Dovhal Iryna
Teacher
Separate Structural Subdivision "Kramatorsk Professional
College of Kryvyi Rih National University";
Senior teacher
LLC "Technical university "Metinvest polytechnic"

DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS OF STUDENTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRACTICAL CLASSES: RAFT TECHNOLOGY

Summary. *The article examines strategies and techniques for developing the writing skills of students in foreign language practical classes, specifically the RAFT technology. The stages of preparation for the application of this technology are analyzed, and examples of its use for different levels and topics are provided. It is emphasized that RAFT promotes the development of critical thinking, creativity, and communicative competence of students.*

Key words: *development of writing skills, foreign language, practical classes, RAFT technology, critical thinking, communicative competence, creativity, teaching methodology.*

Developing the writing skills of students in practical foreign language classes is a complex process that requires a systematic approach and the use of various methods. To achieve this goal, several key aspects need to be considered.

Here are the main strategies and techniques that can help in this: Ensuring a strong foundation through grammar and vocabulary learning. Students should have a sufficient stock of grammatical structures and vocabulary to express their

thoughts in writing. The key element is regular practice and memorization of grammar and new vocabulary. Understanding text structure occurs through learning about different types of texts (letter, essay, description, narrative, article, etc.) and their structure (introduction, main body and conclusion). After forming a strong foundation, it is important to move on to the practical application of acquired knowledge. Writing practice can be in various formats and for different purposes. Students can write texts of various genres and formats: letters (personal, official), emails, essays, descriptions, narratives, resumes, instructions, articles, blogs, etc.

One of the effective methods for developing writing skills is the RAFT technique. This technology is a powerful tool for developing writing skills. It helps students better understand the purpose and audience of their writing, which leads to a more focused and effective presentation of thoughts. In addition, the RAFT technique is a pedagogical approach aimed at developing students' critical thinking. Developing critical thinking in students during practical foreign language classes is an extremely important task that allows them not only to master language skills but also to develop the ability to analyze information, formulate their own judgments, and make informed decisions.

Let's consider how this technology works. The abbreviation RAFT stands for: role, audience, format and topic. Role: The student chooses a specific role from which they will write the text. Audience: The audience for whom the text is intended is determined. Format: The format of the text is chosen (letter, article, announcement, etc.). Topic: The topic on which the text needs to be written is determined. The main idea of the RAFT technique is that the student writes a text, assuming a specific role, addressing a specific audience in a defined format on a given topic. This helps students consider the topic from different perspectives, develop writing skills, learn to analyze information and formulate their own thoughts, and understand the purpose and recipient of their text.

Preparation for the application of the RAFT technique in practical foreign language classes requires careful planning and consideration of several key aspects. Here are the main stages of preparation.

Define the learning objective and topic. What specific writing skill do you want to develop in students? (e.g., writing a description, letter, essay, expressing an opinion). Choose a topic that corresponds to the curriculum and students' interests: the topic should be relevant and sufficiently familiar to students so that they can focus on the writing task and not on understanding the content itself.

Consider different role options: choose roles that will be interesting and appropriate for the language proficiency level and the topic of the lesson. It is necessary to consider the level of difficulty. For beginners, the roles can be simpler (e.g., a tourist in another country), and for more advanced students – more complex (e.g., a professional in a certain field). Make sure students understand who their character is and what their characteristics are.

Define the audience. It is advisable to choose a specific audience. The audience should be clearly defined (friend, parents, blog readers, clients, etc.). Pay attention to the level of formality. Determine what level of formality should be used in writing (formal, informal). The audience should be such that students can imagine who they are addressing.

Choose the format. It is necessary to choose an appropriate text format. Consider different formats that correspond to the purpose and topic (letter, email, article, announcement, description, narrative, etc.). Make sure students are familiar with the features of the chosen format. The format should match the role and audience.

Prepare the necessary materials and instructions. It is mandatory to provide students with clear instructions regarding the role, audience, format, and topic. It is necessary to show students examples of texts in the appropriate format or with a similar topic. Provide or remind students in advance of key words, phrases, and grammatical structures that may be needed to complete the

task. Define evaluation criteria. Explain to students the criteria by which their work will be evaluated (e.g., correspondence to the role and audience, structure, grammar, vocabulary, originality).

Allocate sufficient time for explaining the task, preparation, writing, and possibly discussion or editing. If necessary, divide the task into stages (planning, draft and editing, final version). You should support students. Ensure that students can contact you for help and clarification. Provide access to dictionaries, textbooks, and other necessary materials. Consider potential problems. Think about possible difficulties that students may encounter (e.g., unfamiliar vocabulary, complex grammatical structures). Develop strategies to overcome difficulties. Prepare hints or additional tasks in advance for students who may need additional support.

Let's look at examples of applying RAFT in practical English language classes on various topics.

Example 1: Role: A tourist visiting Great Britain. Audience: A friend who has not been to Great Britain. Format: Email. Topic: My impressions of the first day in London. Task: Write an email to a friend about your first impressions of London, describing what you saw, heard, and tasted. Objectives: Development of writing skills, use of descriptive adjectives, expressing one's own opinion.

Example 2: Role: A journalist writing an article. Audience: Readers of a local newspaper. Format: Short report. Topic: Environmental problems in the city. Task: Write a short report for a local newspaper about environmental problems in London and other large cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds, which suffer from air pollution due to the high concentration of transport and industry, suggesting possible solutions. Objectives: Development of skills in writing journalistic texts, analysis of information, expressing one's own position, use of more complex grammatical structures and vocabulary.

Example 3: Role: A reporter for a travel agency. Audience: Potential tourists planning a trip to Great Britain. Format: Short promotional booklet or

blog post. Topic: Description of an attractive place in Great Britain (city, famous place, landmark). Task: Write a short promotional booklet or blog post to interest tourists in visiting a specific place in Great Britain, describing its advantages and features. Objectives: Development of skills in writing advertising texts, use of persuasive arguments, descriptive vocabulary related to travel.

Example 4: Role: A chef at a vegan restaurant. Audience: A blogger specializing in vegan food. Format: Blog article. Topic: Developing a new vegan burger. Task: Write an article describing a new vegan burger, its ingredients, preparation process, and health benefits. Objectives: Development of descriptive writing skills, practical use of specialized vocabulary related to cooking and veganism.

Example 5: Role: A startup entrepreneur. Audience: Investors. Format: Business plan. Topic: Developing a business plan for opening a coffee shop. Task: Write a business plan describing the concept of the coffee shop, the market, competitors, marketing strategy, and financial plan. Objectives: Development of skills in writing business documents, use of professionally oriented vocabulary, development of business planning skills.

These examples demonstrate how the RAFT technique can be adapted for various learning objectives and levels of foreign language proficiency, making the learning process more interesting and effective. It is also important to encourage students' creativity and provide them with the opportunity to choose roles and formats that interest them most.

The use of the RAFT technique in practical foreign language classes has many advantages. The motivation and interest of students in learning a foreign language increase because the tasks become more interesting and personally oriented. Practical application of the language takes place. Students learn to use the foreign language in real-life contexts. They have the opportunity to express their imagination and creative abilities. Through the implementation of the

RAFT technique, students develop critical thinking. They learn to choose the appropriate writing style and adapt the language to a specific audience. This technology can make the learning process more effective and focused on the development of communicative competence and professional orientation of students.

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