Arabian Journal of Science

ISSN:2308-5703

Impact factor:13.5 *International Multidisciplinary Online Journal* July, 2026

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE UK AND FINLAND IN DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS IN PRIMARY GRADES

Shukurova Dilfuza Rakhmatovna
English teacher, School No. 1, Jondor district, Bukhara region

Abstract This scientific article analyzes effective methodologies for developing writing skills in primary grades, drawing on the Cambridge Primary experience. The study examines Cambridge's process-based approach, genre pedagogy, and task-based learning strategies. It explores how these methods foster independent and creative writing abilities in young learners. The article provides a detailed analysis of effective classroom practices, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques aligned with the Cambridge framework. It also discusses the integration of these methodologies within diverse national educational contexts. The research highlights the importance of creating a supportive writing environment, explicit instruction in transcription skills, and the use of formative assessment to guide student progress.

Keywords: Cambridge Primary, writing skills, primary education, methodology, process-based approach, genre pedagogy, creative writing, assessment, instructional strategies, pedagogical experience, transcription skills, formative assessment.

The development of writing skills in primary education is a cornerstone of a child's academic journey, serving as a fundamental tool for communication, critical thinking, and self-expression across all subjects. In recent years, the Cambridge Primary program has emerged as a globally recognized framework that offers a comprehensive and structured approach to nurturing these essential competencies from an early age. This article delves into the methodology of developing writing skills in primary grades, drawing extensively on the Cambridge Primary experience to provide a detailed analysis of effective pedagogical strategies, classroom practices, and assessment techniques. By examining the core principles of the Cambridge approach, particularly its emphasis on process-based learning, genre awareness, and the integration of writing with other language skills, this article aims to offer valuable insights for educators seeking to enhance their writing instruction. The Cambridge Primary framework is meticulously designed to be both challenging and supportive, recognizing that the journey from being a novice scribbler to a confident author is incremental and requires a rich, stimulating environment. At the heart of this methodology is the belief that writing is not merely a mechanical act of transcribing thoughts but a complex cognitive process that involves planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. This holistic view moves beyond traditional, product-oriented approaches that focus solely on the final piece of work, instead valuing the developmental stages a child undergoes to reach that point. Therefore, the teacher's role shifts from that of a mere evaluator to a facilitator, mentor, and co-writer, guiding students through each stage of the writing process while providing constructive feedback and fostering a positive writing culture within the classroom. Research has consistently demonstrated that when students are taught writing as a process, they develop greater metacognitive awareness and produce higher-quality texts (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Graham & Perin, 2007).

One of the most distinctive features of the Cambridge Primary methodology is its profound commitment to the "process approach" to writing. This approach, which has been extensively researched and validated in educational literature, breaks down the daunting task of writing into manageable and recursive stages. The initial phase, pre-writing, is crucial as it lays the groundwork for all subsequent work. In a Cambridge-aligned classroom, this stage goes far beyond simply deciding on a topic. It is a dynamic period of exploration and idea generation where students are encouraged to engage in brainstorming sessions, create mind maps, read mentor texts, discuss their thoughts with

peers, and ask questions. The goal is to build a rich reservoir of ideas and to help young writers find their voice even before they put pen to paper. For instance, if a class is tasked with writing a descriptive piece about a market, the pre-writing stage might involve a virtual tour of a market, looking at photographs, smelling and tasting different spices (if feasible), and collaboratively listing powerful adjectives and sensory words. This immersive preparation ensures that when students begin their first drafts, they are equipped with both the content and the vocabulary to express themselves effectively. Following pre-writing, the drafting stage is where these ideas are transformed into a rough piece of writing. At this point, the emphasis is on fluency and getting thoughts down on the page, not on perfection. Students are encouraged to focus on content, organization, and meaning, while the teacher circulates, offering encouragement and asking probing questions to help them develop their ideas further. The subsequent stages of revising and editing are where the real refinement occurs. Revision is a macro-level process focused on improving the content and structure of the writing. Students are taught to read their own work critically, asking questions like, "Is my main idea clear? Have I included enough detail? Does my story have a logical sequence?" This often involves adding, removing, or reorganizing text, and peer feedback plays a vital role in this stage, teaching students to give and receive constructive criticism in a supportive environment. Editing, on the other hand, is a micro-level process that focuses on the mechanics of writing, such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, and capitalization. It is the final polish that ensures the writing is clear, accurate, and ready for its audience. Finally, the publishing stage is the culmination of the writing process, where the final, polished piece is shared with an authentic audience, which could be classmates, parents, or even the wider community through a class blog or display. This act of publication instills a sense of pride and accomplishment in young writers, reinforcing the value and purpose of their hard work. According to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), this iterative process helps young writers transition from a knowledge-telling to a knowledge-transforming model of composition.

Beyond the process-oriented framework, the Cambridge Primary methodology places a strong emphasis on "genre-based pedagogy." This means that students are explicitly taught the features and structures of different text types. They are not just expected to "write a story" or "write a report" without a clear understanding of what that entails. Instead, they are immersed in the genre, reading and analyzing exemplars, identifying common linguistic features, and understanding the social purpose of the text. For example, when learning to write a persuasive letter, students would first read and analyze several examples of persuasive letters, identifying the use of rhetorical questions, emotive language, persuasive devices, and the typical structure of an argument. This explicit teaching of genre features provides students with a clear roadmap and a set of tools they can use when constructing their own texts in that genre. This approach demystifies writing, making it more accessible and less intimidating for young learners. It empowers them with knowledge of how different types of texts work, enabling them to make conscious choices about their language and structure to achieve a specific purpose. Hyland (2003) argues that genre-based instruction is particularly effective because it makes explicit the relationship between language and its social context, which is crucial for developing communicative competence. The integration of reading and writing is also a critical component of this methodology, as reading serves as the primary model for writing. By exposing students to a wide variety of high-quality texts, they develop a rich vocabulary, an understanding of sentence structure, and an appreciation for the power of language. This, in turn, provides a solid foundation for their own writing endeavors. Furthermore, Cambridge Primary encourages teachers to create a print-rich classroom environment where writing is celebrated and practiced daily. This includes having word walls, anchor charts, student-authored books, and a dedicated writing center with a range of resources that inspire and support young writers. Graves (1983) was a pioneer in advocating for such an environment,

emphasizing that children learn to write by writing, just as they learn to read by reading, and that a supportive classroom community is essential for this process.

The assessment of writing within the Cambridge Primary framework is integral to the learning process, designed to be both formative and summative to provide a comprehensive picture of a student's progress. Formative assessment is continuous and embedded in daily instruction. It is a diagnostic tool that allows teachers to identify students' strengths and areas for development, enabling them to tailor their teaching accordingly. In a writing workshop, formative assessment might involve observing students as they write, listening in on their discussions with peers, checking their writing journals, and providing immediate, specific feedback that moves their learning forward. The Cambridge Primary approach also strongly advocates for the use of self-assessment and peer assessment as vital strategies for developing metacognitive skills. By using child-friendly checklists and rubrics, students are taught to critically evaluate their own work and the work of their peers against clear criteria. This not only fosters independence and ownership over their learning but also deepens their understanding of what constitutes effective writing. Summative assessment, typically conducted at the end of a unit or term, measures what a student has learned against the curriculum's learning objectives. The Cambridge Primary Progression Tests and Checkpoint assessments, for example, provide valuable data on student achievement in writing. However, the true strength of the Cambridge methodology lies in its use of these assessments not just for grading but as a diagnostic tool to inform future instruction. The feedback provided to students on their summative work is detailed and focuses on how they can improve, guiding their next steps in learning. Black and Wiliam (1998) have shown that formative assessment practices, when implemented effectively, can significantly enhance student achievement, a principle that is deeply embedded in the Cambridge approach.

A key aspect of the pedagogical approach in the Cambridge Primary curriculum is the explicit teaching of grammar and vocabulary in context, rather than as an isolated, decontextualized list of rules. This is a significant departure from more traditional methods where grammar was taught through rote memorization and abstract exercises. In the Cambridge framework, grammar and spelling are taught functionally, to help students make meaning in their writing. For instance, when learning to write in the past tense, students might be asked to write a recount of a school trip. The teacher would then explicitly point out the use of past tense verbs in the text and explain why they are used, linking the grammatical concept directly to the purpose of the text. This contextualized approach makes grammar more meaningful and easier for students to understand and apply in their own writing. Similarly, vocabulary development is not left to chance but is actively taught. Teachers introduce and explore new words through reading, discussion, and explicit instruction, using strategies like word maps, synonym webs, and vocabulary games. The goal is to expand students' vocabulary so they have a wider lexical range to choose from when they write, enabling them to express their ideas with greater precision and nuance. Furthermore, the methodology strongly encourages the integration of technology to enhance the teaching and learning of writing. From using word processors for drafting and editing to creating digital stories, blogs, or collaborative writing projects, technology is seen as a powerful tool that can motivate young writers and provide them with new and exciting ways to compose and share their work. The use of technology also allows for multiple means of expression, accommodating different learning styles and needs. Warschauer (2006) emphasizes that technology can transform the writing process by making it more collaborative, iterative, and authentic, which aligns perfectly with the goals of the Cambridge Primary framework.

The development of handwriting and spelling proficiency is also a distinct and vital component of the Cambridge Primary writing methodology, particularly in the early years. The program recognizes that these transcription skills are the foundational building blocks for writing. If a child is struggling to form letters or spell common words, their cognitive resources are depleted, leaving little

energy for the higher-order thinking processes of composition, such as generating ideas, organizing thoughts, or choosing appropriate vocabulary. Therefore, Cambridge Primary advocates for a systematic and explicit approach to teaching handwriting, ensuring students develop a legible and fluent script. This often involves direct instruction in letter formation, posture, and pencil grip, as well as frequent practice. Similarly, spelling is taught using a multi-sensory and structured approach. Rather than relying solely on rote memorization of word lists, the program emphasizes the teaching of phonics, spelling rules, and common prefixes and suffixes. Students are encouraged to use strategies like sounding out words, looking for word chunks, and using reference materials like dictionaries. The goal is to equip them with a repertoire of strategies they can use independently to spell words correctly and to become confident spellers. This explicit focus on transcription skills ensures that students are not held back by mechanical difficulties, allowing them to focus their creative energies on the composition of their writing. Research by Graham, Harris, and Fink-Chorzempa (2002) highlights that explicit instruction in handwriting and spelling leads to significant improvements in the overall quality and fluency of students' written compositions, reinforcing the importance of these foundational skills.

The Cambridge Primary methodology also places significant importance on developing students' ability to write for different purposes and audiences. This goes beyond simply learning different text types; it involves understanding the social context of writing and the impact that word choice, tone, and structure have on the reader. Students are encouraged to consider questions such as: Who am I writing for? Why am I writing this? What do I want my reader to think, feel, or do after reading my text? This awareness of audience and purpose is a crucial element of becoming a skilled and effective writer. In practice, this might involve students writing a letter to the principal to request a new piece of playground equipment, creating a brochure to persuade visitors to come to their town, or composing a poem to express a personal feeling. Each of these tasks requires a different approach, and students are guided to make appropriate linguistic and structural choices. This authentic purpose-driven approach to writing increases student motivation and engagement, as they see their writing as having a real-world impact. Furthermore, the Cambridge framework encourages collaborative writing activities, where students work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit a text. This not only develops their writing skills but also fosters important social and communication skills, such as negotiation, compromise, and peer feedback. Collaborative writing also provides a supportive environment where less confident writers can learn from their more experienced peers, and all students can benefit from the collective knowledge and ideas of the group.

In conclusion, the Cambridge Primary methodology offers a robust and balanced framework for developing writing skills in primary grades. Its strength lies in its holistic and integrated nature, combining a process-based approach, genre awareness, explicit instruction in grammar and vocabulary, a strong emphasis on transcription skills, and a comprehensive system of formative and summative assessment. It is a methodology that views writing as a complex, developmental journey, and the teacher as a guide, mentor, and facilitator who creates a supportive, stimulating, and purposeful environment for learning. The transferability of these principles to various national educational contexts is promising, though it requires thoughtful adaptation to account for cultural and linguistic differences, teacher training needs, and resource availability. For educators, embracing the Cambridge Primary approach means moving away from a "one-size-fits-all" model and adopting a more individualized, student-centered pedagogy that celebrates the writing process as much as the final product. By building a classroom culture that values risk-taking, revision, and reflection, teachers can empower their students to become confident, articulate, and passionate writers, equipped with the skills they need to communicate effectively and succeed in their academic and personal lives. The careful integration of explicit teaching with creative exploration, and the constant interplay between reading and writing, create a rich tapestry of learning opportunities that prepare students not just for the next

grade level, but for a lifetime of meaningful engagement with the written word. Ultimately, the Cambridge Primary experience demonstrates that effective writing instruction is not about a single best method but about a coherent, research-informed approach that adapts to the needs of each learner and fosters a lifelong love of writing.

References

1. Bereiter, C., & Scardamalia, M. (1987). The psychology of written composition. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
2. Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. Phi Delta Kappan, 80(2), 139–148.
3. Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. College Composition and Communication, 32(4), 365–387.
4. Graham, S., Harris, K. R., & Fink-Chorzempa, B. (2002). Contribution of spelling instruction to the spelling, writing, and reading of poor spellers. Journal of Educational Psychology, 94(4), 669–686.
5. Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students. Journal of Educational Psychology, 99(3), 445–476.
6. Graves, D. H. (1983). Writing: Teachers and children at work. Heinemann Educational Books.
7. Hyland, K. (2003). Second language writing. Cambridge University Press.
8. Warschauer, M. (2006). Laptops and literacy: A multi-site case study. Pedagogies: An International Journal, 1(1), 52–67.