Chapter Five
Towards an Adequate Integrated Approach to the Teaching of Academic Writing at Aden University

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The findings of the analysis of the data gathered by the different research tools discussed in the previous chapter assure that the teachers of English writing in our colleges are still teaching writing according to the methods prescribed by the traditional paradigm. Since the sample population comprised teachers and students from some of the best colleges which were the first to be established at Aden University, one might assume that the same situation exists in the other colleges of the other universities in Yemen.

But writing is not the skill that is mainly linked with knowledge of language (i.e. structures and vocabulary) emphasised by the traditional paradigm. Such knowledge is needed in writing but not to be focused on excessively. Therefore, this chapter will first give a brief idea about the approach proposed in this thesis. This will be followed by an attempt of mapping this idea out. It will also provide some general and theoretical principles that may help in achieving the desired improvement of academic writing at a college level. Furthermore, the chapter will present an analysis of the questionnaire conducted to teachers who have sufficient experience in teaching writing. The questionnaire aims to gather the teachers’ views on the proposed writing
tasks. The chapter will then provide the proposed tasks that may lead to a better teaching of academic writing at a college level. It will end with some suggestions for further research and a conclusion.

5.0 The Approach Proposed in this Thesis

The idea of the proposed collective approach, i.e. the process-genre approach is an exciting prospect in the broadest sense of the word since it subsumes a variety of writing approaches and therefore takes into account all factors or principles involved in good writing. In broad terms, it is an approach which mainly aims to develop the undergraduate students' academic writing at Aden University. In addition, the principles of the proposed approach are primarily contemporary based on the modern approaches to the teaching of writing. These approaches are: the process approach, the genre approach, the communicative approach, and the application of discourse analysis theories in the teaching of writing.

However, taking into account the modern approaches and discourse analysis as the main sources of the proposed principles does not completely mean to neglect the traditional product approach since all the main principles of the product approach are subsumed in the genre approach, which gives importance to these principles as well as the context of writing (i.e. the audience and the purpose that shape the rhetorical structure of any genre).

To put it simply, the genre approach pays attention to the context of writing as well as the analysis and practice of the grammatical and lexical features of the modeled genre. Therefore, it gives importance to the use of the principle of 'modeling' used by the product approach. This use was favoured by the majority of teachers at Aden University. Thus, the new born approach does not totally exclude the fundamental principles of the major approaches: the product, process, and genre but
takes or integrates the strengths of each to achieve effective writing. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning here that the idea of the proposed approach can be applied to different subjects and disciplines as well.

5.1 Mapping the Idea out

Broadly speaking, students writing in a foreign language yield texts which contain different types of linguistic, grammatical, and rhetorical errors. This may be due to not having enough knowledge of the use of the new rhetorical structures of genres, cohesive devices, organisation of ideas, and grammar rules. Therefore, their texts fail to be as much effective as they should be. This, however, reflects the foreign students' problems in writing and thereby offers the potentiality to apply the newly-formed approach to the foreign students of different disciplines such as medicine and business to improve their writing. Therefore, this section will present the general procedures for applying the proposed approach in class for different subjects and disciplines.

It is, however, worth noting that the students' questionnaire and interview in this study showed that the students suffered a lot from difficulties when writing such as the grammatical, lexical, and rhetorical (e.g. organisation of ideas) difficulties. Such difficulties contributed to the production of ineffective pieces of communication. The students' responses also exhibited that the students were in great need of an extremely thorough practice of these aspects through the actual act of writing in the classroom.

Therefore, the undergraduate students at Aden University should be able to write texts in which there are clear, fluent, and effective communications of ideas. This can be done firstly by the use of activities which pay attention to certain features such as the intended audience and the purpose of writing along with the concentration
on the overall meaning and organisation of ideas in a text, and secondly by thinking of writing as a result of employing the cognitive strategies that control the composing process such as planning, organising, composing, revising, and redrafting.

Such strategies mentioned above may help the students decide on the logical sequence of information: how ideas are organized and how to select possible linkers between sentences and paragraphs in a text. Therefore, the proposed approach aims mainly to develop the students' learning strategies to help them write successfully and effectively. Kane and Peters (1976) contend that one approach to be competent in writing is to carefully understand how skillful authors compose their texts. Thus, the students' awareness of using the learning strategies should be raised by teachers. This means that teachers' responsibility is to focus on teaching the use of these strategies by designing activities which offer the students an opportunity to use them in the classroom effectively.

In brief, the teaching of writing at Aden University should be based on teaching it as a process where each stage is important involving a purpose and readers whose responses are a vital part of writing. Nevertheless, here are some general procedures for teaching writing in the classroom for different subjects and disciplines such as reading, business, etc.

-Step 1: The teacher introduces the task of writing.
-Step 2: The teacher brainstorms the students through having a free and relatively unstructured discussion on the assigned topic as a way of generating ideas. (Brainstorming often serves as a preparation for another activity or gather ideas, opinions related to a writing topic and is used to help the students produce ideas.)
Step 3: The teacher divides the class into small groups and each group should be under the leadership of a skillful student.

Step 4: The teacher asks the groups to start the initial planning for the task.

Step 5: The teacher starts the writing conference or face to face conversation with each group giving support with organisation of ideas, assist with language and extend the students' thinking about the topic. He/she should give instant feedback about writing in progress.

Step 6: The teacher and the groups revise the plans and write the drafts and expand them. The teacher in this stage provides comments or information where it is necessary in order to help the students redraft their plans.

Step 7: The teacher asks the students to start composing the sentences and paragraphs which may take certain time.

Step 8: The teacher spends certain time with each group to provide feedback while the students draft their paragraphs.

Step 9: The teacher helps the groups in organising the paragraphs and checking the spelling and grammatical errors.

Step 10: The teacher gives the students time to edit and redraft the final text.

Step 11: The leaders of the groups read out the final drafts and this stage creates an audience which will judge the effectiveness of the final drafts.

All these steps may take five or six sessions, but the teachers should go through them patiently.

5.2 General Principles for the Improvement of Academic Writing at a College Level

This study is trying to help the students become independent writers through the proper teaching of writing. As teachers at Aden University, we have not been able
to offer proper guidance to our students because of not having enough knowledge and understanding about the processes of writing and how it should be taught to students in our colleges.

However, in order to help writing teachers actually practise the preaching of new research, they have to take up into their account not only the surface structure of the language but other general essential principles.

**The Objective of Writing**

The aim of teaching writing in the colleges of Aden University should help students learn to write whole texts which form connected, contextualised, and appropriate pieces of written work.

This aim can be achieved by teaching writing as a process of discovery, so that they can be freed from "rigid performance and unthinking reproduction" (Rivers, 1983, p. 69). The ultimate aim of the writing tasks, therefore, should not reflect writing as learning the structures and vocabulary of language and apply them at the sentence level.

**Teacher Training**

All writing teachers should educate themselves on the principles of teaching writing. They should keep abreast of the new ideas that will continue to pour in from the on-going research in the west in the area of teaching/learning writing.

The amount of teacher training required to implement strategy training to the students is yet another issue. The teachers do not only need to be trained in the methods of incorporating strategy instruction in their classroom but also to be convinced that strategies can be effective for their students.
That is, we have to worry about the professional progress of our teachers so that their approaches in teaching writing do not become static. "The role of the teacher is very complex; the teacher has to balance various pedagogical insights which will have to be rethought somewhat differently for each student in the class" (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 254).

Thus, writing teachers at Aden University should be provided with up-to-date information about writing approaches. Moreover, the English departments in the colleges of Aden University should organise in-service workshops at which teachers come together to be acquainted with the way writing should be taught and to analyse their own problems, search for and discuss possible solutions and experiment with each other, which in turn yields a certain sort of teacher's improvement.

**The Actual Process of Writing in Class**

It was believed that in traditional writing teaching, the writers already knew what they wanted to say and writing was merely an act of transferring those ideas onto paper.

But recent research throws light upon the "directionless" writing in another way. It believes that the process of composing is "non-linear, exploratory, and generative" (Zamel, 1983, p.165) and the writer "meander" because he is "using language to discover meaning in experience and to communicate it" (Murray, 1978, p.86). According to Zamel, it is through the act of writing that

Ideas are explored, clarified, and reformulated and, as this process continues, new ideas suggest themselves and become assimilated into the developing pattern of thought. (Zamel, 1983, p.166)

Therefore, "writing permits us not just to say what we have to say, but to see what we have to say" (Irmscher, 1979, p. 20).
So the students in the Yemeni classroom should be helped to practise the process of composing. They should be helped to draft out sections of the writing and review, revise, and edit them.

These strategies could be presented through modeling of such strategies by the teacher. The teacher can model a writing assignment. He could talk aloud while composing at the board or while using an overhead projector. Students observe the various choices made by the teacher- the techniques used and how the text developed. After the composing process is over, the students could ask about the various techniques used by the teacher and discuss them. The teacher, then, can explain the various strategies he used and show how conscious use of strategies may help in coming up with effective piece of writing.

Students’ Awareness

On the basis of the discussion above, the students in the colleges of Aden University should be made aware that there are strategies that should be used when writing for developing good writing skills.

The students have to use the strategies consciously while writing and after they have some practice in using them, they could be used automatically. Oxford, Lavine and Crookall (1989) have stressed the importance of student awareness of strategy use and teacher’s role in strategy training.

.... It is essential that the teacher develops the learners’ awareness and use of learning strategies by offering training in which strategies are made very explicit. In this way, the teacher takes on another role, that of strategy trainer. (Oxford et al, 1989, p. 36)

O’ Malley and Chamot (1990) have said that the students should know the goals of strategy instruction and should also know the strategy taught:
It is believed that this metacognitive knowledge will facilitate transfer of the strategies to new tasks and will assist students towards autonomous use of strategies. (O’ Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.184)

The Linguistic Skills

Since the college students are suffering from making some grammatical, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation etc mistakes, the writing class should deal with such linguistic skill but not to overuse them.

The proposed new approach to teaching writing does not totally exclude the productive view of writing but takes its strengths and deal with its skills in a better way within the other views of writing. The way of using the skills in the writing class will be illustrated in the next suggested ways of teaching writing (see task 1 below) according to the view of the collective approach.

Thus, the students in the writing class should be given the opportunity to practise the different forms and functions in writing, the correct use of grammar, sentence structures, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling as well as the ability to use cohesive devices in linking ideas among the sentences which are related to the topic sentence.

The Context of Writing

It is understood from the data gathered by means of the classroom observations and students’ questionnaire that the context of writing was often absent from the writing tasks. This may render the writing tasks incomprehensible since the context of writing contributes to the students’ understanding of the writing task and therefore motivate them to write effectively.

The writing tasks in the new approach should have the context of writing. It is the role of teachers or coursebook writers to create such contexts relevant to the
students’ socio-cultural setting or relevant to what they already know (i.e. their knowledge). It is the teachers’ role not only the creation of the contexts of writing but also the variation of such contexts as well as the creation of a purpose for each piece of writing.

**Assessment /Feedback**

The process-genre approach calls for the practice of the cognitive/academic skills in writing, which is the first important aspect of it. The other face of the coin is the process of assessment.

The teacher in the process-genre approach should respond as equally to the students’ strengths as to their weaknesses. That is, he should make praise in the students’ paper to the strengths they make.

The most important thing to bear in mind is to assist students to reflect upon their own writing process and their products through providing students with effective feedback of the process and products achieved. This, therefore, may lead the learners to evaluate their own achievement and yield an improvement in their writing.

Most writing teachers contend that “reading and writing” are not enough in helping students become good writers. Students should receive “feedback” to help them both understand the way others read or interpret their writing and the revisions that might improve their writing (Goldstein, 2008, pp. 4-5).

Therefore, the process-genre approach requires the teacher to intervene and give feedback in the process of writing. But can any teacher offer an effective feedback? Grabe and Kaplan (1996) clarify that “the student learns to write by working with a more knowledgeable person on the skills and knowledge needed to perform specific purposeful actions through a kind of apprenticeship … students gradually learn through feedback on writing” (pp. 242-243). The most important thing
to be taken into account, Goldstein also makes clear, is the way feedback is made "effective" (p.7).

Class Size

It is a well-known phenomenon in the departments of English at the colleges of Aden University to receive a large number of students who constitute a heavy load on the departments and teachers as well. This large number of students in the English departments may due to the dominant belief that mastering the English language will help them in getting jobs easily since it is one of the most important requirements in getting a job.

As a matter of fact, in the process-genre writing classroom the class size should be less. If the number of students in the class is less, attention to the students' activities would be more possible to be controlled and directed.

Time for Writing Practice in Class

Time for writing practice is an important issue in the process-genre writing class. Students should be provided with sufficient time in the writing class in order to practise and develop the use of the cognitive strategies of planning, organising, revising, editing, and redrafting. Shortage of time will not help in yielding complete and real pieces of writing.

Students are in need of time for writing practice in class. And it is the teacher's task to prepare classroom activities that take the students into the practice of the processes of writing. Practising writing in the classroom may be the starting point for students to develop confidence to write more at home and can be a sort of motivation and improvement. This can be achieved if students feel some sort of success in the "learning environment" of the classroom (Hedge, 1988, p.11).
Collaborative Learning

The tasks in the writing skills class should not be very often organised individually. Students can benefit a lot from working together. Collaborative learning is very useful since it encourages the students to discuss in group, build up confidence of expressing views and ideas among themselves and enable them to learn by doing as well as allows students to take active part in classroom interaction.

In this respect, Richards et al. (1992) describes the cooperative learning as “a) it is less threatening for many students; b) it increases the amount of student participation in the classroom; c) it reduces the need for competitiveness; and d) it reduces the teacher’s dominance in the classroom” (p.87).

Caywood and Gillian (1987) describe such learning by saying “in a collaborative learning class there is less direct teaching but there is much more learning” (p. 39). Hedge (1988) also supports this kind of work and says that it helps the process of writing in different ways:

A) brainstorming a topic in group discussion produces lot of ideas from which students have to select the most effective and appropriate. Careful selection of content is an important part of the art of good writing.

B) skills of organisation and logical sequencing come into play as the group decides on the overall structure of the piece of writing.

C) while writing out a first draft, with one student acting as ‘Scribe’ or secretary and the other student arguing out the structures of structures of sentences, the choice of words, and the best way to link ideas, there is a spontaneous process of revision in progress. (pp. 11-12)

5.3 Teachers’ Questionnaire

The teachers’ questionnaire is made to examine the teachers’ views on the writing tasks proposed in this thesis (See Appendix 7). More specifically, the
questionnaire will examine the teachers' reflection on the proposed tasks and the
general procedures which underlie them.

The questionnaire is administered to five teachers who have sufficient
experience in teaching writing in the English Departments of Aden University. These
teachers, therefore, will constitute good perspectives and the findings will hold
significant implications for the writing classroom practice.

It would certainly be useful to investigate and find out the teachers' views on
such proposed tasks since it will put the researcher in a better position to improve
most effective and helpful writing classroom practice.

The Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

A syllabus

In this section the teachers were asked whether the writing syllabus for the
B.Ed. students in their University included these types of the proposed tasks: Does
the writing syllabus for the B.Ed. students in your university include these types
of the proposed tasks? All the five teachers said that such tasks were not there.
These responses indicated that the writing syllabus in the university lacked the types
of tasks which give importance to the various principles or features of the major
approaches in combination needed for effective writing such as the grammatical and
lexical features, the context of writing (i.e. the audience and the purpose of writing
along with the rhetorical structure of a genre), and the processes which control the
composing process. Thus, the responses made it evident how inadequate the syllabus
for the B.Ed. students is regarding writing and how desperately it needs to be
changed.
Teachers' Views on the Proposed Writing Tasks

This section consisted of three questions (1-3) which aimed to gather the teachers’ opinions on the proposed writing tasks. The first and the second are related to each other. The first one sought to elicit the views of the teachers about the level of difficulty of the tasks. The second one required the teachers to suggest types of modifications they could introduce of the proposed tasks in case of their difficulty or unsuitability for the students to make them better.

1.) What is your opinion about the proposed writing tasks?
   a. Very difficult
   b. Difficult
   c. Average
   d. Good

2.) If you have chosen (a) or (b) of No. 1.), which of the following modifications would you introduce:
   a. supplement the syllabus with what you think is appropriate ( )
   b. delete that what you consider not necessary ( )
   c. overstress the use of the grammatical aspect of a language ( )
   d. if any other, please specify

All of them said that the tasks were “good”. No teacher found them ‘Very difficult’, ‘Difficult’, and ‘Average’ and thereby providing evidence that these proposed writing tasks are just right for the students and should be employed in the writing classroom. Hence, they are favourable as tasks that could be used productively. None of them suggested any modifications of these tasks supporting these tasks to make the writing syllabus better.
The third question in this section aimed to collect the teachers' views on certain statements on the proposed writing tasks: 

3) **Please put a tick [✓] against the following statements on the proposed writing tasks according to you.** The respondents in this question were required to show for each statement whether they are 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. These statements are as follows:

1) The proposed writing tasks promote students' writing skills.
2) These writing tasks encourage students to write in a process-genre approach to writing.
3) The writing tasks motivate students in brainstorming. Organizing, drafting, revising, and editing.
4) The writing tasks are of considerable importance in the academic setting.
5) Many micro-skills of writing are integrated into the tasks.
6) Teaching university students accurate writing for identifying, illustrating, listing, defining, comparing, contrasting, analysing, describing, and stating their points and this is the kind of writing that should be encouraged.

In response to the question above, all the five teachers expressed agreement that the writing tasks promoted students' writing skills and none of them expressed disagreement. However, opinion about the writing tasks promoting a process-genre approach to writing was evenly divided with two of the teachers supporting and three of them 'undecided' about this promotion. This response, however, supports the results obtained from teachers' interview which indicated that the majority of teachers lacked adequate knowledge about the process or genre approaches. This may be due to not having access to the recent references and therefore the lack of both knowledge
about the recent changes in the field of teaching writing and the tasks that underlie these approaches.

Nevertheless, all the five teachers agreed strongly the usefulness of the writing tasks in helping the students with pre-writing activity such as brainstorming, organising, drafting, revising and editing. This response indicates the teachers' support of such strategies but their unawareness of such strategies to be existed within the theoretical frame of the process approach which underlies them. This, therefore, calls for an urgent need for the teachers' theoretical and practical awareness of the principles that are the basis of the process and genre approaches in combination.

So far, the opinions stated make it evident that the writing tasks have been approved by all the five teachers. The tasks are seen to do a lot to promote writing skills, though the majority of the teachers were not theoretically and practically aware of the tasks which embody the process and genre approaches. This is because no attempt is made to make or adopt tasks that imply the application of the principles of these approaches. Moreover, no attempt is also made to blend various activities or incorporate the main stages that define the process-genre approach to the teaching of writing into the syllabus/tasks used in the B.Ed. in the colleges of Aden University.

Therefore, the teachers must be aware of the indispensability of writing skills in higher educational institutions such as colleges or universities. This importance was understood from teachers' responses regarding the place of these skills in the academic setting. Three of them expressed 'strong agreement' and two expressed 'agreement' over the importance of these writing tasks in the academic setting, as they felt that the micro-skills of writing were integrated into these tasks and the opinion that these tasks would teach university students the accurate kind of writing that will
stand them always in good stead and these included the functions of ‘identifying, illustrating, listing, defining, comparing, constructing and analysing, etc.

It emerges from the responses that the teachers are highly interested in change. They are also keenly aware of the limitation of the coursebook and the need to bring about drastic changes in the current materials, methodology and techniques to teach academic writing. This awareness is not only welcome but the need of the hour.

**Inclusion of Micro-skills in the Proposed Writing Tasks**

This section comprised one question where teachers were required to list the micro-skills of writing incorporated into the proposed writing tasks. This was to know whether these tasks which are suggested for teaching writing in the academic setting make provision for the teaching of sub-skills. The sub-skills of writing that teachers could choose from comprised: ‘collecting information’, ‘brainstorming’, ‘note taking/making’, ‘planning’, ‘drafting’, ‘revising’, ‘summary writing’, ‘analysis’, ‘collecting, selecting and organising relevant ideas to develop an argument’, ‘grammar’, ‘introducing, developing and concluding an idea, etc.’ and any other skills they can specify.

All the five teachers included ‘collecting information’, ‘planning’, ‘drafting’, ‘revising’, ‘editing’, ‘collecting, selecting, and organising relevant ideas to develop an argument’, ‘introducing, developing and concluding an idea, etc.’ and ‘grammar’ as micro-skills included in the proposed writing tasks. Four the teachers opted for ‘analysis’ as a micro-skill incorporated in the proposed writing tasks while one of them chose ‘summary writing’ as a micro-skill included in the proposed writing tasks.

It is easy to conclude that the proposed writing tasks subsumes different micro-skills and would do much to stimulate creativity or imaginativeness among students. The inclusion of features crucial to making the writing tasks meaningful and
productive implies in turn the inclusion of incentive to teach or learn academic writing at the college or university level.

**Methods of Teaching**

This section sought the teachers' opinions on the extent of improvement the proposed tasks will achieve in their university.

1) Do you think the proposed tasks will improve the academic writing in your university? Please put a tick [✓] mark against the 'Yes' or 'No' side.

Yes [ ] / No [ ]

a) If Yes, to what extent will they improve the students' level of writing?

a. to some extent
b. to a great extent
c. not at all

b) If No, what would you propose?

The question above depended completely on the teachers' perception of the proposed writing tasks to be used in the process-genre approach. All the five teachers had very good opinion of the proposed writing tasks as they all agreed about their implications over the students' level of writing. They also all agreed about the great extent to which these writing tasks will improve the level of writing in the academic setting.

Thus, it is apparent that the teachers do have high regard for the proposed writing tasks and therefore probably choose to burden themselves go the extra mile to invest writing with meaning and imagination.

**Open-ended Questions**

The first question in the open-ended items 1) Do you think that such these proposed writing tasks are implemented in the writing classes in your
university? If not, do you suggest or advise using them in the writing class? Give reasons for your answer, was not only difficult to answer for teachers but rather tricky too. It required teachers to state what they thought of these proposed writing tasks, which embodied the process-genre approach and included different communicative methodology. The question was meant to bring out the familiarity or unfamiliarity of teachers with the process-genre pedagogy, particularly with reference to academic writing of university students. It assumes particular significance in the context of this research which is chiefly concerned with the prospect of implementing the process-genre approach in the writing syllabus of Aden University, Yemen to improve the academic writing at the undergraduate level.

Thus, the question tries to examine if there is a match between theory and practice and whether the process-genre procedure or principle is a proposition existed in the Yemeni context. This was an important question and probably the most important of them all because the research in question deals with a process-genre approach and the teaching of tasks based on such approach for the undergraduates at Aden University.

The process-genre approach was not introduced in Yemen and there could be several problems associated with genuine implementation of its tasks and methodology. This may due to the absence of both inadequate knowledge of this approach and the availability of the tasks which are based on it. Nevertheless, most of the teachers expressed their disappointment of that a process-genre approach was not adequately known and thereby not implemented in their university as they felt all that such an approach might help students be competent at the different skills in combination. These skills are needed for teaching effective writing.
A teacher said "We do not have enough knowledge about the process approach and we do not have course materials which deal with tasks underlying this approach and the genre approach either. Therefore, we lack tasks which underlie the principles of these approaches in combination." There is evidence from classroom observation that a process-genre approach procedures or principles were not being implemented in a writing class at the colleges of Aden University to a great extent.

Another teacher supported the opinion that such these tasks were not implemented in the writing class. He said that the traditional approaches continued to dominate pedagogy in the writing classes. They all agreed that traditional methods/approaches were still being practiced in the writing class.

In sum, it is apparent that the proposed writing tasks are new to the teachers. To most, the proposed approach, which underlies the proposed tasks, is a recent phenomenon in the context of the Yemeni education system. This may be due to not having access to the contemporary changes in the field of teaching writing and therefore the dominance of the traditional approaches in the teaching of writing.

The second and the last question of the open-ended items in the teachers' questionnaire required the teachers to state the usefulness of the proposed tasks in teaching writing. They were asked how confident they felt about the recent technique. All of them endorsed the view that these tasks, which were based on the process-genre approach, were new and that they would take some time to acquaint themselves with the nuances of these tasks since they are different from what they had already practiced.

But the teachers did say that they felt comfortable as these tasks would increase students' confidence, promote cooperative learning and place the teachers in a vital role as facilitators. Nevertheless, these tasks have their opponents. The
opposition stemmed from many factors such as large classes size, time constraints, scarcity of authentic materials, the demands of examinations, etc. These are factors which may affect the teaching of writing.

The teachers, however, felt that there must be tasks in the Yemeni context which are the results of an eclectic blend of grammatical, lexical, rhetorical elements. These teachers said that these tasks to teaching writing would help students work in groups, brainstorm, share ideas and benefit from their peers. Thus, these tasks promote cooperative learning. Thus, all the five teachers have emphasised the importance and usefulness of these tasks for effective teaching of writing.

5.5 Ways of Teaching Academic Writing at a College Level

To help teachers of English writing at a college level teach writing effectively here some suggested activities. These activities will illustrate some of the principles in practice. The first task is provided with more detailed description of the steps for more clarification of the new approach.

It is worth mentioning that my study is qualitative since it has sought an understanding of the individuals' perception of certain phenomena/facts (i.e. the teachers' perception or knowledge of the new trends in teaching writing- the process and genre approaches) in the Colleges of Aden University. That is, it has doubted whether this knowledge of the new perspectives existed in the writing class of Aden University. Thus, my study has sought insights rather than statistical or relationship analyses between a set of facts to another- the features which underlie the quantitative study. These insights have been reached through the research tools used for this study.

In this way, the suggestion of tasks representing the proposed approach will not, therefore, affect or decrease the important of this study but contributes to certain extent to its importance. For more clarification, as a researcher, I did not hypothesise
that a certain method (A) of a particular approach (e.g. the process-genre approach) is better than the other method (B) of another approach (e.g. the product approach) which involves examining the Distribution of test scores (e.g. obtained by giving a test to students taught by A and B) in a population (the students who take the test).

More specifically, I did not seek that relationship - the coefficient of correlation between two features: method A and good test scores and rejecting the unstated null hypothesis of no relationship between the two features, thus providing support for the preferred method. Therefore, my study suggested an approach which focuses on both the different techniques used by each different major approach and the skills they draw on. Nevertheless, the following tasks were adapted from Hedge (1988) with making some modifications and supplementation in these tasks to fit or suit the Yemeni socio-cultural context.

**Task (1) Describing a person**

The following steps forms the teaching procedure of task 1:

**Step (1)**

- Teacher asks the students to work individually and to think of someone they know and like in the class or outside the class.
- Teacher asks them to write down five sentences, and uses prompt questions orally or on the board to get them started.
- Is he short/fat?
- What colour is his hair?
- Students compose first draft from their existing language resources and personal experience. They are given a chance to create before seeing a model. (Here the students produce a set of sentences, which is a first draft to be revised and refined later.)
**Step (2)**

- Teacher reads a text he created himself, which is a simple description of a person.
- Teacher provides a context for the text for example Ahmed’s description of his new friend, Abdullah, in a letter to a friend.

He’s quite short and fat with dark curly hair and black eyes. He usually wears casual clothes. He likes wearing jeans and a leather jacket. He’s a lively person, very funny sometimes but he can be serious too. Everyone likes him because he’s very kind.

*(The students are now presented with a particular function of writing, e.g. physical description, and one possible organisation for it. The context of an informal letter to a friend indicates the possibility to use contracted forms).*

**Step (3)**

- Teacher works with the whole class together, eliciting words from the text and writing them down in three categories on the board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Looks</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Personality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(The focus in the above step is on a particular writing skill, i.e. choice of lexis to fit relevant categories).*

**Step (4)**

- Teacher puts the students into groups of four or five and asks them to read out in turn the sentences they wrote in step 1.
- The whole group noting down the new words in their list.
- Teacher monitors and helps the groups.

*(In this step, the students interact to generate the thinking process and build up ideas for content)*
Step (5)

- Teacher elicits new words from the group and adds to the lists on the board with any necessary spelling corrections and explanations.

Step (6)

- Teacher gives each group a picture of a person from a magazine and asks them to make notes together on the three categories.

(The students in step (5) are encouraged to make notes as a planning activity)

Step (7)

- Teacher takes up some of the notes jotted down while monitoring and works on a sentence - level exercise practising the sentence structures in the model texts using adjectival phrase:

- He's quite tall and thin with dark straight hair and brown eyes.

(The focus in step (7) is on a particular writing skill, that is specific types of sentence structure, but in the context of a whole text).

Step (8)

- Teacher asks the students to write a description of the person in their picture in the group using the notes they have made.

(Step 8 is an example of collaborative writing, which ensures the process of revising and editing. Teacher goes around and monitors how they doing the task, commenting and giving help when necessary)

Step (9)

- Teacher asks each group to read its own piece of writing in the class.

(Step 9 creates an audience which will judge the effectiveness of the communication.)
**Step (10)**

- The teacher asks the students to think back to the person they first tried to describe and develop their original draft into a fuller description.

*In step 10, the students rethink, revise and edit their first draft to produce a final draft.*

*Time has been provided for writing in the classroom. The homework allows students to try a similar task by themselves after a degree of confidence has been established.***

**Task (2) Giving Opinions and Justifying them. Organizing an Argument.**

The following steps forms the teaching procedure of task 2:

**Step (1)**

- Teacher prepares a topic in terms of content. That is, the teacher prepares notes.

**Step (2)**

- Teacher writes the notes he has previously prepared on the board which may, for example, ‘for’ and ‘against’ ‘lecturing as a method of teaching’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For</th>
<th>Against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures are an economical way of giving information to a large number of students.</td>
<td>Often the same lecture notes are used year after year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The latest information or views can be heard.</td>
<td>It is difficult to take notes in a lecture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step (3)**

- Teacher asks the students to work in pairs and turn each note into a more detailed statement for and against ‘lecturing as a method of teaching’.
Step (4)

- Students work together for a while
- Teacher, then, holds a feedback session and asks the students to suggest notes or statements.
- Teacher writes the notes or statements on the board.
- Teacher may get something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For</th>
<th>Against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• It is more interesting to hear and see a person than to read a book</td>
<td>• Lectures are often badly delivered and are boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A good lecture can stimulate thought and discussion.</td>
<td>• Many lecturers just read aloud parts of their books. It is easier to read the books.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step (5)

- Teacher shows the students how to turn these notes or statements into a set of arguments by following, for example this particular pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturing as a method of teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Point</td>
<td>Lecturing as a method of teaching is so frequently under attack today from educational psychologists and by students that some justification is needed to retain it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Arguments</td>
<td>Critics believe that many lecturers just read aloud parts of their books and that it is easier to read books.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step (6)

- Teacher asks the students to work in pairs to construct paragraphs for each statement following this pattern developing the argument by elaborating the point, and giving a reason to back it up.
**Step (7)**

- When the students have finished a first draft, teacher asks the students to think about how to present this text. That is, to consider how would it be organised and what style would be best for the readers and the topic a direct style using pronouns such ‘They’, ‘we’, questions to catch attention? or strong opinions, e.g. ‘it is essential that’.

**Step (8)**

- Teacher asks the students to take the first draft individually and redraft it to represent the model one prepared by the teacher or one, for example, taken from an educational magazine.

**Task (3) Interviewing people: A summer holiday jobs report**

The following steps forms the teaching procedure of task 3:

**Step (1)**

- Teacher prepares a text for the class about a summer holiday job report.
- Teacher introduces the topic of summer holiday jobs by asking who in the class has experience of this.
- Teacher encourages the class to question volunteers about their experiences.

**Step (2)**

- Teacher elicits from the students the questions they can ask and the categories these relate to.
- Teacher builds up a chart on the board.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>How old are you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of job</td>
<td>What type of work do you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step (3)**

- Teacher reads the short model text he already prepared with the class and uses the questions above to check comprehension.
- Teacher adds any other categories generated by information in the text.

Maged Farag, thirteen years old, works at clothes showroom on summer holidays. He starts work at nine a.m and finishes work at one p.m. The showroom opens again at four p.m. and closes at nine. He likes selling clothes to the people but he does not like getting tips. He prefers talking to customers but finds it hard to make friends with all customers.

Maged likes working. He enjoys earning money, he makes YR 100 a day. He's saving up for a good bicycle.

**Step (4)**

- Teacher asks each student to interview another student in the class using the questions and making notes.
- Students use the notes for writing a report.

*The students' work can be displayed, with photographs of the students interviewed.*

- Teacher asks students to do such task as homework and encourages them to interview friends or members of their families.
Displaying the students' work is a motivating factor for the student to work. If students know that their work is to be displayed or published they will be motivated to write since it creates audience for their writing and a reason for writing).

**Task (4) Writing letters of invitation**

The following steps forms the teaching procedure of task 4:

**Step (1)**

- Teacher asks the students to fill in a page in their notebook with a number of appointments, real or imagined. *(The aim here is to have a number of sufficient number of appointments so that two students may well have simultaneous engagements)*.

- Students should not see each other's appointments, so that an information gap is created.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>August</th>
<th>August</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 18 Friday</td>
<td>• 22 Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 8 pm bus to Sana’a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 19 Saturday</td>
<td>• 28 Wednesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10 a.m. Meeting at Al-Salem Café 2 p.m. bus to Adam</td>
<td>• 8 pm dinner at Uncle's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 20 Sunday</td>
<td>• 24 Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 p.m. lunch with Abdullah</td>
<td>• 8 pm Cinema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 21 Monday</td>
<td>• Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 8 pm Swimming pool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step (2)**

- Teacher asks the students to work in pairs.

- All the students write a letter to their partners inviting them to do something the following week.

*(When they have finished, the letter can then be exchanged)*
**Step (3)**

- The students read the letters they have received and check in their pages to see whether or not they are able to accept the invitation.

**Step (4)**

- The students individually write a reply, accepting or declining the invitation.

  *(If they cannot accept they should suggest an alternative arrangement.)*

**Task (5)**

- Explaining reasons in cause and effect arguments.
- Explaining causes and giving reasons.

  *(The focus have will be on connectives of cause and effect and organizing an argument into primary and secondary points.)*

The following steps forms the teaching procedure of task 5:

**Step (1)**

- Teacher suggests a topic, for example, 'Why do women live longer than men?'
- Teacher introduces the idea of women’s greater longevity by reading a short extract from a social studies book or by discussing it with the class, eliciting and commenting on information.

**Step (2)**

- Teacher asks the students to suggest reasons why women live longer than men.
- Teacher elicits a few ideas and as students try to express them show them various ways of explaining reasons and results.
- In most countries only men take part in military combat.
Many Young men are killed in Wartime.

Men often take on the main financial responsibility of keeping a family, they develop stress-related illnesses and die younger.

One reason why women live longer than men is that their bodies are naturally able to survive longer.

Step (3)

- Teacher gives the students a list of suggestions as to why women live longer than men.
- Teacher asks them to work in pairs, and to decide which are the most important reasons, which are only the secondary, and which are not true, or irrelevant.

Why do women live longer than men?
- Women’s physical structure allows them to live longer than men.
- Men take part in military combat in war time and women do not.
- Men enjoy taking part in much more dangerous sports.
- Men have more financial and economical pressures.
- Men work in heavy industry which can be dangerous to health.
- Women do not take on dangerous jobs such as mining, building, etc.,
- Men do not manage retirement well and just give up.

Step (4)

- Teacher holds a feedback session and writes up the primary and secondary points on the board to give students the shape of their argument.
Step (5)

- Teacher shows the students how they can distinguish between primary and secondary points by using language such as:
  - One of the most important reasons why.....
  - The main reasons why.....
  - There are other reasons, too,......

Step (6)

- Teacher asks the students to start drafting their writing in pairs or groups. *(The students discuss within the group and plan, organise, compose, revise, edit and finally redraft.)*
- Teacher goes around for a help, commenting when necessary.

Task (6) Complaining *(a letter of complaint)*. Connectives of contrast.

The following steps forms the teaching procedure of task 6:

Step (1)

- Teacher makes copies of the letter and the accompanying task sheet.
- Teacher introduces the topic by asking the students if they think that restaurants should have a policy in choosing waiters/waitresses.
- Teacher asks the students to suggest guidelines.

Step (2)

- Teacher hands out the letter.

---

The Manager  
Al-Amer Hotel  
12 Hasan Ali  
Crater.  

10 Madram Road  
Ma’alla  
24 July 2007

Dear Sir,  
I am writing to complain about the worst service in the Al-Amer restaurant last Friday evening.
I took a group of my friends who came from Hadramout to the restaurant because I had heard that the food and the standard of service was excellent.

However, when we arrived at the restaurant we were kept waiting for half an hour before we were served. When the food finally arrived we started eating for a while. Then, the waitress came and took the plates before we finish eating. When I complained to the person who was over the waitress he became rude. I was disgusted by the treatment we received and shall certainly never eat there again.

I feel that at the very least you owe my guests and me an apology and await an answer from you.

Yours faithfully
Maged Farag.

- Teacher asks the students to read through the letter quickly and to explain why the writer is complaining.

**Step (3)**
- Teacher draws the students' attention to the sentence beginning:

  "However,..."

- Teacher explains that there are several ways of writing this.
- Teacher elicits from the students the correct ways to complete the sentence frames.

**Step (4)**
- Teacher asks the class to work in groups of four or five.
- Teacher asks the students to use the structure and to choose a particular way of connecting the ideas from the examples shown.
- Student should, for example, write about the following:
- Write to a travel company you booked through in the season of Al-Hijj in Mecca. They said they would offer a transport facility from Mecca to Al-Madina and back. But this facility was not offered there.
- Work with a partner and write a letter of complaint.
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

It is suggested that the process-genre approach could improve the undergraduate students' academic writing at a college level. That is, this writing could be improved with the use of writing strategies and the application of the genre approach techniques.

However, there are still some possibilities for further research. The undergraduate college students at Aden University could adopt the writing strategies to improve their L1 writing first and this would help transfer of strategies to L2 writing. In addition, the research could also examine whether the undergraduate students use similar strategies in their L1 and L2 writing. If the same strategies are used then the undergraduate students could be trained to use writing strategies in L1 first and then transfer to L2 writing.

Furthermore, teacher training programme should be developed to train the teacher in identifying the students' L2 learning strategy first through surveys, interviews etc. Then, the students should be helped to adopt those strategies, which are compatible with their goals, and learning styles and this would help both the teacher and the student in being aware of the techniques that help improve L2 writing.

Learning to write at last should be done as an activity in the classroom not at home. Friere (1977) says:

if learning to read and write is to constitute an act of knowing, the learner must assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects. It is not a matter of memorizing and repeating given syllabus, words and phrases, but rather of reflecting critically on the process of writing and on writing itself and the profound significance of language... (p. 29)
5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided some general principles of the process genre approach to improve the academic writing for the undergraduate students at Aden University. In addition, the researcher has suggested ways of how writing in a process-genre classroom should be dealt with.

Some examples of writing tasks were given which require the teachers to develop their methodology. This methodology involves integrating the different perspectives in writing. The chapter concluded with some suggestions for further research.

To sum up, it is a key point that teachers should take into their account the principled methods of the process-genre approach to enable their students become independent writers.