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EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF WRITING SKILLS TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

In this globalisation era, communication plays a dominant role in all fields. Language is the primary key for communication and communication is almost impossible without the presence of a language. Even if it is possible to communicate through signs and gestures, it does not fulfill the desires of the human beings completely. Moreover, language is a weapon in communicating human's ideas, thoughts and feelings to the other fellow human beings. Hence, humans learn language skills in order to keep their relationship with others. To learn a language, humans need to learn the skills of that particular language. To learn a foreign or second language such as English also, the learners have to learn all the skills of it to prove themselves as good communicators. Among the four language skills, the English language learners (ELLs) find it difficult to acquire writing skills than the other three skills, i.e. listening, speaking and reading. As writing involves a lot of practice due to the complexity of its phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic structures, EFL/ESL teachers have to think of implementing alternate methods in their classrooms in order to develop their ELLs' writing skills. Therefore, the teachers have to introduce various strategies and novel techniques and approaches to enhance the writing skills of the ELLs.

This paper focuses mainly on teaching effective writing skills to the English language learners. First of all, this paper discusses the importance of English as an international language. Later, this paper lays emphasis on the importance of language skills that are needed for the ELLs to develop their communication skills in English. Furthermore, this paper mainly focuses on the importance of the writing skills of the English language. Then this paper also discloses the advantages of writing skills for the ELLs. After that, it also thoroughly discusses the effective teaching of writing skills for the ELLs. Finally, this paper also gives some valuable suggestions to both the teachers of English and the ELLs to develop their teaching and learning writing skills.

Key words: ELLs (English language learners), language skills, latest techniques and approaches, strategies, teachers, writing skills.

Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed the wonderful vicissitudes that are taking place due to the dawn of innovations in technology. It resulted in tremendous changes in the field of communication system also. To communicate well with humans, one must learn a language systematically. Moreover, human beings ought to get mastery over all the four skills of a language in order to communicate with the fellow beings in the society. Furthermore, to accomplish the goals and objectives of their tasks, people have to learn a language with a lot of concentration, dedication, devotion and determination. In learning a language thoroughly, people need to learn all the four skills of the language, LSRW, i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing with utmost care and concentration. There is a need to learn all these four skills since they play a vital role in communication. Since communication plays a key role in getting progress tremendously in each and every field, the people in the present society try to learn all the four skills by paying more attention to them. So, after realizing the importance of the communication in developing their career as well as their bright future, they have been giving more importance to the language skills and try to acquire them by putting more efforts. Therefore, the learners of a language have to work hard to achieve the desired results.

The Importance of English as an International Language

According to the recent statistics, there are approximately 6500 spoken languages in the world today and nearly 2000 among these languages have fewer than 1000 speakers. Among all these 6500 spoken languages, Mandarin, the Chinese language, is the most popular language in the world with 1,213,000,000 speakers. Among 7.5 billion inhabitants, 20 percent of the population on the Earth, i.e., 1.5 billion people speak English. Among them, 360 million people speak English as their first language, whereas, the remaining people are the non-native speakers of English. English is the only language which is widely spoken all over the world and it is the most commonly studied foreign language in the world. It is the language used for various purposes such as business, trade and commerce, international relationships, higher education, employment, internet, travel and tourism, scientific research, engineering and technology and so on. More than 85 percent of the scientific research is being done in English and most of the higher education books are available in English. The most published international newspapers are in English and a majority of the Hollywood movies are made in English. Furthermore, a majority of children's cartoons and games are designed in English. Also, a majority of students learn English in order to continue their higher education in foreign countries. English is the basic language that is used for internet purposes. In view of these reasons, English has been widely used for all purposes throughout the world.

The importance of Language Skills

English, being an international language, is spoken by a majority of people around the globe and it is the language spoken in all parts of the world. According to 2015 statistics, English serves as an official language of 67 sovereign states and 27 non-sovereign entities. Moreover; many country subdivisions have also declared English as an official language either at a regional level or at a local level. The majority of the former territories of the British Empire have English as an official language. English seems to be the *de facto* 'global' language of the late twentieth and the first few years of the 21st century. Hence, there is a need not only to learn English to communicate well with the people all over the world but also to obtain a good progress in all the fields.

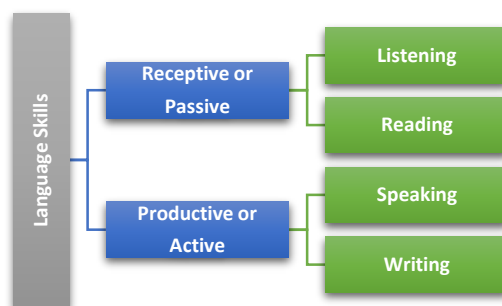


Fig: The Four Language Skills of English

Since learning English language needs more practice and hard work, the English language learners (ELLs) should concentrate more on gaining knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structure of it. In order to communicate well in English, the ELLs have to acquire all the four skills of the English language, viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among these four skills, listening and reading are receptive or passive skills, whereas, speaking and writing are productive or active skills. Listening and reading are called receptive or passive skills since the ELLs merely receive and understand these skills and they never produce them to perform these skills. On the other hand, writing and speaking are productive or active skills since the ELLs ought to produce the language using these two skills. Furthermore, speaking and writing are more visible to the others and they are also more controlled and guided activities where the primary focus of these two skills is laid on accuracy. It is a known fact that the ELLs feel more comfortable while speaking in their mother tongue, but their communication becomes apparent while they are speaking the foreign or second language. While learning English also, the same scenario is reflects on the ELLs. They face various problems in leaning the basic skills of the English language. Therefore, there is a need to motivate the ELLs properly to learn the English language in a congenial atmosphere. As teachers are the pioneers in motivating and inspiring the ELLs in learning the required skills of the English language, they should always try to introduce various new strategies, techniques and approaches in their classrooms. As a result, the ELLs participate actively in the learning process. In this regard, the teachers of English should always concentrate more on the language skills so that the ELLs practise them regularly to get more command over these four skills. Therefore, the ELLs have to pay more attention on these skills in order to develop their oral as well as written communication skills.

Among these four language skills, each and every skill is given more importance and the ELLs should never ignore any of these since they are interlinked and each skill has its own importance. The learners initially acquire the listening skills while learning any language and the same case is applied to learning the English language also. Listening, according to Hornby, means, "To pay attention to somebody/something that you can hear". The main problem that the ELLs face while learning the listening skill is that they unnecessarily try to understand the meaning of each and every word of the sentence and they cannot get the meaning of the message properly. Therefore, the ELLs are advised to understand and grasp the content words that are more important and also ignore the unnecessary words so that they will understand the content of the sentence that is spoken. In order to learn the pronunciation of English, the teachers should always encourage the ELLs to pay more attention on the sounds of English. Furthermore, the teachers of English should adopt different new techniques, methods, approaches and strategies to involve the learners in learning the listening skills of English. As everyone is used to listening skills since his/her birth, they naturally enjoy listening to the speeches, dialogues and conversations that take place around them. The teachers should also play some cartoon channels in English to develop their listening skills. Since listening skills lay a foundation to learn the other three skills, the teachers should introduce these skills using various strategies, approaches and techniques in their regular English classrooms in order to improve the listening skills of the ELLs.

The most difficult skill in English for the ELLs is speaking since they have to perform them in real situations. In the real conversations, the ELLs are supposed to give a proper response to the speaker or speakers with whom they are speaking. As the listeners have to give an immediate response to the speaker(s), the ELLs must have good command over both vocabulary as well as grammatical structures of the English language. Spoken language is so important since language merely remains as a script without oral communication. The ELLs cannot communicate with anyone without getting mastery over vocabulary and grammar. So, the ELLs have to practise speaking in English both in and outside of the classrooms to have more speaking practice on real life situations. At the same time, the teachers should involve the learners in group and pair activities by creating different situations that are more useful to converse with others in their lifetime. Moreover, speaking is the activity that is used more frequently than the other skills. In this regard, Rivers (1978) says, "Speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing". We can also observe that we speak more than that of we read, write and listen. Hence, it is more appropriate for the teachers of English to concentrate more on speaking skills by adopting various strategies, techniques and approaches in the English classrooms.

Though reading is a receptive or passive skill, it is more important for the ELLs to improve their spelling, vocabulary, grammar, writing and even reading skills. By reading extensively in English, the structures of English will fill be fixed in the minds of the learners forever and the learners produce the same type of sentences every now and then while they speak to the others. With the techniques of skimming and scanning, the learners will certainly develop not only their reading skills but also grasp the matter within no time. Furthermore, it increases the knowledge of the learners in understanding various types of jargons and texts and also promotes them to learn new vocabulary items. Once the learners habituate to read the text very fast, they will certainly do well in both speaking and writing tasks as well. When the teachers find that the learners feel bored of the routine material, they should immediately switch to some authentic materials that create more interest among the learners. In this regard, the teachers should adopt some useful and interesting material for the learners from various authentic sources like newspapers, journals, magazines, story books and comics so that the ELLs will definitely involve in the given tasks and improve their reading skills enormously. Also, the teachers should encourage them to read additional materials that create more fun and entertainment for them. The teachers should also encourage the ELLs to read moral stories and some short stories that are closely related to their lives. As a result, the ELLs involve more actively in the given tasks and also develop their imagination and critical thinking. Therefore, the teachers of English should always motivate the ELLs to read more stories and interesting topics that are related to their lives in order to develop their reading skills efficiently.

Writing is the most difficult skill among the four language skills for many learners of ESL/EFL learners because of its complexity in spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical structure. There is no one to one relation between spelling and pronunciation of the words in English. Since writing is considered the productive skill, the ELLs find it more complex skill. While the ELLs start writing, they have to follow two important features of writing, i.e., coherence and organization. In this regard, the teachers of English should always teach the learners how to write paragraphs and essays with good coherence and proper organization. Moreover, the teachers should also divide the classroom into small groups to perform the tasks related to writing. It is the duty of the teachers to motivate the learners to participate in writing activities. For this purpose, the teachers have to start the writing tasks from sentence to paragraph and paragraph to essay levels and they should always act as facilitators to help the ELLs whenever they feel that the task is quite difficult. As a result, the ELLs find it easy to finish the given assignments or tasks perfectly by doing them in the form of groups. Therefore, the teachers should always encourage the ELLs to do the given tasks collaboratively or cooperatively in groups since every ELL participates very actively and contributes something to the given tasks.

The advantages of Writing Skills for ELLs

Writing has many advantages for both individual and group ELLs. Writing develops the learners' critical thinking and they will be able to stockpile their ideas. It also helps them recover their ideas by bringing back their old and almost forgotten memories. It also clears their mind and makes them to feel the need to vent and speaks their minds in order to get their point across. It also helps the ELLs analyze things and look at them from a different point of view and the ELLs will be able to draw parallels between situations and fictional events and those that happened in their real life. The ELLs also improve their verbal as well as written skills and while writing, the ELLs carefully select the right vocabulary and grammatical structure. Moreover, the ELLs' writing will be more elegant, concise and eloquent than their actual speech since they have enough time to think and select the appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structure. The following are the advantages of writing skills for the ELLs.

- To make use of the active as well as the passive vocabulary in the learners' writing.
- To enable the learners to use figures of speech, idioms and phrases appropriately.
- To have good command over vocabulary items and grammatical structures.
- To improve the learners to learn how to write personal and official letters.
- To encourage the learners to start writing a topic sentence of a paragraph.
- To encourage the learners to use idiomatic expressions in their writing.
- To cultivate the learners to improve their writing for various contexts.

- To develop the learners to prepare their resumes or CVs attractively.
- To learn the linking devices while writing paragraphs and essays.
- To work in groups with their peers to develop their writing skills.
- To prepare the learners to make summaries of the given text.
- To understand and comprehend huge paragraphs and essays.
- To promote the learners' analytical and rational thinking.
- To enhance their paragraph writing skills enormously.
- To write essays with good coherence in their writing.
- To prepare the learners to write for different jargons.
- To help the learners recollect their past memories.
- To develop the learners' critical thinking skills.
- To enhance the learners' note-taking skills.
- To develop the learners in writing reports.
- To improve the spelling skills of the learners.
- To prepare the learners to write productive essays.
- To rearrange the sentences to make a good paragraph.
- To develop the learners' imagination in writing fictions.
- To teach them how to respond to the mails and messages.
- To develop the learners to maintain the balance of the writing.
- To enhance the learners to improve their verbal and writing skills.
- To note down the important points to save for the future purpose.
- To develop note-making skills while listening to a speech or a lecture.
- To answer the questions accurately in the routine and competitive exams.
- To prepare the learners to write stories to create interest among the readers.
- To improve their story writing skills by using some pictures or picture strips.
- To prepare the learners to perform well in their competitive exams and interviews.
- To help the learners analyze things and look at them from a different point of view.
- To develop the learners' confidence in writing sentences, paragraphs and even essays.
- To enable the learners to be more eloquent, concise and elegant than their actual speech.

Since there are several advantages of writing skills for the ELLs, the teachers of English should allot more time on writing skills and should adopt various innovative ways to attract them towards learning the techniques and mechanism underlying the writing skills.

Effective Teaching of Writing Skills to ELLs

It is a known fact that teaching writing skills is one of the complex procedures for the English language teachers. Furthermore, it is also difficult for the learners to get good command over writing skills because of its complexity in spelling, grammatical structure, usage, coherence, organization and so on. As Rao P. S. (2019) says, "The teachers should understand the level of the students and try to adopt relevant teaching strategies of improving their writing skills that are more suitable for them. Moreover, the tasks that they choose for this purpose should be well-known to the ELLs and they should create interest among the learners". Therefore, the teachers should always think of alternative methods, techniques and approaches to present them in the classrooms in order to make the learners understand the skills properly. For this purpose, the teachers should always adopt simple, useful and needful materials for the learners that create more interest among them. Moreover, the teachers should simplify the complex topics and present them in their classrooms. In this process, the teachers should follow certain techniques that involve the learners more on writing skills.

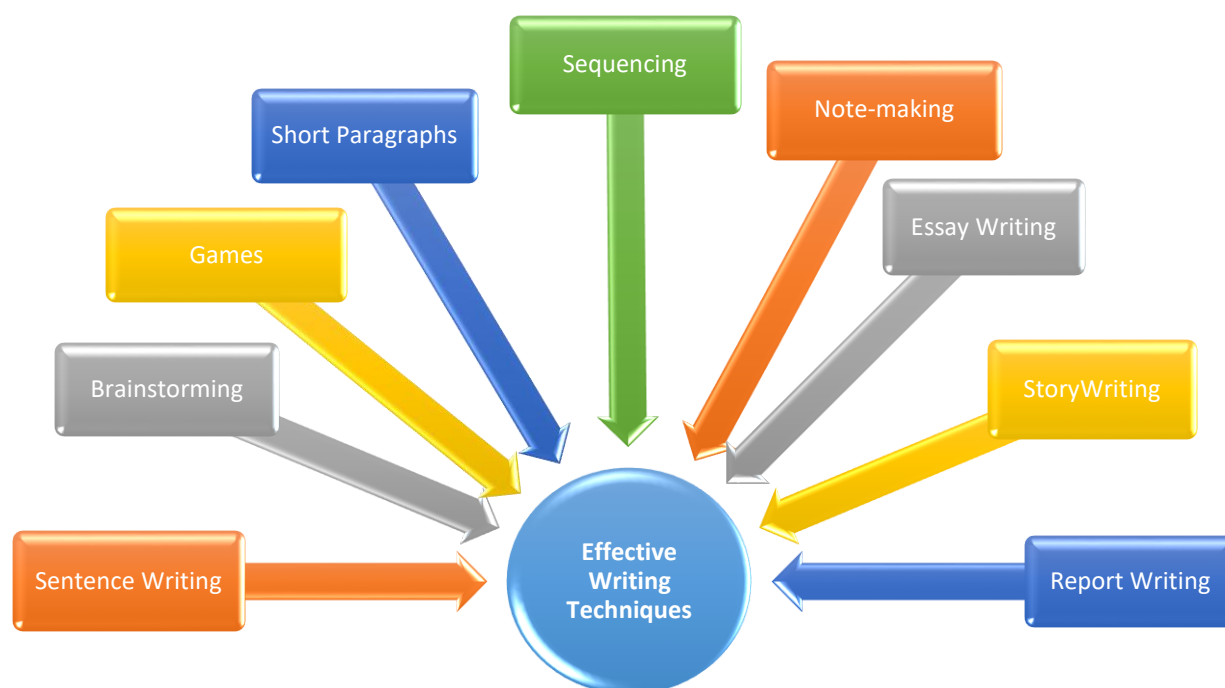


Fig. Effective Writing Techniques to Develop the ELLs' Writing Skills

As writing is a skill that is acquired by constant practice, the teachers should always motivate the ELLs by introducing the topics by adopting new techniques, methods and approaches in the teaching of writing skills. So, the teachers have to start their teaching from word level as spelling plays a key role in developing the ELLs' writing skills. Therefore, the teachers have to adopt various techniques such as oral practice and choral practice both individually and in groups in the classrooms so that the ELLs can have more practice on spelling. In this context, the teachers should conduct oral as well as written quizzes on spelling and also conduct some word games that develop the ELLs' spelling. Then, the teachers should go on to the sentence level and teach them different structures from simple to complex according to the level of the ELLs. At this level, the teachers can introduce some games on the formation of sentences such as rearranging the words. Then the teachers can also have oral practice of the sentences in groups so that the ELLs learn the underlying structure of the sentences. Later, the teachers can also adopt the technique of brainstorming since the ELLs can produce as many sentences as possible through conducting these sessions. Here, the teachers should give them a topic known to the ELLs and motivate them to contribute some sentences related to the topic. Indeed, these brainstorming sessions will be very useful for the ELLs to develop their writing skills as there is no hard and fast rule to supply a specific sentence. So the learners will get an opportunity for their ideas freely, frankly and independently in the form of writing in the classrooms. Since the ELLs can write any sentence whether it is appropriate to the topic or not, they feel free to do it in a learner-friendly atmosphere. Therefore, the teachers should introduce more brainstorming activities in the classrooms so that the ELLs participate in the activities very actively and produce more and more sentences related to the topic given to them.

Once the teachers find that the ELLs get good command over constructing sentences on their own, they can immediately proceed to the paragraph level. Here, the teachers should always introduce well-known and familiar topics for the students so that they will try to work on their own to complete the given tasks. In teaching the ELLs how to write a paragraph, first of all, the teachers should teach them the techniques involved in it. Hence, the teachers should teach them the basic principles of writing a paragraph such as order, coherence and relevance and above all, the topic sentence and the concluding sentence. Furthermore, the teachers should also teach them how to incorporate linking devices in the paragraph to make it more attractive and meaningful. After that, the teachers should train the ELLs in rearranging the jumbled sentences into an order, i.e. sequencing. The teachers have to give scrambled sentences to the ELLs and ask them to put in the proper order to make the paragraph more sense. These types of activities certainly improve the ELLs'

logical thinking and they participate with higher motivation. It results in learning how to unscramble the sentences to arrange the sentences in a logical sequence to make it a meaningful paragraph.

Another important technique to develop the ELLs' writing skills is note-making. Through note-making technique, the teachers initially help the ELLs to find out the important points of the given text. In this process, the ELLs go through the given text carefully twice or three times and underline the important points in their first reading. Then the ELLs eliminate some unimportant ones among them when they read the text for the second time and in their third reading, they come to a conclusion and make notes of the important points. This technique develops the ELLs to make short notes of the given text with all important points. So, there is no need for the ELLs to read the whole text and just by reading the important points only they can grasp the complete text. Once the ELLs are trained well in paragraph writing, sequencing and note-making, then the teachers can proceed to essay writing which is more important in developing their academic career. While teaching the techniques of writing the essays, the teachers should concentrate on different types of essays as there is no one-to-one relationship among them. So, the teachers should concentrate more on the techniques of writing each type of essay and teach the students in a way that they can understand all the rules clearly. Moreover, the teachers should select the titles of the essays that are catchy and easily understood by the ELLs. Initially, the teachers should help the ELLs get the main points of each paragraph so that they will develop the skills of writing essays gradually on their own.

Then the ELLs are encouraged to write small stories that they are familiar with. In order to develop the story-writing skills of the ELLs, the teachers should go on telling them some moral and historical stories according to the interests of the learners. Moreover, the teachers should encourage the ELLs to translate the stories of their mother tongue by forming groups and ask them to work collaboratively. As a result, the ELLs can take part in these tasks very actively and contribute something to complete the story. Another technique that the teachers can follow to develop their story writing skills is showing some pictures or picture strips so that the ELLs can make miracles of it. The last but not the least technique to develop the writing skills of the ELLs is report writing. A report is a written document of something that somebody has seen, observed, investigated, done or heard. Since it is a systematic, logical, well-organised presentation of both facts and findings of an event or incident that happened somewhere else, the writer of the report takes all the points in consideration and writes a detailed report on it. Even though it seems to be very simple, there is more complexity in presenting the report. Therefore, the teachers should train the ELLs by working on various sample reports and ask them to rewrite the same reports on their own. Initially, the teachers should start with weather reports, article report, speech report, debate report, business report and so on. The main difference between an essay and a report is that an essay always presents arguments and reasoning whereas a report presents only the facts. Therefore, the teachers of English should always try to involve the ELLs in groups so that they can write good reports on their favourite sport, movie, book, story, cartoon or an incident to improve their writing skills efficaciously.

As the ELLs find many problems in writing such as spelling, grammatical structures, logical order, coherence, organisation and so on, it is the responsibility of the teachers to prepare the learners to overcome these problems by adopting the latest techniques, methods and approaches. At the same time, it is apt to quote Rao, P. S. (2019), "The ELLs have to pay more attention and put more emphasis on writing skills so they can surely master them. As a result, writing becomes very easy for the learners and they learn it with more interest and it will be very useful for them in attaining good results". Furthermore, Rao, P. S. (2017b) states, "As writing is the most difficult skill to acquire for the EFL/ESL learners, the teachers should concentrate more on their learners' writing skills by involving them in a variety of activities. Therefore, the teachers are supposed to take the EFL/ESL learners' interests and needs in consideration so that the learners' involvement in the given writing task increases. Moreover, the EFL/ESL learners participate in the tasks very actively and they will produce qualitative and productive results in their English writing skills". Therefore, the teachers of English should think innovatively to motivate the ELLs towards learning all the techniques of writing skills so that they will develop their skills in writing English enormously.

Conclusion

In this paper, an attempt has been made to bring out the techniques of teaching effective writing skills to the ELLs. First of all, this paper has discussed the importance of English as an international language. Later, this paper has laid emphasis on the importance of language skills that are needed for ELLs to develop their communication skills in English. Furthermore, this paper has mainly focused on the importance of the writing skills of the English language. Then this paper has also disclosed the advantages of writing skills for the ELLs. After that, it has also thoroughly discussed the effective teaching of writing skills for the ELLs. Finally, this paper has also given some valuable suggestions to both the teachers of English and the ELLs to develop their teaching and learning writing skills efficiently.

Since writing is considered the most difficult skill to acquire for the ELLs, the teachers of English should think of appropriate methods and latest techniques in English language teaching and develop the writing skills of the ELLs. As Rao, P. S. (2017a) asserts, "The teachers have to make the ELLs understand the techniques of writing English and demonstrate them by giving some important and interesting topics as examples. While teaching the writing skills in ELL environment, the teachers have to choose the topics that are more easier and interesting ones so that the learners feel happier and try to concentrate more on their learning". The teachers should always prepare their teaching materials by taking the interests and needs of the ELLs in consideration and try to give the writing tasks to the ELLs by adopting collaborative learning approach. So the learners will get a chance to discuss with their peers and contribute something to it which is more valuable to accomplish the given writing tasks or assignments. Here, the teachers act as facilitators and help the learners whenever they find any kind of difficulty in completing the given work. Moreover, the ELLs also work collectively with mutual cooperation and it results in getting the desired results. In this regard, the teachers of English should always encourage the learners to perform the writing tasks in pairs or group in order to achieve the productive outcome.

Moreover, the English teachers have to adopt some more new techniques to improve the EFL/ESL learners' writing skills. When the teachers give a certain writing task to the learners, they have to suggest the learners how to express ideas and organize the given task. The teachers have to guide the learners with the process of writing that needs to divide the writing activity into several stages where each activity involves sub-skills in doing this process. Therefore, the teachers have to guide the learners properly in order to involve them in the activities with a lot of motivation and encouragement.

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