Jerry was the kind of guy who was always in a good mood and always had something positive to say. When someone asked him how he was doing, he would reply, “Things just can't be better!”

One day I asked him, “I don't get it! How do you stay positive all the time?” Jerry replied with a smile, “Each morning, I wake up and tell myself, 'Jerry, you can choose to be in a good mood, or you can choose to be in a bad mood.' I choose to be in a good mood. Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be weighed down by it and look on myself as a victim, or I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it.”

“Yeah, right, but it's not always that easy, is it?” I protested.

Several years later, I heard that Jerry did something very dangerous in the restaurant business: he left the back door open one morning and was held up at gunpoint by three armed robbers. While he was trying to open the safe, Jerry was so nervous that his hands slipped off the combination lock. The robbers panicked and shot him. Luckily, Jerry was found in time and rushed to the local hospital immediately. After an eighteen-hour operation and weeks in intensive care, Jerry was released from the hospital with fragments of the bullets still in his body.

I saw Jerry about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he answered, “Things just can't be better! Wanna see my scars?” I declined his offer and asked him what was going through his mind when the robbery took place. “I should have locked the back door. That was the first thing that went through my mind,” Jerry said. “Then, as I lay on the floor, I told myself I had two choices: I could choose to live, or I could choose to give up. I chose to live.”

“Weren't you scared? Did you lose consciousness?” I asked.

Jerry continued, “No, I didn't. I could hear the paramedics telling me I was going to be fine, but I got really scared when I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses in the emergency room. I read in their eyes, 'He's not gonna make it.' Then I knew I had to take action.”

“What did you do?” I asked.

“Well, there was a big, burly nurse shouting questions at me,” said Jerry. “She asked if I was allergic to anything. ‘Yes,’ I replied. Suddenly, everyone stopped working and waited for my further reply. Then I took a deep breath and yelled,
'Bullets!' Over their laughter, I told them, 'I have chosen to live. Don't operate on me as if I were dead!'

Jerry lived—thanks to the skills of his doctors as well as his amazing attitude. In a time when he could have chosen to give up, Jerry chose to be hopeful and live. I've learned from him that we have the choice to live our lives to the fullest every day. Attitude, after all, is everything.

Introduction

The concept of using short texts or excerpts as models from the work of good writers to teach students writing through reading is not new. However, it requires reconsidering how to make the teaching approaches effective.

Teaching writing is most effective if discussion about the reading materials precedes asking your students to write. The teacher provides and supports enough stimuli and feedback while the students spend time in deep thought, analyzing the texts. Before the students try to write, models can be used to help learn how to write.

Brainstorm before writing to collect ideas. During the brainstorming process, the teacher can ask their students to organize their ideas or concepts by means of some graphic organizers to present the relationships among these ideas. Once the students are used to it, you will find that it is quite productive.

Text Difficulty level:

- [ ] Elementary
- [ ] Intermediate
- [ ] Upper-Intermediate
- [ ] Advanced

Modes of writing: persuasion, character analysis, story organizer, narration, description, argumentation

Teaching focus: subjunctive mood, past tense

Teaching procedure:
1. Show the students the film "Forrest Gump" (1994) and discuss the movie.
2. Introduce some famous quotations about attitudes.
3. Guide the students to read through the text.
4. Ask the students to brainstorm with "graphic organizers" to analyze the contents and structures of the text.
5. Ask every student to think of one thing and talk about his attitude toward that thing.
Lesson Plan

I. Raising Students’ Awareness

Directions:
The teacher shows students the film “Forrest Gump (1994)” to help them discuss how attitude may change one’s fate. Then the teacher can ask students the following questions to help them realize the importance of attitude.

1. What do Forrest Gump and Jerry (the character in the textbook) share in common?
2. Have you had a frustrating or shocking experience? How did you react to that? Could you handle it better now?
3. Tell a story about yourself and show what you have learned from your bad experience.
4. What are the key factors of success? How would you rank them in terms of importance?

II. Presenting the Text

2.1 Famous Quotations about Attitudes
Adapted from Allen Klein’s “Winning Words-Quotations to Uplift, Inspire, Motivate and Delight.”

1. Change your thoughts and you change your world.
   — Norman Vincent Peale, American writer.
2. If you think you can do a thing or think your can’t do a thing, you’re right.
   — Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company.
3. The mind is its own place, and in itself, can make heaven of Hell, and a hell of Heaven.
   — John Milton, celebrated English poet and the author of “Paradise Lost”.
4. Watch your thoughts; they become words.
   Watch your words; they become actions.
   Watch your actions; they become habits.
   Watch your habits; they become character.
   Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.
   — Frank Outlaw, American writer.
5. We cannot choose the things that will happen to us. But we can choose the attitude we will take toward anything that happens. Success or failure depends on your attitude.
   — Alfred A. Montapert, American writer.
6. The greatest revolution of our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.
— William James, American psychologist and philosopher.
7. Remember happiness doesn’t depend upon who you are or what you have; it depends solely upon what you think.
— Dale Carnegie, American writer and the developer of famous courses in self-improvement, speaking, and interpersonal skills.
8. The meaning of things lies not in the things themselves but in our attitude towards them.
— Antoine de Saint-Exupery, the French writer of “The Little Prince.”
9. The greatest part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions and not on our circumstances.
— Martha Washington, the wife of George Washington.

2.2 Brainstorming with Graphic Organizer

Directions:

Brainstorming with graphic organizers, students should concentrate more on ideas. During this process, you will find that students have generated a lot of ideas, which need to be structured into a complete text.

First, divide the whole class into several groups and ask each group to discuss the main character “Jerry” about his Actions, Words, Feelings, and Looks. Then fill in the Character Map, and share the result with the whole class.
Character Map

**Action**

1. Each time he wakes up, he encourages himself.
2. Each time something bad happens, he chooses to learn from it.
3. When he was in the emergency room, he acted humorously.

**Words**

1. If I were any better, I would be twins.
2. I choose to be in a good mood.
3. I choose the positive side of life.
4. I am choosing to live.

**Feelings**

1. I can choose to be in a good or a bad mood.
2. I can choose to be a victim or to learn.
3. I can choose to accept complaints or point out the positive side.
4. I can choose to live or to die.

**Looks**

1. ALWAYS in a good mood.
2. ALWAYS have something positive to say.
Second, the teacher asks students to read the reading again and use the scanning strategy to find out the organization of the story. Ask students to find out about the introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and the resolution of the story by using the graphic organizer.

**Story Organizer**
Jerry was the kind of guy who was always in a good mood and always had something positive to say.

Every time someone comes to complain, Jerry chooses to point out the positive side of life.

Jerry survived because of his amazing attitude.

Jerry chose to live and played a joke with doctors and nurses to be treated as a living person.

Jerry knew that he had two choices: to live or to die.

He chose to live and made the doctor him that way.

Jerry was shot by robbers and seriously injured.

Jerry was held up by 3 robbers and was shot by them. He almost lost his life.

Introduction/Exposition

Characters

Jerry and Narrator

Setting

Restaurant

Hospital

Rising Action

Problem/Conflict

Jenny was shot by robbers and seriously injured.

Climax

Falling Action

Solution

Jerry chose to live and played a joke with doctors and nurses to be treated as a living person.

Resolution

Jerry survived because of his amazing attitude.
III. Bridging Practice to Writing

3.1 Learn to develop your attitude

Directions:
Read the following story and try to analyze it by using the above story organizer.
Write down Introduction, Rising action, Climax, Falling action, and Resolution.
Give the story a title and discuss the key message that the speaker wants to convey.

When I was 17, I read a quote: "If you live each day as if it were your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help myself make the big choices in life. Because almost everything - all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important.

About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumor on my pancreas. I didn't even know what a pancreas was. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months. My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for preparing to die.

I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that evening I had a biopsy, where they stuck an endoscope down my throat, through my stomach and into my intestines, put a needle into my pancreas and got a few cells from the tumor. I was sedated, but my wife, who was there, told me that when they viewed the cells under a microscope the doctors started crying because it turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery. I had the surgery and I'm fine now.

This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope it's the closest I
get for a few more decades. Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept.

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don’t want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. Someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.

Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most importantly, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

3.2 Brainstorming: Look at the bright side of life.

Directions:
Think about the “two choices” after Jerry was shot by the robbers. Imagine the difficulties and frustrations people may encounter in everyday life. Try to write them down and write down the positive and the negative solutions.
Positive or Negative?

T-Chart

Difficulties and Frustrations:

Positive

Negative
IV. Students’ Works

4.1 Writing
Directions:
Write a one-hundred-word essay to describe your attitude toward learning, life, or anything else.

＊Student’s work sample one : 307

游捷名

My Attitude Towards Life and Death

There are lots of stories describing how emperors and wizards search for the methods for eternal life. These stories show the people’s fear for death because we never know where our souls may go after leaving our bodies. And in the end, of course, no one found the method for eternal life. Death is unavoidable.

In the story of The Lord of The Rings written by J.R.R. Tolkien, the Elves were immortal while the Men were doomed to die. However, death was a “gift” given to Men by Valar (the Gods of Middle Earth) so that one day the Men could leave the Middle Earth while the Elves had no choice but to live with the sadness of Middle Earth.

What Tolkien emphasized is: there is no need to fear death. What we should do is to live meaningfully at the present because there are much more wonderful things in this world that worth fighting for. Somebody once said, “Yesterday is
history; tomorrow is mystery; today is a gift. That's why it is called the 'present"'. Since we know neither the future nor when we will die, we should grab the present in our hands, and enjoy living in it.

＊Student’s work sample two : 307 黃博鈺

My Attitude Toward Civilization

When people discovered fire, civilization began. Fire can bring light, cook, and scare the beasts away. It can help people to live a better life. But fire also can burn the house. Fire is also a dangerous thing for us. So how to use fire is important. If it is properly used, it can help us; but if it isn’t, it will also hurt us. And civilization is the same.

Today, we have highly-developed civilization. We have computers, cars, and lots of modern things in our world which can’t be found in the past world. They bring us not only more comfortable life but a lot of problems. For example, factories and cars produce a lot of CO2, which makes the temperature of the earth much higher than before. And in order to get more fuel and more paper, we cut a lot of wood, which makes the animals lose their habitats.

So, if we develop our civilization well, it can help us; otherwise, it will destroy our environment and our highly-developed civilization and even all the people in the world. So what is our future? Our attitude decides everything.

4.2 Speech Contest

Directions:
Prepare a 2-minute English speech on the topic “One thing I would like to change about _____, and how I would do it.” Tell people a bad phenomenon and explain the reasons behind it, and what one can do to make it better. Ask the students to use graphic organizers to analyze their own work in terms of persuasion.

＊Student’s work sample three : 308 鄒奕笙

One Thing I’d Like to Change About My School
And How I Would Do It

In order to maintain a near-perfect academic environment, even the slightest details matter. There are several elements that need to be taken into consideration when it comes to changing a school. Yet what I consider the most essential in all those elements is to view the topic from a student’s point of view. What can we do to make them more comfortable in this atmosphere? How do we improve? Most important of all, what is it that they lack? I give you one answer: Attitude.

Over the years, Chien Kuo students have been famous for our outstanding
performances in academics and creativity. Supposedly, the future should look bright and full of opportunities for the students. Yet the rises in the number of student suicide these years have caught the public’s attention. Up to five suicide incidents have occurred during my stay in CK. What’s been triggering these events? The problem lies within.

Being the center of attention, Chien Kuo students expect a lot out of themselves. The pressure of accomplishing high goals has put the students into a state where there’s no room for failure. This is the attitude that needs to be altered.

Education is a rather important stage of our life. Students have been given the idea that once you get into a good university, it’s paradise. It would seem odd to them that life will still go on like they always have been in high school. But the truth is that along will be more problems, more obstacles, and more “tests”.

Nobody is perfect. Everyone falls once in a while. The key is not on how hard you fall but how much effort you make to get back up again. American writer Denis Waitely once said, “Failure is our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is delay, not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead end. Failure is something we can avoid by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing.” When you fall, learn to embrace it, to get as much as you can out of the experience. Scores and transcripts come and go but our attitude towards the world will always be there for the rest of our life. And that’s exactly what the students need to understand.

I stood in the middle of the school campus while preparing for the material on this speech. I looked around for something that I thought could be changed. I didn’t have any answers until I spot a student limping towards the library with a chunk of notebooks and papers in arm and the way he was holding them was as if they worry him more than his feet does. School facilities will progress within time. Rules or regulations can always be bent under different circumstances. But the way we approach studies will remain the same. You instill a right attitude in a school successfully, when you truly make a difference. I would like to do whatever I can to influence the students around me and motivate them into reconsidering the way they look at their life because I’m well aware of the fact that if you want to make a meaningful change, you start with attitude.
V. Conclusion

Integrated reading-writing instructional approaches are based on the understanding of how the reading and writing processes are connected and how the roles of the reader and writer are interrelated. Student participation in activities promotes the development of both reading and writing skills, which leads to effective writing.