

Issues in TESL

Ratnawati Mohd Asraf

IIUM PRESS
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA



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IUM Press

Published by:
IUM Press
International Islamic University Malaysia

First Edition, 2011
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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Edited by:

Ratnawati Mohd Asraf

Issues in TESL

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ISBN: 978-967-418-056-0

Member of Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia – MAPIM
(Malaysian Scholarly Publishing Council)

Printed by :

IUM PRINTING SDN. BHD.

No. 1, Jalan Industri Batu Caves 1/3

Taman Perindustrian Batu Caves

Batu Caves Centre Point

68100 Batu Caves

Selangor Darul Ehsan

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THE TEACHING OF WRITING: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Noor Lide Abu Kassim & Kamal J. Badrasawi

INTRODUCTION

In the academic context, the ability to write is an essential skill to master since more often than not a successful academic endeavour demands the capacity to produce written discourse that demonstrates language proficiency and critical thinking ability (Bizzell, 1987). However, the ability to produce such discourse is not easy to acquire as writing entails a myriad of highly complex skills involving psychological, cognitive, and linguistic factors

Psychologically, writing demands tremendous endurance as it exerts intense pressure on the writer. Unlike speaking, which has a situational context to help invoke some form of response in a two-way communication, writing is 'a largely solitary act'. It deprives the writer of a real situational context, audience, and immediate feedback. Thus, the writer is compelled to assume the roles of the readers and predict the readers' perception, views, and expectations. Ong (1987) in his article 'Literacy and Orality in Our Times' clearly articulates the solitary act of writing and the psychological implications it has on the writer.

The writer has also to anticipate all the connections which are needed by a particular audience of readers. In fictional or other narrative writing this is an exceedingly intricate and elusive business. In expository writing it is difficult, too ... There are no live persons facing the writer to clarify his thinking by their reactions. There is no feedback. There are no auditors to look pleased or