

ABSTRACT .

The present study was an action research carried out to develop the skill of writing compositions in second language. The sample consisted of eight grade nine students of St. Peter's College, Colombo 4. It was identified that students had difficulties in writing compositions. They faced problems in using the appropriate form and structure in carrying out writing activities. As further identified , they lacked vocabulary and organizational skills to carry out writing activities. It was found that the major reason for the students' lack of competencies in writing compositions was the inadequate practice in the sub skills of writing. Thus, the intervention programme was designed to give adequate practice in improving the sub skills ; form and structure, vocabulary and organizational skills through guided writing activities to facilitate the development of writing compositions in second language.

Pre test , interview , observation , assignments and post test were the instruments used for data collection in the present study. Pre test and interview were conducted before the intervention programme for the purpose of sampling and need analysis. Observation and assignments were the techniques used to measure the progress during the intervention. The post test was used to measure the effectiveness and success of the intervention programme. The intervention programme was designed to be carried out in six stages of 23 guided writing

activities and 6 free writing activities . Each stage had both guided writing activities and a free writing activity which focussed on specific form and structure as well as themes. Free writing activities administered at the end of each stage were set as assignments and they were marked according to set criteria for quantitative analysis and the observations made were analyzed qualitatively . Finally, a post test was administered . The evaluation of the effectiveness and success of the programme was made through the comparison of assignments marks , comparison of observed behaviour at the beginning and the end of the intervention programme and the comparison of pre test and post test marks.

All eight students of the sample showed an immense interest in the programme and showed a progress in their performance both in writing compositions in second language and in their attitude and behaviours. The students were willing to continue the programme, as the procedure used and methods adopted were very effective in getting the students to overcome difficulties faced by them in writing compositions in second language. Thus, it was suggested that the students' ability to write compositions can be facilitated and improved through guided writing which will equip them with necessary sub skills needed in carrying out free writing activities.