

*Modulo di riferimento*  
Modulo 2

*Unità teorica di riferimento*  
The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): key concepts and key words G. Langé

*Nucleo di riferimento*  
CORE TOPIC 1: Competences according to the CEFR

## WRITING SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

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### Sommario

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	2
<i>Aims</i>	2
<i>Objectives</i>	2
<i>Final competences</i>	3
<i>Metodology</i>	3
<b>ACTIVITY: STEPS</b>	5
<i>STEP 1: Reflection</i>	5
Task 1.1: Approaches to writing and teaching activities	5
Task 1.2: Process writing: online workshop	6
Task 1.3: Classroom activities	7
<i>STEP 2: Error correction</i>	11
Task 2.1: Reflection	11
Task 2.2: Thinking about different correction techniques	11
Task 2.3: Using a different correction technique in the classroom	13
<i>STEP 3: ICT and Writing</i>	14
Task 3.1: Reflection	14
Task 3.2: Creating a class blog	14
Task 3.3: Farewell presentation	15
<b>RESOURCES</b>	16
<i>Bibliography</i>	16
<i>Websites</i>	16
<i>Sintesi in italiano</i>	18

## DESCRIPTION

### *Aims*

The module aims to increase teaching knowledge and ability in the classroom with focus on the skill of writing. The teachers' tasks will increase personal reflection, teaching knowledge and ability **with the objective that teachers will have a platform and resources for future writing lessons**. The resources are aimed to be flexible so that they can be adapted to give a wider range of practical ideas.

### *Objectives*

#### **Teachers will**

- Investigate some approaches to writing, the rationale behind them and how to apply them in the classroom
- Use some writing activities in the classroom to gain a better understanding of the approaches and evaluate how effective they are for their students
- Experiment with the use of correction codes
- Increase their knowledge of ICT for writing lessons
- Reflect on and consolidate what they have learnt during the unit by creating a presentation

#### **Students will**

- have a clearer understanding of what is expected from them during writing lessons
- be more motivated to participate in writing lessons
- feel more supported and have a sense of achievement during and after writing activities
- have used error correction codes to correct their writing
- develop their writing skills through group, peer and individual work by doing a variety of motivating activities which integrate skills to increase student production and ability

## ***Final competences***

### **Teachers will**

- have the knowledge and the practical tools to develop students' writing skills and strategies for academic and global learning by applying both process and product approaches to writing
- have experimented in class with a variety of writing activities
- have used codes for error correction
- have given a short presentation at the end of the module
- have increased their lesson resource bank and knowledge of teaching websites and other ICT programmes
- have reflected on their experience with colleagues

## ***Metodology***

Teachers will have the opportunity to reflect on how they teach writing in the classroom, compare their practice with specific approaches used to increase written ability and production and also compare with other teachers. The focus on methodology (product and process writing) will show how writing can be a motivating tool in language learning and an excellent way to assess their students' progress. The unit will explore how integrated skills (speaking and writing) are used to increase student communication, ability, knowledge and production. The use of ICT will be incorporated into the tasks for teachers and the activities for use in the classroom.

### **Step 1: Reflection**

Task 1.1 Reflection

Task 1.2 Process writing: online workshop + response

Task 1.3 Activities

### **Step 2: Correction**

Task 2.1 Reflection on correction in the classroom

Task 2.2 Reading + video input

Task 2.3 Classroom practice

### **Step 3: ICT and Writing**

Task 3.1: Reflection

Task 3.2: Setting up a blog

Task 3.3: Farewell presentation

## **Teaching strategies**

Teaching writing can be difficult if the correct strategies are not put into place. Student motivation is a key factor in the success of what is produced therefore, finding the correct strategies to use with your class to gain the best outcomes is essential.

Areas that will be considered are:

- Pair and group tasks - co-operative work increases student participation
- Using ICT to increase learner autonomy and communication
- Peer editing and evaluation to help students to reflect and review work
- Real world tasks e.g. writing and sending emails
- Integrated skills work to increase focus and motivation and to reflect real world tasks

## **ACTIVITY: STEPS**

### ***STEP 1: Reflection***

#### ***Task 1.1: Approaches to writing and teaching activities***

(20 minutes)

What is the correct way to teach the skill of writing? Teachers have debated for years about which approach is more effective. However, we may never fully agree on which approach is the best and why. Maybe we, as teachers, have to be more flexible in our teaching and look into varying our teaching techniques to understand what motivates our students so that we gain results that our students merit.

Answer the questions below then if possible compare your ideas with a colleague.

#### **Reflection**

##### ***Day to day writing***

1. What do you write in your day to day life?  
e.g. reports, shopping lists
2. What do your students write in their day to day lives?  
e.g. text messages, homework
3. Are there any similarities between the lists above? If so, what? If not, why not?

#### **Writing in class**

##### ***Students***

4.
  - a. How often do your students do writing in class?
  - b. What do they write?
  - c. Why do they write? e.g. a test
  - d. What problems do they have with writing? e.g. spelling

### **Teachers**

5. What did you do in your last writing lesson?
6. How did you plan your lesson?
7. What were your aims?
8. Did you have any problems? If yes, what?
9. What would you change if you do the lesson again?
10. Is writing fun or boring? Why? Why not?

[attach\_1.doc]

After answering these questions, think about what would help you to be more effective when teaching writing to your students. Make some notes and if possible compare with a colleague.

### **Task 1.2: Process writing: online workshop** (60 minutes)

Click on the link below. Work through the workshop and take notes on what you have learnt.

[www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/captivate/process\\_writing.swf](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/captivate/process_writing.swf)

**Once you have completed the workshop answer these questions and if possible compare your ideas with your colleague(s).**

1. Which approach (product or process) is similar to the way you teach?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the techniques suggested in the presentation?
3. Which approach would suit your style of teaching?

[attach\_2.doc]

### **Extra reading**

Here are two articles on the same topic for further reading.

- **Approaches to process writing** [attach\_3.doc]
- **Product and process: A comparison** [attach\_4.doc]

### ***Task 1.3: Classroom activities***

Students often view writing as boring. They can sit for the whole lesson with maybe one or two sentences written down. By staging the lesson, they will gradually build up to a final product ready for publication (a class blog) or to be displayed in the classroom. This may mean writing more than one draft, however, the activities used in each stage should be motivating in a way that the students want to do the activity and see the progression of their work. Once tasks are complete, praise your students for the work they have done.

Look at these activities and evaluate how effective they may be in your classroom. **Try at least two** with your class and compare your experience with a colleague.

After each activity, adapt and use the attached evaluation grids:

- for **self-evaluations** [attach\_5.doc]
- for **peer/teacher evaluation** [attach\_6.doc]

*Activity 1: Telling a story*

*Activity 2: Texting*

*Activity 3: Email*

*Activity 4: Class magazines*

#### **Activity 1: Telling a story (1.5 hours)**

Narrative, telling stories and anecdotes forms an important part of our everyday communication. This lesson is aimed at developing the ability to tell stories or anecdotes. It is based on an idea from 'Once Upon a time' by John Morgan & Mario Rinvulcri. It starts with fluency practice and works towards developing accuracy. The lesson also includes a grammatical focus session that aims to develop understanding of the meaning and form of narrative tenses.

Read the **lesson plan** [attach\_7.pdf] and **worksheets** [attach\_8.pdf]

This lesson is for intermediate students and above, but the activity can be adapted and used with any level. You can think about specific language that you want to focus on and write some questions for your students to answer. Before they write their first draft they can practise by telling a partner or other group their story or experience.

**Example:** write some questions about last weekend

e.g. where were you? What did you do in the morning? Did you plan to meet anyone? What time did you meet? Etc.

## Activity 2: Texting (45 minutes)

Like it or not, mobile phones are going to be in our lives for a long time. Texting a friend is a very effective form of communication. In English we use a lot of contractions when texting e.g. c u l8r. Understanding this language isn't easy if you are not used to it, however students really enjoy practising it and they become very good very quickly. This can be used in real world situations at the touch of a button and may help your students keep in touch with people from other countries by phone or chatting.

### Preparation

Cut up some A4 sheets of paper.

Notes:

- show or draw a mobile phone on the whiteboard. Ask them what we can do with them e.g. phone, texting, facebook, send e-mails look up things on the internet, play games, mp3 etc.
- Ask the students what they use their mobiles for most of all. Hopefully they will say texting. Then ask them what they text their friends and family about. Write this part on the whiteboard.
- Pre-teach some texting language e.g. C u 2moro, r u @ skool?
- See link below for help with texting language:  
[http://y2u.co.uk/Knowledge\\_Information/Technology/RN\\_Mobile\\_SMS\\_Texting\\_Slang.htm](http://y2u.co.uk/Knowledge_Information/Technology/RN_Mobile_SMS_Texting_Slang.htm)
- Tell your students that they are going to text each other about the situations on the board.
- Put the ss into pairs and match them to another pair. Ask them which topics they would like to text about and off they go. They can text back and forward as much as they like, by writing their SMS messages on slips of paper.

**Note:** to do this effectively you may have to organise your classroom into two lines facing each other e.g.

**XX XX XX XX XX**

**Teacher**

**XX XX XX XX XX**

The teacher plays a type of cyber postman or woman, passing the messages back and forward.

**Extra idea:** if you have a good set of students, this lesson could be done using chat. This would make the whole experience more realistic. Careful monitoring is essential so that students are kept on task and don't use L1.



### **Activity 3: Email (45 minutes)**

Sending emails is a great way to start students communicating with other people. This may be the students' first opportunity to use English in the real world.

Notes:

- Show a picture of a map of the world and ask students which country they would like to visit and why.
- Draw a stick man / woman on the board and elicit personal information about the person e.g. name, age, where from? Family? Hobbies? Etc
- Tell them that he/she wants to find a pen friend. Ask if anyone has a pen friend already and get the class to ask any questions about them. e.g. How long have you been friends?, where does she come from? Have you met each other?
- Tell your students that they are going to write an email to this person. Give the students your email address (not a personal one. It may be better to create a new one for your class) and tell them to send it to you.
- Before they write brainstorm what information they should give to this person and what other information they would like to know.
- The writing can be done as homework or in class depending on time and computer availability.
- If your class would like to really become pen friends, think about setting up a pen friend project with another school or on line. **Be careful. Check all sites before students use them.**

The British Council provides a website for schools to collaborate with each other around the world: <http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/home>

This site is for other learners of English looking for pen friends: [www.its-myworld.com/open/penpals.asp](http://www.its-myworld.com/open/penpals.asp)

- Tell students to look at the site and find two possible pen pals they would like to contact.
- Refer back to their previous email and focus on areas to improve.
- Students edit and send their emails to their chosen penfriend.

### **Activity 4: Class magazines (3 – 6 hours)**

*Adapted from "Writing" by Tricia Hedge*

This activity is project based and will take more than one lesson. The idea is to create a class magazine to be published for people to read e.g. parents or other classes. The aim of this type of project is to encourage responsibility and autonomy in self-selected extensive writing.

## Procedure

### *Planning*

- Bring in some magazines (different types e.g. sport, gossip, national geographic) brainstorm what you might find in them and write the answers on the board.
- Tell your class that they are going to make a class magazine. Put them into groups and tell them to discuss what theme it should have, what type of format, decisions also have to be made on issues such as length and number of sessions etc.

### *Fieldwork*

- Give out tasks to smaller groups e.g. interviews, library research, doing a survey, writing away for information etc
- Give a lot of support to your students at this stage.

### *Writing*

- Once your students have enough information they can start writing in pairs or small groups (even individually). Let them ask you for any advice. Encourage students to make revisions before you look at their final drafts.

### *Editing*

- Display their final drafts
- Students read and make general suggestions to their classmates on the content, layout and possibly visuals. Advise students not to make any rude or silly comments other students' work. Any comments should be constructive.
- Make sure all communication is in English.
- Teachers should be used as support but only if asked. Raise awareness of important errors for students to work out.
- Decide on final edition and start on final product.

### *Publication*

- Decide how the magazine should be displayed e.g. in class, in the corridor, on a blog etc.
- Invite readers e.g. other classes / teachers, head teacher, parents

**Extra idea:** instead of a magazine, a story book could be made with students' stories.

## ***STEP 2: Error correction***

### ***Task 2.1: Reflection***

*(20 minutes)*

Think back to the last time you gave back written work to your students. I am sure there are mixed reactions to their faces. Some happy, some disappointed, some who don't care and the list goes on. Now think how much your students have learnt from their work being corrected. Do they make the same errors or have they learnt from it?

Answer the questions below then compare with a colleague.

1. How often do you correct your students' written work?
2. How do you correct their work?
3. What criteria do you use when you are correcting?
4. Do your students know what criteria you use? If not, why?
5. Do your students learn from your correction method?
6. Do you think your method of correction is effective? Why? Why not?
7. When you correct your students' work, what type of errors are you looking for?
8. Do you believe that correction is the only way to improve your students' level English? Why? Why not?

### ***Task 2.2: Thinking about different correction techniques***

*(30 minutes)*

Click on the links and read the article then watch the video. Decide which correction techniques you will try and in your class. Remember, you will have to do a writing lesson before so that you have student errors to work with.

- **Error correction 1** [[attach\\_9.doc](#)]
- **Peer editing and correction** [[www.viddler.com/player/d447a662/](http://www.viddler.com/player/d447a662/)]

### **Correction codes**

One way of helping students be more aware of their errors is by highlighting their errors with a correction code. This way they can try to work out their own errors in pairs.

**Example:**

**WW** → Wrong word

**G** → Grammar

**Sp** → Spelling

**^** → missing word

**WT** → Wrong tense

**WO** → Word order

**P** → Punctuation

You can find another example of a correction code here [[attach\\_10.doc](#)]

**Procedure:**

- Set a writing task. Ask learners to double-space or leave a clear margin.
- Collect the work and correct it using the correction code. Underline the mistakes you want learners to notice and add the codes, either underneath or in the margin.
- Return the work and ask learners to take it home and correct it, then submit it again.
- The first time you do this, explain to your learners what you are doing and why (in L1 if necessary).
- Alternatively, do the correcting work in pairs or small groups in class.

**Alternative procedures:**

1. Select the most interesting/productive mistakes and prepare a worksheet for the class to work on together. Keep it short.
2. Ask your learners to correct their work in class (don't let this go on too long) and share some of the corrections with the group in mini-presentations. They can do this individually or in groups.
3. Use e-mail and Word's insert comment tool to do this kind of work.

**Some observations**

Learners find this very motivating but there are some things to think about:

- Don't overdo it. One correction per line of an extended text is enough.
- Be consistent with the system you use. Choose your code based on your learners' level and awareness of mistakes.
- Be supportive. Explain why you are doing this and be available to help.
- Be punctual returning homework, otherwise learners can become demotivated.
- Remember correcting your own mistakes is not easy.

Source: [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/activities/writing-correction-code](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/activities/writing-correction-code)

### Further correction idea:

Gather a number of your students' errors. Type them, highlight them and write the correction code at the end of the sentence.

### Example

2. Yesterday he **going** to the cinema WT

Put students into pairs or small groups. Tell them that they have to ask you for an error

e.g. "miss, can I have an error slip, please?"

give them the slip and the students try to write the correction as fast as possible in their note books before giving you the slip back and asking for another one. (Make sure they write the number from the slip)

Check the answers at the end.

### **Task 2.3: Using a different correction technique in the class-room**

(20 - 40 minutes)

Use one of the correction ideas above with your class and compare its effectiveness with a colleague. **REMEMBER** you will have to get some errors from your students' work.

## ***STEP 3: ICT and Writing***

### ***Task 3.1: Reflection***

*(20 – 30 minutes)*

Writing is becoming less “pen and paper” based and more computer based. The world we live in is becoming much more interactive due to the use of social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and chat sites. Students sometimes know more about the cyber world than their teachers, however, we can use their knowledge and interest in computers and the internet to develop their English skills.

Answer these questions about ICT in the classroom then compare with a colleague.

1. Do you use ICT with your classes already? If so, what have you done?
2. How much should we be focusing on typing rather than hand writing?
3. What are the positive and negative aspects of using ICT with you classes?
4. Do you feel that using ICT is too problematic and just makes life more difficult?
5. Why? Why not?
6. What type of activities can you do with ICT in the classroom?

### ***Task 3.2: Creating a class blog***

*(1 hour +)*

Follow the instructions and create a blog for your students:

[[attach\\_11.doc](#)]

Make sure you understand how to invite people and your instructions are clear when setting up the activity so that your students don't have too much difficulty getting started.

Give students a task and tell them to post their answers on the blog.

#### **Example Blog activities**

- Introducing themselves, likes, hobbies, family, music etc (students should go into detail here and give as much information as possible)

- Writing about their holiday
- Controversial questions ( students write their opinions)
- Writing their final draft of a class story
- Word of the day
- Giving instructions (students are given the task to explain how to do something. They must write the instructions clearly for their classmates to read)
- What would you change? ( activity to get students opinions on how they believe things would be better if it was done their way)
- Nagging corner ( students complain about anything and anything)
- Favourite song or book ( students copy and past the link of the favourite song or book and write a comment about why they like it so much)

Basically anything the students want to write can be put on here however; rules must be put into place so that they do not violate other people's privacy.

Another blogging site for schools: <http://edublogs.org/>

If you have time, look at this site for more ideas for using ICT:

[www.onestopenglish.com/support/methodology/grammar-vocabulary-and-skills/teaching-writing-using-the-internet/146517.article](http://www.onestopenglish.com/support/methodology/grammar-vocabulary-and-skills/teaching-writing-using-the-internet/146517.article)

### ***Task 3.3: Farewell presentation*** (3 hours)

You will give a short presentation of the activities you have tried in class. You can bring any examples or power point presentations to share with your colleagues.

Follow the questions below.

- Which activities have you tried?
- How effective where they?
- Did you have any problems? If so, what?
- Will you change the way you teach writing now? *Why? Why not?*

**Teachers' Self evaluation** [[attach\\_12.doc](#)]

**Students' self evaluation** [[attach\\_13.doc](#)]

## RESOURCES

### *Bibliography*

**HEDGE, T.** (2005). *Writing*. OUP.

### *Websites*

Process writing 1

- [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/training-courses/process-writing-1](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/training-courses/process-writing-1)

Approaches to process writing

- [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/approaches-process-writing](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/approaches-process-writing)

Product and process writing: A comparison

- [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/product-process-writing-a-comparison](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/product-process-writing-a-comparison)

Telling a story

- [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/lesson-plans/telling-a-story](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/lesson-plans/telling-a-story)

Error Correction 1

- [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/error-correction-1](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/error-correction-1)

Peer editing and correction

- [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/tips/peer-editing-correction](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/tips/peer-editing-correction)

Y2U.co.uk, SMS language

- [http://y2u.co.uk/Knowledge\\_Information/Technology/RN\\_Mobile\\_SMS\\_Texting\\_Slang.htm](http://y2u.co.uk/Knowledge_Information/Technology/RN_Mobile_SMS_Texting_Slang.htm)



### Edublogs

- <http://edublogs.org/>

### British Council, Schools Online

- <http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/home>

### Its-myworld

- [www.its-myworld.com/open/penpals.asp](http://www.its-myworld.com/open/penpals.asp)

## **Other websites to help your students**

### British Council, LearnEnglish Kids

- <http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/>

### British Council, LearnEnglish

- <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/>

### Total English

- [www.pearsonlongman.com/totalenglish/resources/resources.html#Upper-Intermediate](http://www.pearsonlongman.com/totalenglish/resources/resources.html#Upper-Intermediate)

### Oxford University Press, New English File

- <http://elt.oup.com/student/englishfile/;jsessionid=55876545197BEDB7765D353D61C3F102?cc=gb&sellLanguage=en>

### Teaching writing using the internet

- [www.onestopenglish.com/support/methodology/grammar-vocabulary-and-skills/teaching-writing-using-the-internet/146517.article](http://www.onestopenglish.com/support/methodology/grammar-vocabulary-and-skills/teaching-writing-using-the-internet/146517.article)

## ***Sintesi in italiano***

**Overview.** La *European Recommendation on key competences for life long learning* (2006) sottolinea l'importanza di un uso funzionale della lingua come strumento per esprimere bisogni, desideri, comportamenti e stati d'animo. Gli insegnanti sono quindi chiamati a presentare ai propri studenti la lingua in uso, e assegnare loro attività e veri e propri compiti linguistici.

Il corso è stato progettato per fornire agli insegnanti le conoscenze e gli strumenti per potenziare le competenze di scrittura degli studenti attraverso attività che presentano obiettivi verosimili e riconoscibili nel mondo reale. Le attività sono state selezionate in modo che gli insegnanti possano realizzarle in classe con facilità e con il massimo di produttività.

### **Obiettivi previsti:**

- aumentare la consapevolezza degli insegnanti relativamente alle metodologie di apprendimento delle lingue;
- fornire agli insegnanti un set di attività;
- aumentare la consapevolezza degli insegnanti relativamente all'efficacia dei multimedia in classe per migliorare la comunicazione degli studenti.

### **Alla fine del corso i docenti saranno in grado di:**

- servirsi di attività che supportano la produttività dello studente;
- valutare l'efficacia delle attività che hanno utilizzato in classe;
- comprendere gli approcci e le metodologie utilizzate per la pianificazione di lezioni/attività.

**Metodologia.** Gli insegnanti avranno la possibilità di riflettere sul modo in cui insegnare a scrivere in aula, accostandosi alle metodologie di altri insegnanti e confrontando la loro pratica con approcci specifici utilizzati per aumentare la capacità e la produzione scritta. Il focus sulla metodologia (prodotto e processo di scrittura) mostra come la scrittura possa essere uno strumento per motivare l'apprendimento delle lingue e un ottimo modo per valutare i progressi degli studenti. L'unità analizza l'efficacia dell'integrazione delle abilità (parlato e scrittura) per aumentare negli studenti le abilità di comunicazione, di conoscenza e di produzione. È previsto l'impiego delle ICT sia per le operazioni degli insegnanti che per le attività rivolte alla classe.

**Step 1.** *Riflessioni. Approcci alle attività di scrittura e insegnamento.*

Questo passaggio chiede agli insegnanti di riflettere sulla loro esperienza, su quello che hanno fatto in classe e sulle modalità di realizzazione. Possono poi concentrarsi su diversi approcci e concetti-chiave relativi all'insegnamento delle lingue. Passeranno quindi in rassegna le attività da realizzare in classe per valutare l'efficacia delle proposte e provarne almeno due prima di riflettere con un collega su ciò che hanno imparato.

**Step 2.** *Esaminare l'utilizzo efficace della correzione degli errori.*

In questa fase, gli insegnanti esamineranno diverse attività finalizzate alla correzione degli elaborati scritti degli studenti. Esamineranno le modalità di sensibilizzazione degli studenti nei confronti degli errori e le attività volte ad aiutare gli studenti a rafforzarsi nei punti deboli. Gli insegnanti potranno infine valutare e testare alcune attività prima di confrontare la proprie esperienze con un collega.

**Step 3.** *ICT e scrittura.*

In questa parte del corso, gli insegnanti rifletteranno sulla propria esperienza con le ICT in classe e passeranno poi alla creazione di un blog di classe. Passeranno in rassegna le attività che possono essere realizzate con un blog di classe che può diventare parte della loro presentazione di commiato.

Agli insegnanti verrà infine chiesto di realizzare una breve presentazione su ciò che hanno imparato durante dal corso. Ogni insegnante avrà l'opportunità di presentare esempi di lavoro che hanno realizzato e di valutazione le attività e gli approcci che hanno seguito.