's school . I made a classroom observation roaster where I took the information from the class. While observing the classes, I tried to note down the points mainly covering the classroom infrastructures, seating arrangement, teaching and learning methods and strategies and so on. However, the actual number of students varies from 45 to 60 while the presented students vary from 18- 50. However, the observation sheet has been included with the appendix page.

### **Data Collecting Procedure**

I administered the students while they were in answering the questionnaire. Some students felt shy and some students felt uneasy finding me, an unknown visitor, beside them. But, some of them seemed motivated and asked different questions to clarify their confusion related to the questionnaire.

However, I was able to manage the environment and to make a friendly environment. However, before distributing the questionnaire I became introduced to the students. There is a common tendency among the students to feel fear of teachers. This fear may hamper the responses and for this fear at the beginning I assured that I would not play any role like a teacher.

Rather, I claimed me as a seeker of some support and asked for help from them. These techniques really helped me to find the participants easy going and interesting.

I confidently administered the teachers' interview. With a friendly introducing, I tried to clearly point out my objective and purpose. The teachers were in hesitation with some of the questions. But, I precisely described and made clear them.

### **Data Analyzing Procedure**

There were quantitative and qualitative methods of questions. The quantitative question was the close-ended type of question where students had options to choose the answer. On the other hand, the later one is the open-ended question where students had a room to opine their view against or for the question.

### **Reasons for Selecting the Areas**

The areas like suburb (Pabna) and city (Dhaka) had been selected willingly to find and present the real pictures or the challenges in both the urban and non-urban areas. The aim of the paper was not distinguishing the challenges between the rural and urban educational institutions rather getting a general information about the challenges that both the institutions had to face in writing English.

### **Ethics**

I have maintained a strong ethics while and after collecting the research data. Participants had been given a piece of paper promising that the confidentiality of their names and data would be strictly maintained. I had taken their written consent about the ethical issues and the



participants allowed me to use the information only for my research purpose. I gave one signed copies to my interviewees and kept one with me for any further need.

### **Limitations of the study**

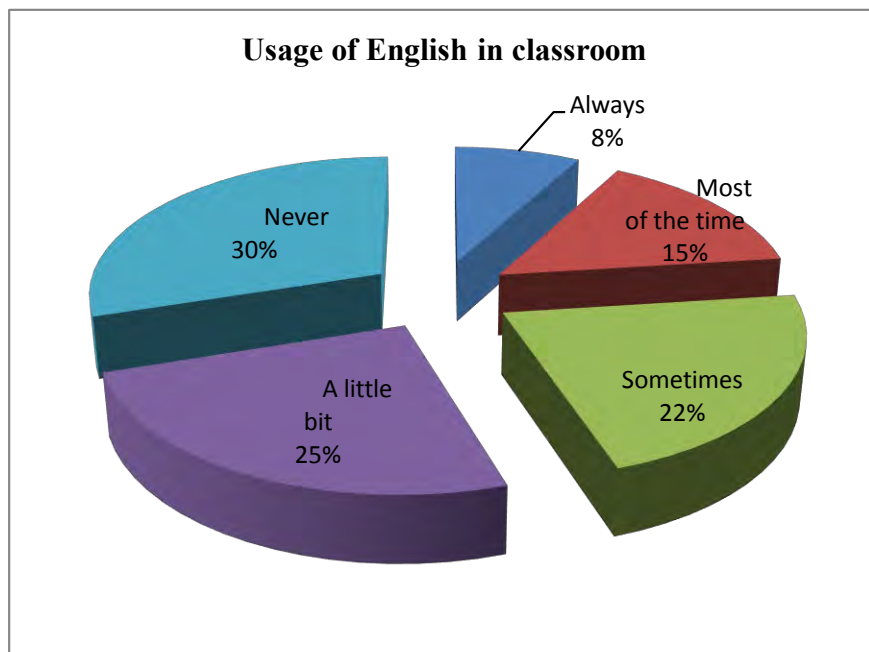
I had faced some limitations in conducting the study. I had to conduct the survey in both the rural and urban areas. But, I had to wait for 1.5 months to do that because some of my personal problem .Moreover, the Bengali medium institutions had their half yearly examination's time while everyone was busy with the exam preparation.

However, I also had to experience challenges in maintaining the formalities to conduct the survey in the both schools. For example, I had to convince the authority that this survey is harmless to them. Moreover, students were confused thinking in their response that in the survey paper will be marked. Students were also shy and introvert at the beginning after seeing me as I was a stranger to them.

### Results

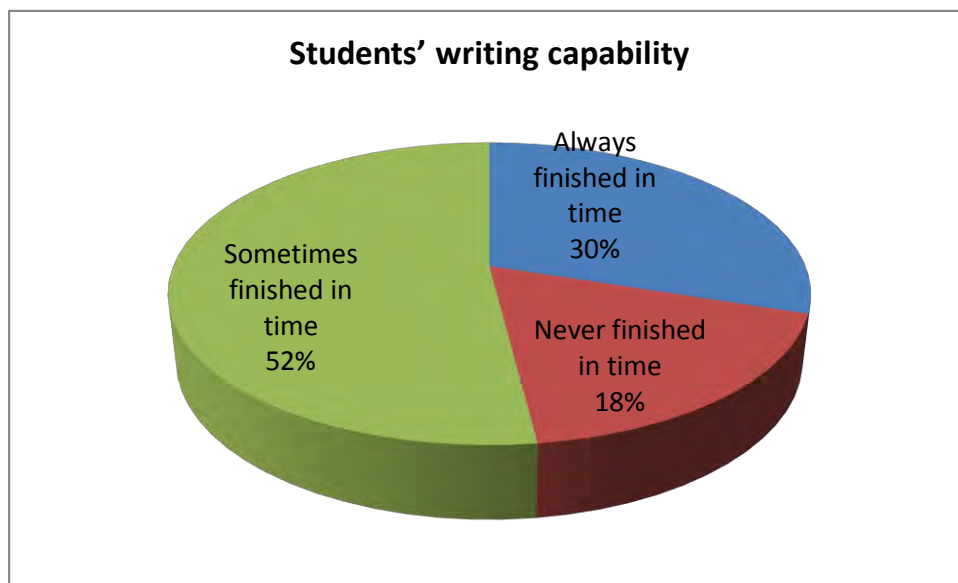
#### The findings of Students Close ended question

Figure 1: Usage of English in classroom



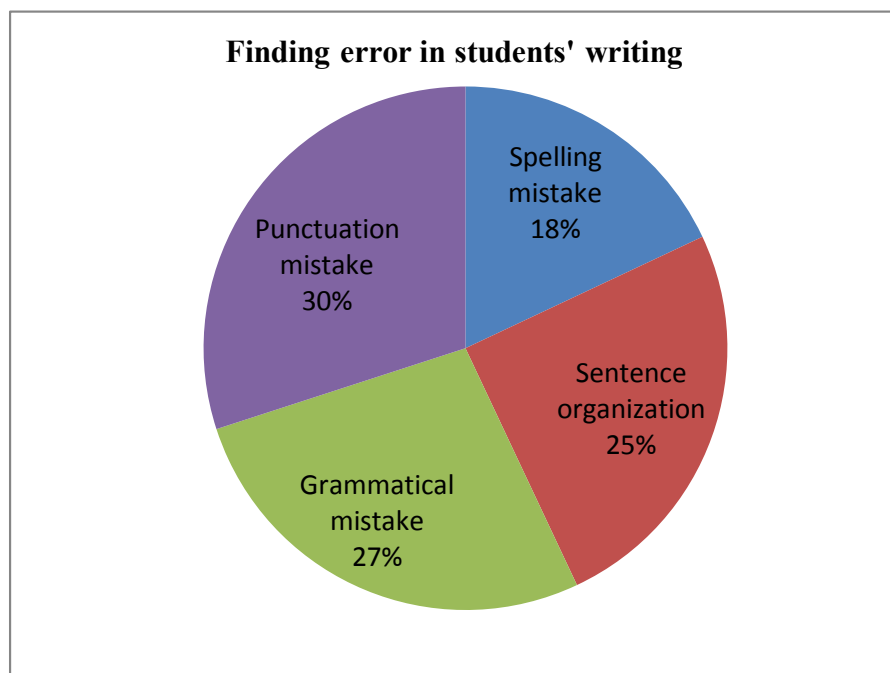
In this figure (see figure 1), it is seen that 8% students affirmed that they ‘Always’ used English in their English class while 30% students said they ‘Never’ used English in class. On the other hand, 22% students said that they used English ‘Sometimes’ while the 25% students stated that they used English ‘A little bit’ in their class. 15% students had stated that ‘Most of the time’ they used English in their classroom.

**Figure 2: Students writing capability (Under Time constrains)**



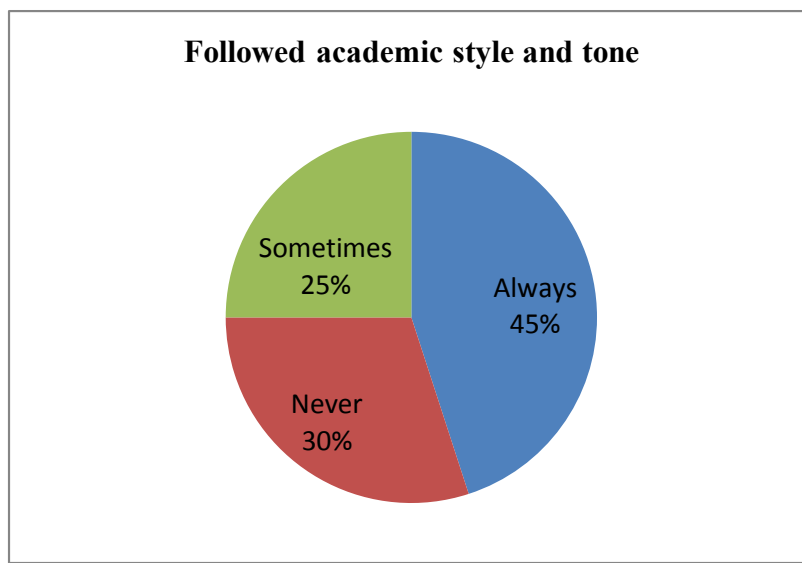
In this figure (see figure 2), it is seen that 30% students affirmed that they 'Always' finished their writing in given time in their English writing class while 18% students said they 'Never' finished their writing in the given time . On the other hand, 52% students said that they 'Sometimes' finished their writing in the given time in their classroom.

**Figure :3 Finding Error in students' writing**



In this figure (see figure .3), it is seen that 18% students ‘Always ‘mistake spelling during their writing while 25% students’ ‘Sometimes’ cannot produce correct sentence . On the other hand, 30% students said that they ‘Most of the time’ mistakes punctuation during their writing While 27% students mistake grammar ‘A little bit ‘during their writing.

**Figure:4 Followed academic style and tone**



In this figure (see figure 4.1.4), it is seen that 45% students 'Always' follow academic style and tone in their writing while 30% students' Sometimes' follow academic style and tone. On the other hand, 25% students never follow academic style and tone during their writing.

### **The findings of students' open-ended questions**

#### **The impact of the students' number in practicing English.**

Among the participants, most of them acknowledged the positive contribution of the existing number of students in practicing English. For example, 13 students said that their peers helped them to practice English and 11 students asserted that they got a willingness from their peers to practice English. On the other hand, 7 students said that they got an inspiration from the

classmates. However, 14 students stated that because of having a large number of students, they could not listen to their teachers properly.

### **The importance of having English writing test.**

The students said that they did not have any writing assessment. Some students had seen it as a motivational factor while some other students had seen as a 'compulsory' factor in learning writing English. Though some students had left the question without answering but those who had answered had shown a great importance of taking the English writing test. For example, one participant had said that 'taking an English writing test is very important as it can help us to know our writing condition and therefore.

### **The importance of having writing club.**

In response to this question, 80% students responded that they needed an 'English writing club' to practice and improve their writing skill. On the contrary, 2 students disagreed with this group and strongly believed that "a regular classroom is enough for practice writing.

### **The importance of following modern technology**

To answer this question 60% students said that modern technology is too much helpful for improving their writing skill for example the software programs that allow teachers to focus only on grammar, word processing, word analysis etc on the other hand, rest of the student disagree with it.

### **The importance of following writing process**

Among all of the participants most of them told they do not follow any writing process in the time of examination and rest of them told most of the time they follow writing process like planning, drafting, revising, editing etc.

## **Findings of the students' Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

### **Students' usage of English**

Almost all the participants who took part in the focus group discussion stated that they did not write in English outside of their classroom or examination. 21 students said that they usually tried to write English in English writing class, especially in the English examination.

14 students among had said that sometimes they practice writing outside classroom like messaging, sending mail etc. The other students affirmed that they never tried to practice writing.

### **Teacher's feedback**

10 of the students said that after checking script their teacher did not give any correction .As a result they did not improve their mistakes of their writing skill.

On the other hand 8 students told that, sometimes their teacher mentioned the mistake but did not give any explanation.

### **Seating arrangements**

Most of the students claimed that they didn't have proper seating arrangements in their English writing class .Their class room is too short for the students .

As a result, at the time of examination they are seating together and copying one another

### **Modern technology**

To answer this question , the participants said that modern technology is too much helpful for improving their writing skill for example the software programs that allow teachers to focus only on grammer,word processing, word analysis etc .But their class room has no facilities to practice writing English .

## **Findings from teachers' response**



### **Necessity of learning writing English**

The three teachers strongly believed that Bangladeshi students must know the writing English to keep pace with the ongoing and dynamic global village. They had given some logics behind their statements. For example, only the female participant had asserted that knowing writing English might enhance students' knowledge about the English writing including grammatical mistakes , spelling mistakes , and punctuation mistakes and so on.

The other two participants had also put the importance of knowing English writing on these factors. However, they also added that knowing writing English is not only for the examination rather it is about to know how to use language in every sphere of the that life.

### **Education system in teaching written English**

The participants said that Bangladeshi education system was indifferent in taking proper care of ensuring teaching-learning writing English. They found some incongruity in the education system. For example, they said that the education system did not focus on the writing skill in testing and evaluation because it is MCQ based.

In their opinion, it was one of the major and biggest reasons of avoiding writing skill from the English syllabuses and as well as from classes because there is no creative writing in the

Syllabus. Students are given some writing topic before examination .They memories that and write that in their exam script.

As a result they don't improve their writing skills.

### **The strategies used in teaching writing English**

The rural teacher said she did not have any specific strategy to teach English specially written one. On the other hand, one urban teacher had said that he tried to use different types of strategies like planning, drafting, revising, editing etc

### **Students' willingness to learn written English**

The participant from rural school had said that her students didn't show interest to learn writing English, in behavior. She believed that this is the reason for current syllabus style .She also added 'We do not have any chance to spend time to teach writing English" she added.

### **Students' mistake in written English**

In all the participants' said, In the classes students feel boring to write. To give explanation they told that, students are used to the memorization .They do not expand their knowledge about writing .

### **Technological problem**

To answer this question the participants said that modern technology is too much helpful for improving their writing skill for example the software programs that allow teachers to focus only on grammer, word processing, word etc .But they don't have sufficient technology to maintain the writing class.

### **Institutional support and teaching aid**

Two participants had said that they got the verbal inspiration from their working institution to teach writing English but they had insufficient teaching aid like computer, projector

or any other modern facilities. But the rural institution neither got the verbal support nor the teaching aid to teach writing English.

### **Analysis of the finding and discussion**

#### **General findings:**

1. Curriculum revision needed to align with Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
2. Scope and sequence is needed.
3. Reading resources are needed.
4. Continue effective training on differentiated instruction, integrating reading and writing instruction, and utilizing data to improve instruction and meet the needs of all students.
5. Technology is underutilized.
6. Teaching time is not consistent across the grade level.
7. Teachers need planning time with colleagues.
8. Pre and post writing samples are needed.
9. Writing across the curriculum is needed.
10. Vertical and horizontal grade level articulation is needed for writing structure.
11. Homework needs to integrate reading and writing.
12. Library book selection needs to align with reading levels.
  
13. Further research is needed on reading and writing workshop programs.
14. English writing competition is needed.
15. English writing club is needed in the institution.

### **Analysis**

In this chapter, the findings of the study will be discussed and explained keeping coordination among the research questions, findings and the literature review.

The study is about the needs analysis of secondary level students' writing skill. The study finds that the number of students in class varies from 18- 65. According to the study conducted by Basir and Ferdousy (2006) a class having 45-91 students can be regarded as a large classroom. It can be regarded as well as a crowded classroom (Sinha, 2001, p. 173). However, this number of students is a challenge for English writing classroom.

But, in my study, one third of the students does not think this number as a challenge for the writing classroom. Rather, having a large number of students in class inspire them in writing English. They think that they get help and inspiration from their own mates (see open ended question ).

On the other hand, the three participant teachers had said that the number of students they have in their class is a 'problem' to teach written English to the students (see teachers' response ).

Now, it is seen that the number of students creates two different feelings between the two Stakeholders in the classroom. For example, as I have mentioned that the students take the large number of students as 'inspirational' while the teachers find it as a 'problem'.

Secondly, Technology plays an important role in education system. It helps our education system to become more and easier and modernize.

According to (Lisa Sandalo, 2010, p16) Proper use of technology enhance writing skills. If teachers change how they teach writing to become more meaningful for Students, then writing have to move beyond a requirement and into an environment that promotes writing across the curriculum. (See literature review).

Teachers need to be flexible when working with technology because there could be obstacles in scheduling computer lab times, and technology issues related to equipment malfunction. Many times teachers see these obstacles as a minor nuisance, and part of the learning process (Andes & Claggett, 2011).

Lisa Sabdalo also suggested that, teachers are faced with new challenges to incorporate technology into classroom instruction and to improve the educational performance of students. Students need to benefit from educational technology and instructional resources. Software programs have been available for educators to help scaffold writing instruction and to help support writing developments.

In my study, I found that most of the classroom has no modern technology and teachers do not use that in case of writing .Most of the students says that their classroom has no modern technology and teachers do not use them anymore and rest of the students says sometimes teachers use technology.

In accordance with during FGD (see FGD ) most of the students had same obligations.On the other hand ,when I asked about it to the teachers ,to answer this question they said that modern technology is too much helpful for improving their writing skill for

example the software programs that allow teachers to focus only on grammar, word processing, word etc. But they don't have sufficiently technology to maintain the writing class. (see teachers' response )

Another two participants had said that they got the verbal inspiration from their working institution to teach writing English but they had insufficient teaching aid like computer, projector or any other modern facilities. But the rural institution neither got the verbal support nor the teaching aid to teach writing English. (see teachers response ).

So as a result, it is seen that class room should be more technolized for effective English writing class.

Thirdly, Teachers are most important factor in education system. As a teacher he/she must play role to help each and every student improve themselves, acquire new skills and become a better individual by the end of the year. What most teachers don't actually realize is that they should be carrying way more responsibility when it comes to helping students improve their writing skill. According to ,(Antonete Ramaj,2011) teacher teach student strategies for the various components of writing process .Students need to acquire specific strategies for each component of the writing process .Students should learn basic strategies ,such as (Pick ideas, Organize the notes, write and say more ),in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. More complicated strategies, such as peer revising, should be introduced in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade or later. Many strategies can be used to assists students with more than one component of the writing process. (See literature review)

Teachers role means, teachers give students more and more home work on writing skill, they will take writing test, they will check scripts carefully and give them feedback

In my study it is seen that in most of the cases teachers don't want to waste too much time for developing students writing skill. On the other hand, teachers told that the class time is too short to teach students .As a result they cannot give enough time, don't check script etc.

So, after all the discussion it is seen that the less interesting teaching methods, lack of support and insufficient learning materials are making their affective filter high. This high filter affects Students and creates challenges to write in English.

### **Recommendation, Suggestions and conclusion**

#### **Recommendation**

On the basis of the present study in the field of teaching English writing, the following is recommended:

1. After proposing the new activities for teaching writing which will be mentioned in the program, the researcher distributes a check list among students to record their errors.
2. To ensure the exercise log correctly students rely on the assistance of their guardians or any assistance available since such log is usually given as home assignment.
3. To improve teaching writing, the English Language practitioners should adopt the following activities for improving the competence of secondary level students in mastering the writing skills.
4. Practice in writing skills is necessary. Because of that the student stook exercises.
5. The teacher has to encourage/motivate the students to work together as much as possible, through group work and pair work.

6. Writing classes must be relaxed and free of tension and risks.
7. Making use of the approaches universally used to teach writing, e.g. the process approach which is based on the research into the strategies writers apply when they compose a piece of writing. On the other hand the process-genre approach which has empirically been proved to be effective. It is built on the notion that writers may benefit from studying different types of written texts.
8. Varying teaching and learning techniques and procedures to keep learners motivated to learn and to meet their different needs and learning preferences
9. Assigning tasks at different levels of difficulty to suit the learners' different abilities. For example, the researcher in her program has started the activities with the easiest exercise related to vocabulary. On the other hand, she ended with the most difficult exercises which are related to writing paragraphs such as post card.
10. Language activities should be meaningful to learners and relate to their real lives.

**Suggestions for further studies:**

The researcher suggests that future research should focus on the following:

1. Syllabus designers should design programs based on individualized activities to develop learners' skills in other domains, e.g. in reading, speaking and listening.
2. Designing and testing programs to reduce writing apprehension among Palestinian student-writers learning English as a foreign language.
3. Designing and testing the effectiveness of a program for training students to provide feedback to their peers on the writing performance of the givers and receivers.



4. The teaching professionals should study the possibility of organizing school schedules to match the principles of individualized instruction.
5. Syllabus designers should investigate the effectiveness of designing textbooks according to the principles of individualized instruction.

## Conclusion

Deliberate practice should be a fundamental principle that guides the instruction and training of student writers. As with the acquisition of other complex physical and cognitive skills, acquiring expertise in the writing of extended texts takes many years of deliberate practice. Presumably, such practice helps writers to gain cognitive control over text production by reducing the individual working memory demands of planning ideas, text generation, and reviewing ideas and text.

A writer's ability to use their linguistic and domain-specific knowledge in composing a text, solving the content and rhetorical problems it poses, depends on achieving such control. That only 10% of high school seniors achieve an advanced score on the test of writing skill may be at least in part a consequence of insufficient or poorly designed practice.

Research is needed in our view on the best ways to implement purposeful practice in educational interventions, including application of the spacing effect and advances in automated essay scoring. Such applied cognitive research has the potential for making significant improvements in writing education.

## References

- Ahmed, S.S. (2006). Written English in Bangladesh: A feedback. *Stamford Journal of Bangladesh*, 2, 1- 15.
- Arju, S. (2011). A study on ESL vocabulary acquisition needs and classroom practice: a Bangladeshi context. *Journal of English*, 6, p. 51-67.
- Basir, A. & Ferdousy, S. (2006). Problems and strategies of teaching English in large classes at universities in Bangladesh. *Stamford Journal of English*, 2, 38-52.
- Chowdhury, N., & Shaila, S.M. (2011). Teaching speaking in large classes: crossing the barriers. *Journal of English*, 6, 68-81.
- Graham, S. (2008). Effective writing instruction for all students.  
Retrieved from <http://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R004250923GJCF33.pdf>
- Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007b). Writing: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools. NewYork, NY: Carnegie.
- Kiuhara, S., Graham, S., & Hawken, L. (2009). Teaching writing to high school students: A national survey. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101(1), 136-160.  
doi:10.1037/a0013097
- National Assessment of Education Progress. (2011). National assessment of educational progress.  
Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>
- National Commission on Writing. (2006). Writing and school reform: Including the neglected “r” the need for a writing revolution.  
Retrieved from <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2432>

National Commission on Writing. (2010). National commission on writing.

Retrieved from <http://www.host-collegeboard.com>

Gilbert, J., & Graham, S. (2010). Teaching writing to elementary students in grades 4-6:

A national survey. *The Elementary School Journal*, *110*(4), 494-518.

. Hayes, J. R., & Flower, L. S. (1980). Identifying the organization of writing processes. In L. W.

Gregg & E. R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Cognitive processes in writing* Ransdell (Eds.), *the science of writing: Theories, methods, individual writing*

Cutler, L., & Graham, S. (2008). Primary grade writing instruction: A national survey.

*Journal of Educational Psychology*, *100*(4), 907-919. doi:10.1037/a0012656

## Appendix 1

### Students questionnaire (close ended): Self Assessment of English writing skills and

#### Use of writing Strategies

Please rate your abilities for each item below a scale between 1 to 5. Circle your choice.

1=never or almost never true of me; 2=usually not true of me

3=somewhat true of me; 4=usually true of me

5=always or almost always true of me

I can write good academic paragraph.	1	2	3	4	5
I can write clear topic sentence that identifies the topic.	1	2	3	4	5
I can logically organize my ideas while writing .	1	2	3	4	5
I can write using an academic style and tone.	1	2	3	4	5
I can use a variety of sentence structure.	1	2	3	4	5
I can use appropriate spelling, capitalization and punctuation.	1	2	3	4	5
I can write an accurate summary of information that I have read.	1	2	3	4	5
I can write a good introduction for an English essay.	1	2	3	4	5
I can use my own independent thinking in my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
I can revise my own writing to improve the development and organization.	1	2	3	4	5
I can effectively write under time constrains.	1	2	3	4	5
I can write quickly in English.	1	2	3	4	5
I can recognize my mistakes after revise my writing	1	2	3	4	5

## **Appendix 2**

### **Questionnaire for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

1. How much do you practice English writing in class or home?
2. Are you confident in writing English? Why or why not?
3. How do you feel to practice write in English in class?
4. How does English writing help you to get the marks in the exam? Does that affect on you?  
How?
5. Do you make any mistake in English writing?
6. what type of mistakes you do?
7. what about your teacher's feedback?
8. How much technology help you to increase writing ability ?

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Teachers interview question**

##### **Teacher's demographic Information**

- |                               |                                      |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>1) Gender:</b>             | <b>2) Designation:</b>               |
| <b>3) Institution's name:</b> | <b>4) Educational qualification:</b> |

- 1) Is English writing is necessary for Bangladeshi students?
- 2) What the supportive materials does your indtitution have to tach writing English?
- 3) How much time do you spend in class to teach writing English?
- 4) How much willingness does your learners' have in learning English writing?
- 5) What are some of the mistakes they usually make in writing English?
- 6) What do you think the reasons are behind students' mistakes in writing English?
- 7) How do you give feddback them when they make mistakes?
- 8) How dpo tou asses your students'' English writing skill/
- 9) How much class room practicing can be effective here

**Appendix 4**

**Class room observation sheet**

**Name of the observed school:**

**Name of the observed class:**

**Date:**

**Duration:**

**Name of the students: Present.....,Absent.....**

**Number of the female students:....., Number of the male students:.....**

SL No	Medium of language in the class room		Teacher's feedback	Student's mistakes	Classroom environment	Used materials
	Teacher	Students				

**Specific**

**comments:**

.....

.....