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Writing as a process.
Skrivande i ämnet Engelska.

Writing as a process. Writing in the subject English.

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Abstract

Writing as a process, Writing in the subject English is a paper, which researches an activity of writing at upper secondary school. It investigates the challenges of teaching writing experienced by English teacher as well as the ways of how best to assist students in their writing assignments. The primary interest of this study is coherence and its development. The primary aim of this work is to follow the development of coherence in English A texts of students during a certain period of time. The method used for this investigation embraces the following stages. I compare eight compositions written by members of my group on the first test, with eight compositions written by the same individuals at the second test, nearly four weeks later. The first composition shouldn’t be shorter than 100-150 words and the pupils had one hour to accomplish it. The second composition should be long and the pupils had two hours to accomplish it. All preparatory work on both occasions was done together in a classroom. To achieve best results in the conquering all obstacles in the activity of writing the notion of Writing as a process was introduced, explained and implemented in every writing situation. A chapter devoted to empirical findings contains a thorough analysis of grammatical, textual and linguistic aspects of thirty-two texts written on two occasions. In the sections discussion and conclusion there is an expression of a support for using writing as a process to improve writing skills of the students. At the same time there is also a great desire to encourage writing across curriculum. The reflections around the study situation at English classes for students with other first language than Swedish hold a special place in this work. Writing as a process approach towards writing helped the students to improve the cohesive aspect of their writings immensely but it couldn’t replace all white spots in their English language acquisition.

Key words are
writing in the subject English A, writing as a process, coherence in written texts, upper secondary school
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Introduction

People communicate and share their life experiences with the help of language. We shouldn’t forget that language also builds up our identity. In the context of school and education, weak knowledge of a language creates big and small problems in the process of learning. People who find themselves in a situation where their knowledge of a language is not sufficient, people, who can’t express themselves freely, often feel silly, misunderstood, and even undesired by the society. Marginalised groups include girls from immigrant backgrounds. Well-developed language skills are therefore essential to avoid marginalisation. And in Sweden today, this includes adequate writing skills in both Swedish and English.

Writing is a very important skill for every person who wants to live an active and meaningful life in a modern post-industrial society. The ability to write is an important democratic right, connected to the freedom of expression: the right to be able to express yourself in both ways, orally and by writing.

Writing opens new opportunities and secures a place for every individual in the society where she or he lives. People don’t need to stay invisible any more. They can reach other people or future audiences, not only by talking to them, but also by writing to them.

To understand how language is used and developed by every individual, and to learn how to assist every pupil in this process of language learning became two central challenges for me as a language teacher as well. The challenges become even greater with the introduction of standards for obligatory skills in a written language. We shall not forget that many linguists and teachers alike regard written language to be another language, although sharing the same word-stock with its spoken variant (Strömquist 1995:10). How to make pupils be aware of such differences?

I have worked with upper secondary students as a teacher of English, and I realized the importance of developing and strengthening of writing skills in my subject too. I completely agree that numerous skills need to be encouraged or activated during the process of writing to achieve both an awareness of early mentioned differences between spoken and written language and desirable standards of the written production.
This particular challenge of acquiring “adequate writing skills in English” at school or gymnasium, how English teachers who are also language teachers meet it and deal with it occupies a central place in my research paper. I would like to dedicate my paper to those particular issues, which arise when students are trying to master the skill of making a text a coherent piece of writing.

Teaching students to write English as it is described in the guidelines of the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket 2000) can not be accomplished by an English language teacher alone:”(…) should aim to evaluate how clearly and coherently the pupil is able to express and communicate a message, as well as the ease, variation and linguistic confidence that is shown. Concerning the pupil’s ability to write English, evaluation also focuses the clarity and precision of the description, and the pupil’s ability to connect phrases and sentences” (tr. I.S.).

And even if most of the responsibility for developing general writing skills falls on the teacher for the subject Swedish, this is still not enough. Only well planned, well thought over strategies, which combine and integrate the language efforts of teachers of all subjects, will make a difference here. All teachers should be aware of the fact that besides teaching their subjects, they are also language teachers. So that even if teachers at a Swedish school will naturally be focusing on Swedish as the medium of instruction, the general writing skills the pupils develop in their courses will also benefit the subject English (Skolverket 2000).

At the same time, writing and reading skills in English and Swedish lay down the foundations for successful individual learning and further progress in obtaining new information. The activity of writing teaches students not only to formulate and express their thoughts clearly, but also to generate new thoughts. It turns them into thinking individuals, personalities with much wider social competence (Skolverket, Engelska A 2000).

The Swedish upper secondary and gymnasium syllabus for English holds high expectations for the students’ writing skills in English. According to the syllabus for English A, a student should also continue improving his/her already considerable knowledge of writing in English. Thus, we read in the particular part of the document that deals with the obligatory goals set for the writing skills for the subject English A: “(…) be able to process and improve their own written production employing the knowledge of how to use written language for different
purposes like to inform, give instructions, formulate arguments, explain values, share her/his own feelings with a reader as well as be able to reform constantly the quality of writing production” (tr. I.S.) (Skolverket, Engelska A 2000). We see here that the pupils already should have obtained quite advanced writing skills by the time they start the course English A. The syllabus for English A at upper secondary level also mentions the ability to write in different genres. It supposes that English A students already have quite a good general idea of existing genre differences, characteristic of different kinds of written texts. Practice in writing different kinds of texts, for instance informative, instructive, argumentative, or emotional texts, as well as texts containing debate on the issue of values, should improve this basic knowledge of genres even further.

As a matter of fact, the document even states - although indirectly – the desirable place of the teacher in this process of developing writing skills. Since students are expected to practice their ability to correct their pieces of writing themselves, the teacher’s role is confined mostly to assisting and encouraging students to express their thoughts in a written form.

We can conclude here that in order to meet the demands of the English A syllabus, writing skills need to be developed so that students are transformed into conscious writers, who are trying actively to find and address their audiences.
Aim

English has been on the Swedish school curriculum for a long time. In Lgr 62 and Lgr 69, English was taught as a foreign language already at primary levels. Writing skills are an important part of the subject English at all levels. Today English belongs to compulsory school subjects in Sweden. It explains the hard demands set for the activity of writing. Demands, which may be some groups of pupils fail to complete.

This is not surprising, since writing is based on precise knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. It is also a very complex skill that goes further than oral communication. “There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text. The skills involved in writing are highly complex” (Richards & Renandya 2003:303). Coherency is absolutely necessary for any student who plans to complete the English A course at upper secondary level.

Coherency is a foundation of any written text of any genre. It is one of the main aspects of a written language, which makes the communication between a reader and a writer possible (Hellspong & Ledin 2001:228). Coherency is a natural part of cognitive processes. It also includes a social competence; some texts can be apprehended only in a certain sociocultural and political context (Ivanich 2004:223).

With this study, I would like to increase awareness of written text structure, and in particular, the cohesive devices and mechanisms, which make a text coherent for a reader. At the same time, reflecting on the question: What errors do English A students make in their writing? I would like to give a more detailed picture of the kinds of failures to address coherent aspects of a written text that typically occur, and how these failures affect the whole process of writing and its final product.

In other words, the primary aim of my work is to investigate what developments in coherence there can be seen in English A texts during a certain period of time.

Research questions:

*What errors are most frequent in pupils’ texts?*
How do you teach pupils to be aware of and adapt their texts to a reader building up on the differences between oral speech and written text?

What pedagogical strategies do you apply as a teacher to make pupils write more coherent?

Does a choice of a theme for writing influence a final production?

How to encourage pupils’ writing skills development updating them at the same time about their real language situation at the moment?

How to assist pupils to deal with their texts more independently throughout the whole process of writing?

To produce a piece of writing of good quality, a writer/a student must keep in mind a number of criteria, to achieve this goal successfully. There are many such criteria, which make up a quality text. Here, I decided to concentrate my attention on the criterion of coherency, and find out if this aspect has changed in the time between two major tests.
Background
Writing as a process

Olga Dysthe, a well-known and popular Norwegian researcher and writer, is also a revolutionary pedagogue. Her books, such as “Det flerstämmiga klassrummet” (1996), inspired many language teachers “to plant” the activity of writing right in the middle of the teaching process, in the middle of an ordinary lesson at school.

According to Dysthe, writing is an absolutely central activity, which can link together all obligatory elements of a working teaching-learning process. She suggests that students should practice in writing, not only during language hours, but also throughout the curriculum. She motivates this initiative by calling it “knowledge privatizing” (Dysthe 1996). This is a new notion. By privatizing knowledge, Dysthe means that a student establishes a personal relationship to a subject by diminishing the distance between herself/himself and the obligatory material. According to Dysthe, this distance will only diminish if a pupil starts using the activity of writing as a natural part of the learning process.

Writing helps pupils to start a process of analyzing, sorting out and eventually building up their own individual and nuanced picture of every subject, which later can be used as a foundation for personal views and opinions. By introducing writing as a regular activity, a teacher can break the silence of numerous passive students. Passive students are a challenge for every teacher in any class, and a very common problem. Also, by introducing writing as an activity, the teacher gets an opportunity to establish a dialogue and a contact with her/his students (Dysthe 1996).

Writing additionally activates an individual control system. By that, Dysthe means that every student gets both a better picture of what should be learnt and better access to planning her/his study time. Students activate their own process of learning, start analyzing the information, and finally actualize their cognitive process. As a result, writing leads to a generally better control over the whole learning situation (Dysthe 1996).

Dysthe’s new pedagogical thinking was influenced by the philosophical ideas of Leo Vygotskij. In the focus of Vygotskij’s research, we find language and social belonging, and their interaction in a constant human need of communication. Culture is a basic element,
which forms and determines every person’s language, because a language expresses every
person’s life experience and life expectations. Vygotskij is also famous for his explanations of
a thinking process. According to Vygotskij (Vygotskij 2001), the activity of writing is unique,
because it is the only language process where we activate simultaneously three main functions
of thought, namely: the verbalizing, the visualizing and the symbolic function.

Writing gives a structure to the content of our thoughts. By individual writing, a writer makes
an abstract language into her/his own; it helps to stimulate a word stock, which would
otherwise stay passive. Due to the fact that writing demands a much higher degree of
language precision and clarity than oral story telling, the activity of writing also initiates a
process of personal/individual thinking (www.skolutveckling.se). Vygotskij, Bruner, Dysthe
and several other thinkers and pedagogues whose pioneer teaching theories reformed the
whole notion of teaching from a result-oriented into a process-oriented activity, also changed
the attitude towards the activity of writing. Writing as a process became a central term for all
teachers who believe that to teach students how to produce an independent, coherent piece of
writing is of far more importance than to train the same students in writing impersonal
grammatically correct texts (Hedge 1991).

In the old, result-oriented, school system, a student was supposed to memorize different
genres of written text, with the final goal to be able to recognize, and then imitate different
kinds of written texts. There was no strong demand on personal characteristics of a text, such
as a personal point of view, opinion or ideas. Stress was placed on the correctness of students’
language and “formalia”.

During my practice I tried to encourage my students to write, make notes in every possible
studying situation. The main idea with that was to turn writing into a tool for getting
information, making learning easier and more accessible. Dealing with writing assignments in
my class I chose to put into practice the idea of writing as a process. I thought that the
implementation and integration of this idea into the teaching approaches to writing would
have fit in a best possible way both the needs of my pupils and the desirable goal in the
subject writing. We should remember that the idea of writing as a process (Dysthe 1996)
demolishes old attitudes, and instead places the process itself in the middle of the activity of
writing. An individual does not need any more to read only representatives of classic
literature, and try to imitate then in her/his writing serious, accomplished pieces of literature
with flawless grammar (Hedge 1991). Instead every person gets an opportunity to write different kinds of texts, and make errors under the process, but the text itself should get a more personal touch. The teacher’s role will gradually diminish during the process, while the student’s control over her/his piece of writing will grow. At the final stage of this process, a student makes all necessary changes in her/his written production herself/himself. Meanwhile, the teacher’s role is confined to being an advisor, or assistant.

This model of teaching reflects social developments, which took place in many modern societies. Relations are not based any more on the obligatory hierarchical model of the past. A teacher nowadays stands much closer to a student than before. But the new model can also be difficult to apply, if pupils expect something more authoritarian or need extra support in their writing processes (Dysthe 1996).

During the time I worked as a teacher, I also reflected a great deal on the question of what would be the most appropriate way to analyze and systematize all shortcomings, weaknesses and pure grammatical mistakes existing in the written production of English learners in my class. As a teacher, I should keep alive the perspective of the students’ writing skills development, as well as remain aware of the shortcomings in their writing. These thoughts were very important for creating a realistic picture of the basic development that took place in the period of time between the two compositions.
Discourse analysis
The Emergence of a coherent text out of writing as a process

As we discussed in a previous section, seeing writing as a process means that writing activities are not based anymore on imitating different patterns of text, where a teacher corrects a finished text. Instead, the author of the text initiates the process of writing, becomes a part of it, and at the end of the writing course/process, the author herself/himself is capable of correcting her/his own text (Richards & Renandya 2003:315).

Meanwhile, when working with students many English language teachers observed an interesting fact. There are a lot of students who have very good general knowledge of English, but nevertheless fail to produce a piece of writing, which would make sense for a reader. In other words, these students fail to write a coherent text. This existing discrepancy between correct English grammar and very poor final textual products was often a side effect of a teaching method where serious studies of the English grammar was considered to be the only key to good knowledge of English (Cook 1989).

This attitude in language studies had its foundation in the linguistic theories of that time. Linguistics operated mostly on the level of the sentence, rather than the text (Cook 1989). The primary interest was to investigate grammatically correct sentences - free of any context.

In 1952, after the publication of the famous article “Discourse Analysis” by Zellig Harris (Harris 1952), the whole view on the role of context in a text was reconsidered. Harris was a sentence linguist himself, but tried to investigate what mechanisms, so called extended grammar, hold sentences together in a text, producing a coherent text.

This new approach to a written text as discourse, that is, “stretches of language perceived to be meaningful, unified and purposive” (Cook 1989:156), stands very close to the progressive views on language studies of today. It also has a profound significance for language teachers and the theoretical and practical targets set for a writing course. The discourse approach compares the emergence of a coherent text to a process under which a writer should manage to address and integrate both grammatical (formal) and contextual aspects of writing (Cook 1989). The fact that in a written text these aspects are often interdependent complicates things even further. The coherence as such is here often expressed through grammar, and “bad
discourse organization often accompanies poor lexico-grammatical competence” (McCarthy 2004:165).

Currently there comes bigger and bigger amount of research carried out on the subject of writing. As it was stated earlier it has also become more common to refer to the activity of writing as to “discourses of writing”. It is interesting to mention in this connection a paper named “Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write” written by Roz Ivanich (Ivanich 2004) where the author recognizes, describes and explains six different writing discourses; six corresponding different approaches to teaching of writing are attached to them. Ivanich analyzes the following writing discourses: a *Skills Discourse, a Creativity Discourse, a Process Discourse, a Genre Discourse, a Social Practices Discourse and a Sociopolitical Discourse* (Ivanich 2004:225). The author also stresses the fact about existing contradictions among the discourses, which can be settled by a well thought over writing pedagogy (Ivanich 2004:220).

As I have already mentioned in a previous section I decided though not without a lot of thinking to choose *a Process Discourse or Writing as a Process* as a teaching approach to writing. I assumed that to implement and integrate writing as a process into the teaching approaches to writing would have fit in a best possible way the needs of my students.
Stages of the writing process
Levels (formal and contextual) of text coherence

A consequence of viewing writing as a process-oriented activity is that English teachers need to consider what theoretical and practical points should be obligatory and integrated in a teaching plan of writing. In this perspective, working with the text’s constant development towards coherence on the formal and contextual levels occupies a central place.

Before taking a closer look at various cohesive aspects of text, we will first briefly comment upon the whole process of writing. We can not separate the improvement of coherent characteristics of any text from a general development and improvement, passing through various stages.

It can be difficult to get an overview, because there are so many different ways of describing the process. Experienced teachers divide the process of writing into stages, but different teachers have different names for the stages they identify. The whole terminology and the choice of theories on writing can also be confusing. For instance, the term Writing Process is sometimes separated from the term Process Writing, although Process Writing ”is no more than a writing process approach to teaching writing” (White & Arndt 1992).

Opinions differ greatly as well, even in the question of what stages of writing should be included in the process of writing, and which stages should be considered simply as Pre-writing. I personally find the way Tricia Hedge deals with the process of writing helpful, in her book “Writing”(1991). Hedge talks about five stages of the process of writing: Composing, Communicating, Crafting, Improving and Evaluating.

Any text goes through a lot of changes before it can be considered ready for reading, and is ready for its audience. Ideally, a strong sense of audience should be present during all stages of writing, including the preparatory stage (Hedge 1991). And ideally, every writer pursues her/his goal to find and address a specific audience from the very start.
In the context of writing as a process a teacher helps a student to mark and pass safely through different stages of work with a text which gradually reforms and changes a text, making it adjusted for a specific reader (Hedge 1991).

An intensive work by a student on cohesive aspects of text constitutes a big and natural part of the text’s gradual improvement. During the *Composing stage*, students learn how to select and combine information for a written text. The main idea here is that the contents of a coming text should make sense for a reader. A student writer keeps in mind her/his future audience already from the very start of the process of writing.

The next stage is *Communicating*. Communication is often considered to be the most important function of language (Cook 1989). Here, students should address the criterion of clear context even more. Before starting writing, student should consider the purpose of writing, the type of text which is appropriate for a chosen purpose, the reader whom this text is meant for, and the type of relationship between reader and writer that is desired. If a writer has met these basic demands of a coherent text, we can be assured that his/her audience will be found and addressed in a more favorable way. “Less skilled writers produce what can be called ”writer based” rather than ”reader based” prose; that is, writing which focuses on the topic at the expense of the reader, and as a result is ambiguous and presents ideas and arguments less clearly” (Hedge 1991: 63).

In the *Crafting section*, a student is supposed to be aware of the mechanisms and devices that hold a text together; in other words all that turns a text into a coherent piece of writing. The *purpose* (why a writer decided to produce her/his piece of writing) and the *reader* (to whom this text is devoted) should be present on the level of discourse organization, which makes a text a readable unit.

The question is which basic features construct a coherent piece of writing and should therefore be present on the level of discourse organization. We will see that some of the obligatory features involved in making up a comprehensible text can be classified as *formal*, while others could be called *contextual*. Among the features that affect the coherence of a text are: the choice of vocabulary and lexical relationships, genre and form, text structure, as well as the use of conjunctions and inner references.
To create a literary unity means that the author’s intention with the text, the choice of words, key words, synonyms, prepositional phrases, articles, the repetition of words, are all subordinated to the main idea of the text and to an imaginary reader. This supposes the integration of every word of the text into a bigger context and every part of the text into the rest of the text, creating a sense of unity of the whole text.

Awareness of genre and the pragmatic function of different model texts (such as narrative, explanation, and instruction) allow the pupil to select an appropriate genre for the whole text (Johns, 2002, referring to Bhatia, 2002). This is in line with the requirements of the Swedish National Curriculum. The use of paragraphs or headings can clarify text structure, while cohesive devices link sentences and paragraphs into a logic unity. Examples are the use of conjunctions, pronouns and demonstratives. Issues of cohesion in a text are in other words very complex, and therefore only certain of these aspects will be focused in the following.

To conclude, we have seen that understanding writing as a process has several important consequences. According to Hedge (1991) it is the students themselves who are the real authors of their writings. That is why a teacher’s role in the whole process of writing is above all to assist the students in their development. The teacher’s role throughout the stages of Composing, Communicating and Crafting is reduced merely to giving constructive feedback to the students. Every student is expected to proceed from a simple stage of the process to a more advanced one. However, during the two last stages (Improving and Evaluating), the teacher’s role increases slightly instead.

As we have seen, the text and its constant improvement form a natural part of the whole process of writing. To teach students to write a cohesive text, we need to split the process of writing into stages, addressing the challenges of every stage. Students will proceed from simple texts to more advanced ones, learning how to master problems which appear on both formal and contextual levels. Only acknowledging that writing is a process-oriented, rather than a result-oriented activity, can help students to achieve a satisfactory textual production (Hedge 1991).
Method

The intention with my research is to analyze the written production of eight English A pupils, that I had been working with during my teaching practice at an upper secondary school which offers training of future nurses. I worked for five weeks at this school, and therefore had good knowledge of the overall context of the pupils’ studies, and the background of the essays I analyzed. It was also interesting to study the written production of my own pupils, because it allowed me to see if I had accomplished some of my teaching aims during my traineeship period. The group consisted of only eight pupils, and I have not made any selection among the pupils of my group.

Although it was easy to explain the main issue of my research to my pupils nevertheless I experienced a lot of strain by being constantly aware of the fact that I should combine two different roles in a classroom. By that I mean that I was constantly aware of the fact that I combined a role of a teacher of English and a person who was working on a completing a research covering my pupils’ difficulties in a creating a piece of cohesive writing. I did realize then that I should create such a working situation for myself where working as a teacher of English and being constantly involved in a process of learning more both about my pupils’ language problems and their general life situation would not clash with my role as a researcher who tried to follow, register and analyze objectively my pupils’ language flaws. Many teachers who are dealing with researches of this kind where they are using data from their own pupils or students experience the same kind of dilemma: how to combine these two roles, a teacher and a researcher. I find methodological explanations incorporated in practical cases presented by Birgitta Bommarco in “Texter i dialog. En studie i gymnasieelevers litteraturläsning” (Bommarco 2006) and Karin Jönsson in “Litteratursarbets möjligheter. En studie av barns läsning i årskurs F-3” (Jönsson 2007) both relevant and realistic. They both stress the fact that there is a principal difference in final intentions of a teacher and a researcher concerning their empirical findings. The teacher’s intentions with her/his findings are to improve a learning situation for her/his pupils. The researcher’s intentions with her/his findings are to get or add new information about the subject of investigation. (Jönsson 2007:26) These two authors, Bommarco and Jönsson, also follow and develop further the ideas worked out by a Norwegian specialist on didactical matters Torlaug L. Hoel who pointed out that every teacher- researcher should always leave a space for an interpreting
position. It is a space between a position of a teacher and a position of a researcher where an objective picture of a real learning situation in every class is being created (Bommarco, 2006, Jönsson, 2007, referring to Hoel, 1997).

As I have already mentioned earlier it was easy to explain the main issue of my research to my pupils. They could relate to my research topic, since it dealt with the problems they experience in the course of the writing process and the ways my pupils can be helped and their texts improved. My pupils admitted that they had shortcomings and that they wanted help to overcome them. All of them expressed their free will to participate in my research. Neither were they opposed to the idea that I might analyze their texts, generalize the problems with these texts, and draw some conclusions about how these problems can be solved. They were informed that these data would be used only in the context of my research. From an ethical point of view I consider my work with the pupils on writing assignments as a partnership; their desire to stay anonymous is naturally respected. (www.vr.se)

All the participants of the group were girls aged between sixteen and eighteen years. All of the pupils in my group had different mother tongues. The status of Swedish can be described as second language. Many of the students completed a course in the subject Swedish as a second language.

At the time of my practice at the school, I tried to address these issues by planning my lectures very carefully. I addressed the issues of having mostly female pupils by introducing topics for discussion that made no girl feel as a stranger. At the same time, the issues of developing and strengthening English and Swedish language remained in the focus of my classes there as well. For achieving this goal I tried to create a kind of balance in using English and Swedish languages. I kept using the Swedish language as a means of instructions at my English classes. At the same time I was building up the pupils’ awareness of the fact that on grammatical and lexical levels there are both big similarities and big differences between these two language systems. I can also add to this activity of strengthening English and Swedish language a constant effort made to create a working language situation where pupils would know exact meanings of new words, terms or abstractions. And the activity writing as a process helped me as a language teacher to establish another necessary balance, that is between the interests of my students and my teacher’s concern about constantly improving their skills in English. At the time of my practice at the school the pupils had four
hours’ English lessons weekly. English is a core subject, so the pupils needed a grade in English to complete their program.

I started my work as English language teacher by introducing a basic awareness of the characteristics of written texts into every writing task, by discussing key words which can be used systematically in a text and by reminding the students that they can not communicate with their future reader in a face- to- face dialogue; different spellings give different meanings.

Students were also reminded of:

- the importance of *structure*, with obligatory introduction and conclusion (Heaton 1966);
- the role of *complete sentences*; the difference between a phrase and a sentence;
- the role of grammar in perceiving the author’s thoughts;
- the interdependence between the style of a text and the recipient;
- the importance of rereading the entire text before handing it in- does it make sense to a reader?

By working on a basic level with written text improvement I could also persuade a growing number of more advanced learners of English to follow up and apply more complicated text patterns, both in form and content, which would fit the author’s idea with the text much better. It was a natural development of dealing with writing assignments in the working context of writing as a process activity (Hellspong & Ledin 2001:47).

On two occasions, I evaluated the development of the writing skills of my pupils by asking them to write a major essay. Both occasions took place at school. They were set up as major tests intended to evaluate the general improvements made by English A pupils in all aspects of the English language. A written task, writing an essay, was incorporated into these bigger events. The students were asked to make their statements implementing the technique of using the power of facts and arguments in their essays as well as addressing their future audience;
me and each other. The tests took place at an interval of four weeks. Although the pupils had several smaller writing assignments during the course, no other major essays were written.

The theme that the pupils were asked to discuss in their first essay was: What do you do to stay fit? The theme of the second composition dealt with the complicated issue of being a woman. Most of the pupils at the upper secondary school I taught at are females, and as their English teacher and a female myself, I tried to introduce a gender perspective on learning issues. The pupils could choose and formulate a topic for their coming essay themselves, as long as it remained relevant for the general theme: To be a woman. Writing as a process presupposes that teacher and pupils work with modern and relevant issues, which are both important and interesting for the pupils.

My tutor and I had been working intensively with the pupils in my group on the question of writing in English to engage all the existing methods, which would strengthen their awareness of a written text. I had been teaching these pupils half a week before the first test. In the following, I will summarize the results, looking at certain basic points that are important for the coherence and readability of the texts.

The description of the pupils’ essays will first consider aspects, which prevent readers from understanding the main idea of these texts. Such aspects include grammar mistakes, poor syntax and inadequate vocabulary. Secondly, spoken English lists aspects that affect the coherence of a text, such as possible shortcuts, reductions, or influence on the written language by spoken English.

Although the description lists mistakes, in my analysis I rather see these mistakes in the context of reflecting more or less progress in writing skills.

In the following, I will compare eight compositions, written by members of my group on the first test, with eight compositions written by the same individuals at the second test, nearly four weeks later. The pupils had one hour at their disposal to accomplish the first composition, which didn’t need to be especially long but nevertheless not shorter than 100-150 words. The second composition the pupils could write for two hours and it was expected to be long. There were no requirements for any preparatory work, which was supposed to be done at home. Instead we did all preparatory work together. We would write together a list
with a number of aspects affecting comprehension and coherence which the pupils tried to implement systematically in their own writing assignments. We placed on the list the aspects like systematically used key words, correct spelling, the importance of structure of any text with obligatory introduction and conclusion (Heaton 1966), the role of complete sentences, the importance of rereading the entire text before handing it in (does it make sense to a reader?). We used to refresh the contents of the list every time we were dealing with a written text. In my work a number of aspects affecting comprehension and coherence are listed systematically.
Empirical findings

In this section I present sixteen texts written by eight authors. It means that every author wrote two texts on two different occasions; at the beginning and at the end of my practice as a language teacher at that particular educational establishment. The texts are placed in such an order, which would easily show an obvious progress achieved by all eight authors in their attempt to create a cohesive piece of writing. At the same time the arrangement of the texts as well as the choice of aspects discussed with every text show also that different writers made different big progress in the activity of writing discourse. The texts written on a second occasion are marked in italics.

The author IM (1)

Text 1: What do you do to stay fit?

Text 2: Boys have an easier life (in italics)

Text structure:
- no obligatory text structure; no introduction, no conclusion
- there is an introduction (sent. 1-2), where the author presents both a topic of discussion and a personal view, which she tries to advocate throughout the whole text
- there is a very well defined conclusion (sent. 17), which also expresses the author’s position on the issue

Thoughts shaped in grammar:
- no Vygotskij’s principle concerning written language: one sentence- one thought
- no complete sentences, just phrases piled on each other
- thoughts are neither based on the recognition of grammatical principles, nor shaped into grammatically correct units
- IM writes in sentences, not in phrases, although sometimes forgetting to mark them graphically (sent.6)
- All 17 sentences composing the text are written in the Present Tense!
A reader- writer relationship:
- no imagining a reader- obvious traces of oral speech
- there is a strong presence of a reader whom the author tries to address and convince with her arguments that it is much easier to be a boy

Syntax:
- there is no main idea, besides the theme that is discussed, and which would link together all these phrases
- syntax is very primitive, consisting mostly of Subject Predicate and Object, the favorite and virtually the only conjunction used is “and”, which is sometimes used many times in one and the same sentence (sent. 14); it can also be placed at the beginning of sentences as in oral speech (sent. 4)

Coherence:
- no coherence, neither on the level of discourse organization (form), nor on the level of the expression (context)
- her text is divided into paragraphs, which makes it easy for a reader to read and apprehend the text

The author ND (2)
Text 1: What do you do to stay fit?
Text 2: To be a boy is easier !!! (in italics)

Text structure:
- the idea of text structure is completely absent, with missing introduction and conclusion
- introduction of well thought over text structure (sent. 1-3)
- there is a well cut introduction, well cut conclusion and a well cut main idea which is developed throughout the whole text namely, to be a boy is easier
**Thoughts shaped in grammar:**
- the text just contains information about the author’s thoughts on the subject - there is no attempt to organize thoughts grammatically into sentences
- the whole narration is presented in the Present Tense
- all the subjects are expressed either by the substantive “boys” or personal pronoun “they”, the same tendency prevails with “girls” and “parents” which are always substituted by “they”

**Syntax:**
- the whole narration consists of phrases added to each other with the conjunction “and” syntax construction in all 16 sentences is strongly influenced by oral speech: sentences start with the phrases “for example” (sent. 5), “specially” (sent. 9) and the conjunction “but” (sent. 2)

**Coherence:**
- the author does not shape her thoughts into sentences, beginning her sentences with “because”, “and”, “infinitive”
- presence of paragraphs; every paragraph presents a new argument supporting the author’s main statement that it is easier to be a boy (ph.1 (sent. 1-3), par.2 (sent. 4-5), par.3 (sent. 6-14), par.4 (sent. 15-15))

**Traces of oral speech:**
- reading the text, you realize that the author’s intention is to supplement her ideas with gestures and needed commentaries on the spot, without addressing the fact that in a written text she will not be able to do so
- it is a very hastily written text, which generally reminds more of a text written as a help and supplement for a public speech, than a text written only for the purpose of reading
The author MR (3)

Text 1: What do you do to stay fit?

Text 2: Boys’ life is easier (in italics)

Syntax:
- out of 7 sentences, all 7 sentences are put in the Future Simple Tense and begin with the personal pronoun “I”- “I will…”
- syntax follows one and the same pattern: Subject + Predicate and (conjunction) Predicate + …or Subject + Predicate and (conjunction) Subject + Predicate + …
- the author uses an if-clause (sent. 3) and subordinate clauses of time (sent. 3, 5, 8) and of reason (sent.4, 8), making the syntax varied
- there is still a tendency to substitute all “parents” with the personal pronoun “they” (sent. 3-4) and all “the boys” with “they” as well
- the conjunction “and” is used nearly in every sentence (sent. 3, 4, 5, 7)

Coherence:
- a text written in sentences, not phrases
- it is definitely a piece of well thought over writing
- the whole composition is divided into 4 paragraphs, where the author discusses with logic and energy four reasons why she considers boys’ life to be so much easier than girls’ life
- every paragraph is based on a new statement, which the author then advocates throughout the whole paragraph
- there is a very distinct introduction (sent. 1-2), which serves also as the main theme for the whole composition
- there is a summing up conclusion (sent. 8-9)
The author DN (4)

Text 1: **What do you do to stay fit?**

Text 2: **I dream about being a boy (in italics)**

**Text structure:**
- a text consisting of 6 sentences that has neither introduction nor conclusion
- there is a very good introduction to the text (11 sent.) which contains both a main theme of a further coming text and an opinion of the author on the issue (sent. 1-3)

**Syntax:**
- there is a mixture of complete sentences and isolated phrases
- syntax is not very advanced, containing mainly the construction “boys/they do not....because....” (sent. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) but there exists a great variety of Object constructions as well as two if-clauses (sent. 2, 5, 11)
- personal pronoun “they” always substitutes “boys” (sent. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10)

**Coherence:**
- the author does not have a habit to mark graphically the end of every sentence and start a new sentence with a capital letter (sent. 4-5)
- “and” with a small letter can start a sentence (sent. 4, 5)
- just phrases with small letters can be marked as complete sentences with full stops (sent. 3, 4)
- wrong prepositions (sent. 1, 5)
- usage of Swedish instead of English (sent. 2, 5)
- other minor grammatical mistakes which add to the difficulties for a reader to read and understand the text
- a text contains 5 paragraphs which are not marked only graphically, but also semantically

**Traces of oral speech:**
different parts of sentences can be put in different grammatical tenses (sent. 1, 2)

most narration happens in the Present Simple Time (sent. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)

The author AD (5)

Text 1: What do you do to stay fit?

Text 2: To be a boy for one day! (in italics)

Text structure:
- there is an introduction (sent.1) and conclusion which has 2 functions, namely: it serves as a conclusion to the whole text and contains the author’s personal opinion and recommendation to the readers on the issue (sent. 12)
- the text has an introduction which coincides with the first paragraph (sent. 1-3) and a conclusion which also coincides with a paragraph (par.6, sent. 18-22), both are interrelated with each other, creating a semantic unity

Thoughts shaped in grammar:
- there are very few grammatical mistakes which would be disturbing for reading a text
- when the author starts her sentences with “because” or “but”, she also underlines them graphically, stressing that she uses these conjunctions as stylistic devices and they are not merely traces of spoken language in a piece of writing (sent. 9, 11, 17, 22)

Syntax:
- syntax presents a variety of different grammatical constructions, namely, two main clauses connected by the conjunction “and” (sent. 2, 9,10, 11), usage of subordinate time clauses (sent. 2, 4,6), and a “that” clause (sent. 12)
- the author expresses her arguments to advocate the main thesis of her essay that boys have more freedom by employing similar grammatical constructions. It is either Subject + Predicate in the Present Tense (sent. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19), or Subject + Negation + Predicate (sent. 5, 13, 15, 16), where the verbal phrase “boys they don’t need” is absolutely a favorite in nearly every sentence; these grammatical constructions prevail over other constructions inside the sentences, which place the text closer to spoken language than it is necessarily is
- AD either does not substitute “boys” at all, repeating it over and over again (sent. 8-10), or uses the substitution “they” (sent. 4, 5,7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16,17, 20)
**Coherence:**
- the author presents a personal story in 12 sentences about the measures which should be taken if you want to be fit
- the author follows a certain form of narration, she points out the reasons why boys have a much easier and nicer life than girls have
- the whole essay is divided into 6 paragraphs, where every new paragraph continues and argues the issues mentioned in the previous one
- every paragraph presents a semantic unity, where the following sentence continues the previous one, preserving a principle of lexical relationship among the sentences (par 2 (sent. 4-7), par 3 (sent. 8-10), par 4 (sent. 11-13), par 5 (sent. 14-17)

**Traces of oral speech:**
- 11 sentences out of 12 are written in different types of Present Tense
- all 21 sentences except sentence 2 (If I had a wish that I want to come true, it would be to try to be a boy for one day) of this composition are put in different types of the Present Tense, which gives it a trace of public speech

The author EM (6)

Text 1: **What do you do to stay fit?**

Text 2: **A boy for a day (in italics)**

**Text structure:**
- the whole text consists of 5 sentences
- there is neither introduction nor conclusion
- the text consists of 8 sentences and is divided into 4 paragraphs
- the first paragraph serves also as an introduction to the whole text, where the author introduces and advocates her main idea: boys have a better and easier life
- there is a well formulated conclusion, where the author, after winding up the general arguments, makes her own conclusion
- the whole narrative text is written in the Present Tense
**Thoughts shaped in grammar:**
- syntax is not based on the principle one thought–one grammatical sentence; it is based on phrases
- it is very difficult for a reader to read and apprehend the text
- it is very easy for a reader to follow the author’s arguments

**Syntax:**
- some sentences are made by ellipses (sent. 2)
- some sentences are made of chains of segments of various grammatical constructions, connected to each other by the conjunction “and” (sent. 11, 3)
- as to syntax, the two conjunctions which are used in constructing nearly every sentence are “and” (sent. 5, 6, 7) and “because” (sent. 4, 6, 8)

**Coherence:**
- there is no logical or grammatical connection between the graphical and the grammatical end of the sentences
- every paragraph discusses a new aspect of the main statement that boys have a better and easier life

**Traces of oral speech:**
- there is a Swedish phrase instead of English (sent. 2)
- there are other grammatical mistakes, such as spelling mistakes (sent. 2, 4, 5), wrong word order (sent. 5)
- the only existing substitution for “a boy” is the personal pronoun “he” (sent. 4, 5, 6)
- the only existing substitution for “boys” is the personal pronoun “they” (sent. 3)
The author SN (7)

Text 1: **What do you do to stay fit?**

Text 2: **To change your sexuality for a day (in italics)**

**Text structure:**
- as to the text structure, every new rule of the author is followed by a short explanation
- the whole text (21 sent.) is divided into clearly cut paragraphs, which are marked by introduction phrases such as “firstly”, “secondly”, “finally”

**Syntax:**
- the text is written in the form of personal recommendations of the author to a reader, so it is very easy to follow
- as to syntax, nearly every sentence starts with a verb in the imperative form (sent. 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10), which can be explained easily by the fact that in the conclusion the author calls her recommendations “rules” (sent. 9)
- the whole text is written in the Present Tense
- what is very special with SN’s text is that she uses the pronouns “it” and “that” to refer not only to something inside a sentence, but also to the previous sentence (sent. 10, 16) which together with the very logical and skillful linking of each sentence to the following makes her text very easy to read.
- although the whole text is written in the Present Tense (except sent.3), generally using simple sentences or compound sentences linked by “and” or “but” (sent. 12, 14 16 18), it also contains samples of more varied syntax, namely: time clauses (sent. 14,20), and a reason clause (sent. 12)

**Coherence:**
- there is an introduction (sent. 1)
- there is a conclusion coinciding with the last sentence (sent. 12)
- there is a distinct introduction, which is also the first paragraph, where the author gives a list of all the problems of being a woman that she is going to discuss there is a distinct conclusion, introduced by the phrase “all in all”, and it is also the last paragraph (5)
**Traces of oral speech:**

- the author addresses a reader by using the personal pronoun “you” in nearly every sentence (sent. 2, 4, 6, 11, 12)
- the only substitute to “men” is the personal pronoun “they” (sent. 8, 11, 12, 14, 18) or “a man” (sent. 19, 20) / “boys” (sent. 12, 16)
- the author uses “women” without substitution, except in the conclusion, where she writes about “a girl” (sent. 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 21)

The author IS (8)

**Text 1:** What do you do to stay fit?

**Text 2:** Men vs women (in italics)

**Text structure:**

- there is an introduction and conclusion
- the whole issue is covered by 4 sentences
- there is an introduction to the text, where the author presents her main theme for discussion namely, men have more rights than women (sent. 1-3, par.1)
- there is also a conclusion, containing the author’s strong opinion that we are the women, we are the future (sent. 10-14, par.5)
- all 14 sentences are written in the Present Tense

**Thoughts shaped in grammar:**

- as to syntax, graphical sentences are much longer than the grammatical ones; the author does not think in grammatical sentences but in phrases (2, 3, 4)
- syntax shows a great variety of grammatical constructions, both on the phrase as well as on the sentence level
- the phrase level: as long as possible (sent. 5), as many rules as we girls (sent. 4), gets a warning (sent. 6), a job as a secretary (sent. 9)

**Syntax:**
the author’s long graphical sentences contain numerous clauses (sent. 2, 3, 4), with correct grammar but absolutely wrong punctuation; one of the sentences starts with “but” (sent. 4)

- the sentence level: compound sentences with conjunction “and” (sent. 5),
conditioned clause (sent. 6)
subordinate clause with “because” (sent. 7)
subordinate clause “that” (sent. 7)
if-clause (sent. 9)
- there is a variety in the substitution of the key word “men”, namely: “the guys” (sent. 4, 13), “they” (sent. 5), “a he” (sent. 6), “a man” (sent. 9)
- there is also a variety in how the author names “women”, namely: “we girls” (sent. 4), “a girl” (sent. 6), “the girls” (sent. 7), “a woman” (sent. 9), “us” (sent. 11)

Coherence:
- it is a personal story of personal measures aimed at staying fit; nearly every sentence starts with the personal pronoun “I” (sent. 1, 3, 4)
- the paragraphs (5) follow the logical development of the text
- every paragraph introduces and describes a new aspect of discrimination against women, using introductory phrases such as “firstly” (2), “and if” (3), “and when” (4), “so do you see?” (5)
Analysis of results

The first set of compositions (What do you do to be fit?), are dangerously close to spoken language, both on the level of form and idea. Even the best of these texts (except AD (5)) are written on a phrase level. The students show no awareness of a reader who should not only read, but also apprehend the text. There are also other common disturbances, such as a lack of synonyms, spelling mistakes, no working punctuation rules. All these shortcomings found in the written production of the students seriously impair the texts’ coherence. The initial level of the students is far below the aims of the syllabus: ”(…) be able to process and improve their own written production” (tr. I.S) (Skolverket Engelska A 2000).

Very substantial progress was made with respect to text coherence in Text 2. The students had become aware that the norms and rules of written language differ from spoken English. This awareness helped them to mobilize and develop further maybe already existing but passive knowledge of necessary writing skills.

In Text 2, all pupils started their texts with an introduction, where they presented the main theme of their composition to a reader, and concluded their texts with a formal conclusion summing up the debated issue. The structure of the entire written body of the texts was improved immensely in all eight Text 2 compositions.

The extent to which the topic influenced the writing process of these young women supports the notion that writing cannot be considered simply acquiring a set of generic skills, which would be studied separately in an abstract manner and afterwards “applied” to different subjects. On the contrary, form and content are strongly linked. The dynamics of the writing process are also connected to issues of identity and motivation, and how a particular topic relates to the individual student. It is important to pay sufficient attention to the students’ background and personal interests when giving assignments. Finally, it would be helpful to consider content more in depth across the curriculum. Compositions could be used to open discussions across the different subjects, and strengthen partnership among the teachers.
The theme of the unfair treatment of girls and women in the world appears to have inspired the students to search for the text’s inner development, employing lexical relationships, where *because* is the favorite.

These results provide many optimistic thoughts to the teacher; pupils did improve many grammatical issues that are necessary for text coherence. At the same time, to judge from the matters of lexical relationships and text unity, no great progress took place between the two compositions.

All eight pieces of narration except some sentences here and there, are written in the Present Tense. This limits and weakens the expressiveness of the compositions, although it is not grammatically wrong to present arguments in the Present Tense.

Finally, the essays present several other shortcomings, above all a lack of language variety, problems with linking logically more advanced grammatical constructions, as well as problems related to the integration of abstract words and notions into the essays.

As a teacher, I should always make an effort to focus the perspective of the students writing skills development, and see the progress they were making, while not neglecting the formal shortcomings in their writing. The change of attitude towards writing and making writing tasks much easier changed the pupils’ attitude towards writing assignments. The activity as such also became much closer and more understandable to every pupil. Instead of being associated with constant failure to produce readable texts and, as a result, a deep sense of despair and uncertainty, it turned instead rather into a process of training needed writing skills. These skills were needed for producing individual texts on various issues. By introducing small and big writing assignments right into the middle of English class, I diminished the psychological distance between oral and written assignments, where oral assignments were favored by most of the pupils.

As we see substantial developments took place in the period of time between the two compositions. However, a number of serious problems remained. Also, although the results can be seen as very positive, considering how weak these students were to start with, their achievement does not meet the standards of recommended goals for the activity writing in Swedish upper secondary school. In other words, although the general results can reflect a
large number of developments towards a coherent text (see Analysis of empirical findings below), they still fail to meet the requirements of the syllabus. The essays present several major shortcomings, such as a lack of language variety, problems with linking logically more advanced grammatical constructions, as well as problems related to the integration of abstract words and notions into the essays. However, I saw how an aspiration to express a personal opinion on the issue of women’s rights stimulated the whole process of writing. Suddenly the students got a motivated need for knowledge of grammar, new words, and basic knowledge for composing a text. Many of these details had seemed meaningless for the students earlier, but became important when they needed to express exactly what they thought about the situation of women.

After starting with a more abstract discussion on historical and traditional differences in the roles of men and women, the need for more abstract words followed naturally. The abstract vocabulary allowed the students to express more general ideas, and at the same time acquiring more precise vocabulary allowed discussions on the issue to develop further. Naturally came also an awareness of the fact that if you want to be heard, you should find your own individual language, and that can not be done if you ignore the grammatical norms of written language.
Discussion

At the very beginning of my teaching practice, I wanted to learn more about my students’ ability to write, by reading assignments made at all times, including the period when I didn’t work there as an English teacher myself. With the kind assistance from my tutor there, I was supplied with numerous writing assignments. Writing assignments often serve as a communication channel between a student and a teacher, since contact hours are limited.

By reading numerous assignments written by my students, I realized that the biggest challenge was to create an awareness that there are differences between spoken and written forms of language and implement this awareness into a process of writing.

Looking at the written work of the students, presented above, it appears that my strategy was successful, and the most students were able to make noticeable progress in a relatively short period of time. There is reason to believe that the students’ progress was triggered by my teaching strategy. Their first paper indicates the initial level of the written work. It suggests that the students lacked basic writing skills, although they had studied English all required years at school before this course.

When you work as a language teacher at school or gymnasium, you realize very clearly that every teacher at school is a language teacher. Pupils constantly work on their language, learning and training to find abstract words for their thoughts, organizing thoughts into logical sentences, and then expressing the final product in the form of language, not only during writing assignments in the subject English. They are engaged in this process during every class in every subject at school. This is why a much bigger partnership, cooperation and writing across the curriculum are needed and should be encouraged at educational establishments of this kind.

Cooperation between teachers on matters of content and argumentative structure is important generally. But there are many aspects of language acquisition and writing processes that can be specifically addressed by language teachers working together. All language teachers could work on a common strategy in coping with different kinds of language problems existing at a particular school. Language teachers could decide, for example, to use the same terminology
in language teaching. They could also start working simultaneously on the grammatical issues that create the biggest problems for the students, numerous issues dealing with the differences between written and spoken language, or strengthening abstract language. Mother tongue teachers play a strategic role for students with a foreign background, for instance by pointing out the comparative aspects of language. Comparative aspects of different languages are important knowledge, also for other language teachers (Lindblad & Lindblad 1981).

**Conclusion**

At the end of my practice I came to the conclusion that the strategy of focusing students’ attention on certain features of written language that are necessary for coherence proved to be successful. The students made substantial progress in a relatively short period of time. Another important observation, which I made, was the extreme importance of the factor of choosing a theme that engaged and motivated the students strongly. Content and form cannot be separated. This suggests that strengthening co-operation with teachers of other subjects would help to improve writing skills. Basic knowledge of grammar and other issues that are needed for writing is generally poor. This is why increased co-operation between language teachers is particularly urgent.

To write a text is a very complex process. The activity demands different kinds of writing skills, as well as knowledge of what text is, knowledge of mechanisms constructing and keeping together words and sentences inside a text, and knowledge of how context affects understanding.

The notion of writing as a process means that it is an ongoing and open process, where making mistakes can be considered a natural part. To my mind exactly thanks to that the implementation of it into a teaching process fits so well both the challenge of a language teacher and the needs of my kind of students. The students who should acquire the English language at Swedish school not having an access to Swedish as a mother tongue. If a language teacher considers writing as a process- oriented, rather than result- oriented activity, it is more important to engage English learners into the process of writing than to linger on the figures showing the exact amounts of mistakes.
We language teachers can only estimate individual improvements made by students towards desirable goals in their writing production. But although all these eight particular students undisputedly made obvious achievements towards a coherent text, their general knowledge of grammatical aspects of written English still remains insufficient. Their knowledge of English grammar, vocabulary and syntax did not allow the students to express their ideas clearly. Furthermore, the students’ knowledge of English was very far below the ambitious learning aims of the syllabus.

However, despite the shortcomings, the most important for the process of writing as well as for the supervising her/his students language teacher is to empower the student who is the real author of any piece of writing, to get full control over her/his text. With “to get full control” I mean to supply every student with all the skills necessary for the individual correction of a written text, where the teacher only marks places that need to be thought over or redone, but without correcting them. And that final goal in writing as a process also reflects very well the goal for writing skills set up in the upper secondary school syllabus:”(...) be able to process and improve their own written production” (tr. I. S) (Skolverket Engelska A 2000). This type of development requires hard work from the students, and careful attention by the teacher to the individual needs of each student. But ultimately, it strengthens the position of the student, putting her/him in charge over her/his writing. The student becomes both the author and editor of her/his own text.
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