

APPLYING ENGAGE, STUDY, ACTIVATE PROCEDURE IN TEACHING GENRE WRITING

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Abstract: Teaching writing requires teachers to apply a suitable method which involves students mentally and physically. ESA Procedure has some unique benefit for both teachers and students since teachers begin the lesson with engaging students to the material to be taught and the classroom situation. ESA, with all its types, can be used to teach students to write texts in different genres and levels of difficulties. By this procedure, teachers can explore students' readiness to begin writing whereas students themselves have opportunities to develop their knowledge through the information obtained during the teaching-learning process. In short, ESA is one procedure that should be applied by teachers in teaching genre writing.

Keywords: ESA Procedure, genre writing

Writing is a skill which often causes trouble for students to master. Generating and organizing ideas are two main reasons why they think it difficult. However, some argue that it is actually an easy task. Trimmer (1995: 2) says that some people find writing easy. They still sit down and write, work until they are finished, and turn out a first draft that is so good and it is their final draft. Despite these two contrasting views, a high motivation to succeed and a frequent practice should let students learn it better and may also make them think it interesting. Oshima and Hogue (1999:2) assert that writing just requires study and practice for its development. It means that the more students practice the more they will get the good result of writing. Therefore, students need to practice as much as possible. Along with students' effort to learn writing there should also be something the teacher must do to facilitate it. She has to be able to decide an appropriate and effective approach, method, or technique which focuses on writing drills.

In reality often teachers train students to write by giving them assignment on a given topic. The students do it based upon teachers' wish and are given opportunities to develop or express their own thoughts, experiences, and feelings. In addition, when the teacher reviews students' works they only correct the punctuations, which is actually too technical. They sometimes even give such bad feedbacks that they may lower students' motivation when they, either intentionally or unintentionally, make fun of the students' works by saying that the writings are too short, out of focus, etc. Although correcting the

grammar will have a better effect, teachers have to realize that a good grammar does not represent a good composition because a good piece of writing is one that is able to convey the writer's idea or purpose in communicative way. Were teaching writing still oriented to teachers' preference it would be impossible to expect students to write well. Thus, now it is time to change that teaching perspective.

Applying Engage Study Activate (ESA) Procedure in teaching writing is one of the many alternatives that teachers can opt out in order to create a better atmosphere because it provides opportunities for students to train themselves.

ENGAGE, STUDY AND ACTIVATE (ESA) PROCEDURES

ESA stands for Engage, Study and Activate. These three elements can be arranged and presented either sequentially or not. They can be done repeatedly depending on the difficulty level of the material being presented.

Engage

At this stage teachers try to arouse students' interest, thus involving their emotions. The aim is to arouse the students' interest, curiosity, and attention. When students are engaged, they learn better than when they are partly or wholly disengaged. Many people cannot remember the lessons at school because they are involved or cannot follow what the teacher explains. Often this is because they are bored, because they are not emotionally engaged with what is going on. Such lesson can be contrasted with lessons where they are amused, moved, stimulated or challenged. It seems quite clear that those lessons involve not only more 'fun', but also better learning.

Michael Gysen in http://www.teflcorp.com/articles/complete_articles.php?index=54 states that the engage phase is used to get the students to think and talk in English and is also a good way to ease to learn lesson. Each student gets involved and inspires confidence. As a result, students are willing to do something which will later be revealed in the next stages.

Activities and materials, which frequently engage students, include: games (depending on age and type), music, discussions (when handled challengingly), stimulating pictures, dramatic stories, amusing anecdotes, keyword etc. But even where such activities and materials are not used, teachers want to ensure their students to engage with the topic or language they are going to write. They will ask the students what they think of a topic before asking them to write.

Study

Study activities are those where the students are asked to focus in on language (information) and how it is constructed. They range from the study and practice to write even single word to an investigation of how a writer achieves a particular effect in a long text; from an examination and practice of a verb tense to the study of a transcript of.

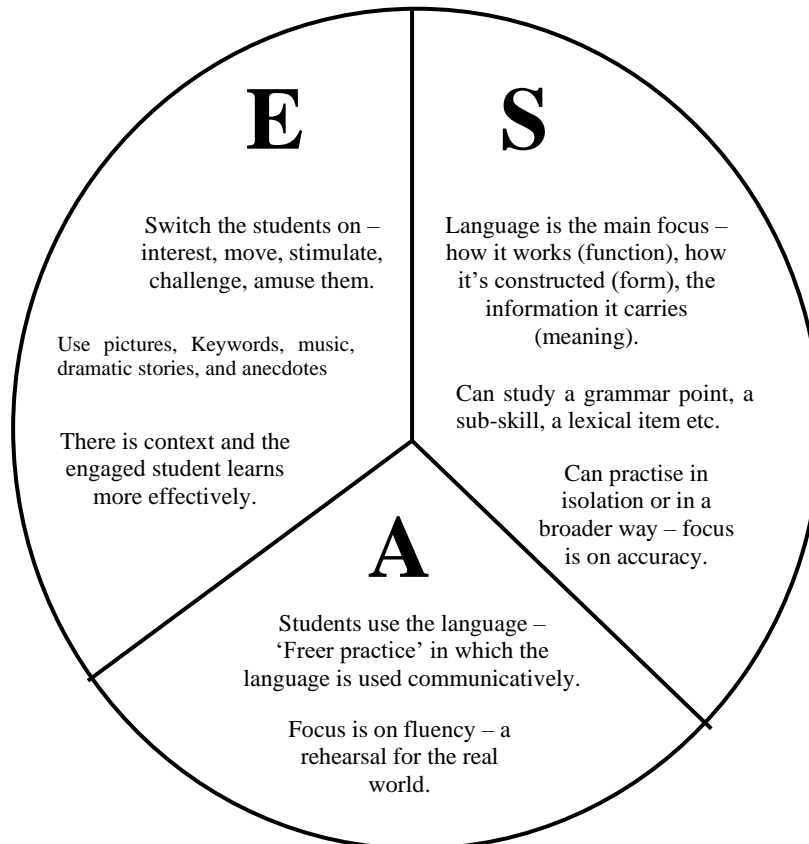
Students can study in a variety of different styles: the teacher can explain grammar, they can study language evidence to discover grammar for themselves,

and they can work in groups. But whatever the style, study means any stage at which the construction of language is the main focus.

This stage shows a very specific characteristic which makes it different from other strategies or techniques because teachers are to freely choose ways of transferring information or knowledge to students. They can decide what strategy or technique that best fits students' interest and complies with the difficulty level of the material.

Activate

This element describes exercises and activities, which are designed to get the students use language as freely and 'communicatively' as they can. The objective for the students is not to focus on language construction and/or practice specific bits of language (grammar patterns, particular, vocabulary items or functions) but for them to use language which may be appropriate for a given situation or topic. Thus, *Activate*



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exercises offer students a chance to try out real language use with little or no restriction- a kind of rehearsal for the real world.

In Activate exercises students present the work they have done either individually or in groups depending on the genre they discussed in the previous stage. Thus, there will be various comments from other groups if they do not

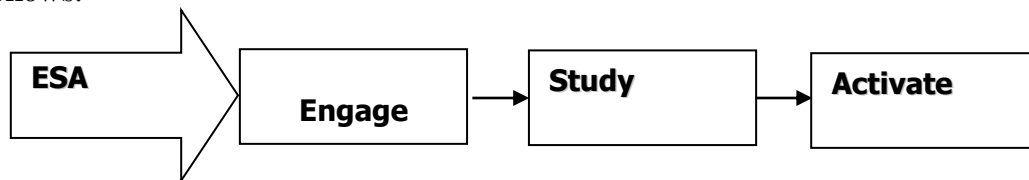
agree to certain elements of the text being presented such as its content, grammar, and diction. Students are also allowed to use their mother tongue if they do not know the words in English. This is acceptable since the procedure will provide an opportunity for the teacher to re-explain the material presented in the Study stage. However, this all depends on the needs of both the teacher and students during the process.

THE TYPES OF ESA PROCEDURE

Harmer (1998:27) states that there are three types of ESA Procedures, namely Straight Arrows, Boomerang Sequence, and Patchwork Sequence. These three techniques are different in their procedures ranging from the simplest up to the most complicated one and can be applied depending on the kinds of texts, students' ages, and the difficulty level of the material.

Straight Arrows sequence

Straight Arrows sequence is one type of teaching sequences that take students in a straight line: First, the teacher gets the class interested and *Engaged*, then they *Study* something and they then try to *Activate* it by putting it into production. There is no repetition of a certain element, making it appropriate to be applied in teaching writing low-level texts of descriptive, narrative, procedure, and recount. This ESA Procedure can be diagrammed as follows:



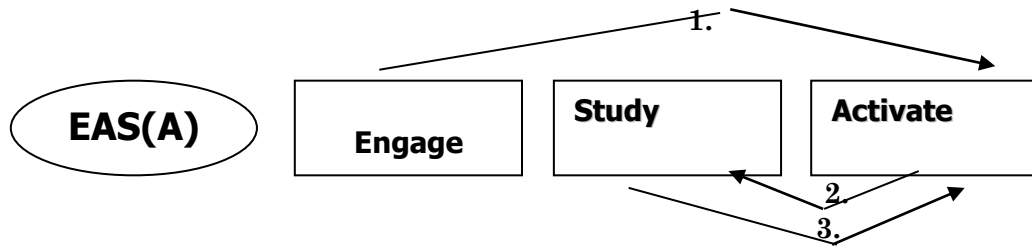
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It is called straight arrow because the activities are more like a sequenced straight arrow beginning from Engage, Study, and Activate. For instance, in teaching how to write a descriptive text, the teacher, first of all, tries to draw students' attention, make them interested, and arouse their curiosity in what they are going to learn. As soon as they can focus, the teacher explains the nature of descriptive text, its schematic structure and linguistic features. Finally, the students are given a certain amount of time to present what they have written either individually or collectively. As a result, there will be a high frequency of oral communication; the errors in speaking do not affect students' success in writing though. This will also help students learn more about the subject and most probably other information which can enrich their knowledge.

Boomerang Sequence

Boomerang sequence is a sequence where the teacher is answering the need of the students. They are not taught language until and unless they have shown (in the *Active* phase) that they have a need for it. That is to say, they will be given some exercise to assess whether they have grasped the information necessary in the next stage. In addition, it will also define the difficulty level and

the depth of the material to be taught. By so doing it will be discovered that in the *Activate* stage students will be able to do their best so that the teacher can set a higher difficulty level. Or conversely, the teacher can understand that the students still need more explanation to help them go the next stage.

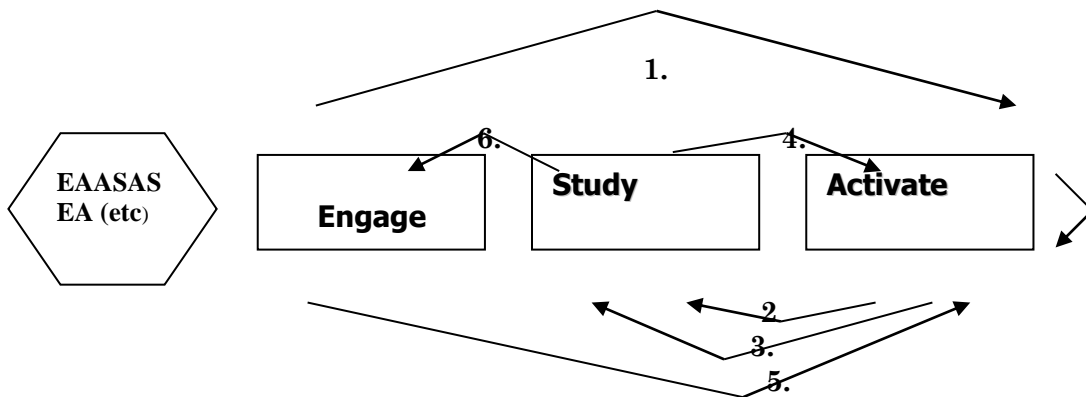


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After this further explanation, the teacher can direct them to the last stage, *Activate*, which is actually optional depending on their success in the previous activate stage. Therefore, this procedure is suggested to be applied in teaching elementary and intermediate levels of writing narrative, recount, descriptive, and procedure texts. The above figure represents the Boomerang Sequence procedure consisting of three procedures: engage, activate, study, activate, study, and activate or EAS(A).

Patchwork Sequence

Patchwork procedure is a recursive procedure which reveals complexity in its application as can be seen in the following figure.



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Patchwork sequence, abbreviated to **EAASASEA**, is initiated with Engage followed by Activate, and Study, which then goes back to Study followed by Engage and Activate. Thus, there are six procedures in this kind of ESA.

The above figure shows that there is a repetition of the three stages; however, Activate occurs more frequently than the other two stages. This

concludes that the procedure is better to be applied in teaching writing narrative and exposition to intermediate and advanced levels. More exercises are required when the materials are of high level of difficulty. By so doing, it is expected that students can reach the objective of teaching.

CONCLUSION

Engage Study Activate (ESA) Procedure is so applicable for each of the stages has its own uniqueness and strengths. Teachers can put the stages according to the needs and do not rigidly stick to the basic order. However, whatever the order is, Engage should be done in the first place since it attempts to attract students' attention and arouse their interest and curiosity.

The Study stage provides high opportunities for teachers to pick up technique in delivering materials. They can choose a technique which best suits students' interest, motivation, and age.

The Activate stage is special for students because in this stage they are given opportunities to train to write and express themselves. Another unique advantage is that it allows them to use their mother tongue.

In conclusion, ESA Procedure is a procedure that can be applied in teaching writing any kind of text with various difficulty levels of materials.

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