**Methods of Teaching and Evaluating Writing**

**Introduction:**

Previous chapters focus on analyzing mistakes committed by Palestinian Arab college students from Israel at different levels, starting from the sentence level and ending with research papers. However, the focus of this chapter is on writing instruction and evaluation, aiming to highlight the shortcomings of traditional teaching methods for improving college students’ writing in general and Arabs in specific and to provide examples of effective methods of instruction that make a difference in students’ attitudes and performance, helping them to overcome their difficulties in writing in English.

Classroom instruction plays an important role in dealing with errors. Throughout the history of English as a second/ foreign writing instruction, teachers employed different approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques that matched with the different theories to help EFL learners write well in English. Many scholars attribute difficulties EFL college students to ineffective instruction in general (Chockwe, 2013 and Young, 2010) and Arab EFL students in specific (Almari & Adawi, 2021; Alzamil, 2020; Anwar & Ahmed, 2016; and Ezza, 2010). The discussion in Chapter 2 also shows that the emphasis of writing instruction for many years has been on the product rather than the process itself. Therefore, writing instructors emphasized grammar and punctuation rather than communicative aspects of writing and genres (Alkubaidi, 2019).

The content of Chapter 7 shows how cultural differences between English and Arabic pose another challenge for Arab students writing in English, which were neglected for many years. To achieve cross-cultural competence, Jiang (2010) believes that the traditional teaching method that the teachers employ, which requires students recite before the examinations should be changed. In addition, since language and culture are inseparable and interdependent, cultural aspects should be considered in EFL programs, including differences in thinking patterns, urging them to use reasoning while writing in English (Ye, 2013) because insufficient training and knowledge might pose another obstacle for Arab-heritage writers to communicate effectively in English.

A historical review of employed teaching methods shows that in the 1960s, the product approach was dominant in writing programs and classes, which was known in the literature as the current-traditional rhetoric (Ezza (2010). This writing theory differs from its predecessor, controlled composition, in terms of considering writing at the discourse level, particularly emphasizing the paragraph and its components. The product approach was criticized in the 1980s since writing stages were not considered. While Freedman et al. (1983) described it as “pedagogically weak” (p. 181), Zamel (1983) claimed that the product approach was ‘‘prescriptive, formulaic, and overtly concerned with correctness” (p. 165). Krashen (1984) also harshly criticized the product approach claimed that even though the student-writer is “able to master all the rules of punctuation, spelling, grammar, and style that linguists have discovered and described”, s/he would never be competent in writing (p. 25).

Chokwe (2013) adds other factors that cause poor academic writing skills among students such as the ineffectiveness of teaching writing at schools, socio-economic backgrounds, and insufficient amount of reading. The transition from high school to college poses another difficulty to students (Yong, 2010) because there is a mismatch between the acquired L2 writing skills in high school and the required level in university courses (Mohammed & Alshenqeeti, 2020).

According to Brown (1994), teachers focus on the final piece of writing and measure it against the criteria of vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical considerations such as spelling and punctuation. Al-Zubaidi (2012) adds to the literature the experience of international students in producing academic texts in English, including Arab students, in Malaysian universities that adopt English as a medium of instruction, claiming that their difficulties stem from their limited L2 proficiency and the influence of prior academic culture, and their mother tongue**.**

 Dhanya & Alamelu (2019) conducted a study to investigate factors that influence the acquisition of writing skills; they asked the students about the problems they encountered in writing and factors that might have a positive impact on their performance in writing. Three themes emerged from the analysis of students’ responses: lack of reading and writing practice (41.47%), lack of ideas (33.33%), and lack of self-confidence (12%). These results are in line with Yaakob’s (2014) who showed some factors that hinder the development of writing skills such as the lack of reading (50%), writing practice (33.33%), and teacher assistance (16.67%).

Investigating the challenges that Arab student teachers encounter in EFL writing in terms of employing appropriate teaching methods, sufficient teaching and time, and providing feedback started to have momentum lately in Saudi Arabia (Almari & Adawi, 2021). Results of research studies conducted by Anwar & Ahmed (2016), Gulzar et al. (2017), Ketabi (2015) and Tseng (2018) attributed the difficulties encountered by Saudi students stemming from adopting ineffective methods of teaching and strategies, allocating insufficient time for error correction, and providing constructive feedback for students when they work individually or collaboratively in groups. Alzamil (2020) recommended revising the writing courses’ materials and teaching methods to help Saudi students overcome their difficulties in writing in English and write better

To help students deal with challenges and writing difficulties, Anwar & Ahmed (2016) highlight the significance of teaching methods and assessment, relating it to the teachers’ employed strategies. Others recommend employing different writing techniques of assessment such as using dictation, having instructor’s correction, providing feedback, being self-corrected, peer-editing, using journals and submitting portfolios (Gulzar et al., 2017; Ketabi, 2015; Sharma, 2019; Tseng, 2018) and using Writing Scoring Rubrics (WSRs) for creating effective correction criteria and practicing self-assessment before submitting the writing tasks(Larkin, 2015and Ningsih, 2016).

In addition, many learners think that the writing process causes anxiety, which urges many scholars and instructors to suggest practical treatment (Raja & Zahid, 2013), adopts different strategies (Herdi, 2015) and techniques (Gorospe & Rayton, 2022) such as working in groups and creating a community of learners, aiming to help their students overcome their writing anxiety. Writing learners would do better in writing when they work collaboratively, especially in class (Dhanya & Alamelu, 2019). Other factors have a negative impact on the fluency and accuracy of the students’ texts such as social media, lack of consistency of teachers’ feedback, and learners’ inability of analyzing and evaluating their work besides learning in large classes, where individuals hardy have their teachers’ attention (Pineteh, 2013).

In conclusion, classroom instruction plays an important role in dealing with errors. Therefore, there is a need for employing methods that are more effective and varying them to help EFL Arab learners write well in English. It is the teachers’ responsibility to adopt, modify or even develop remedial procedures and techniques to minimize the learners’ errors and elevate their level. Students should always be engaged and encouraged to do remedial exercises in order to improve their writing ability. Brief grammar rules may be essential to help students realize the errors that result from overgeneralization and wrong parallelism that mentioned in Chapter 2, citing Al-Buainain (2007). In addition, there is a need for addressing cultural differences between the L1 and L2 by contrasting texts, highlighting differences and practicing writing.

* 1. ***Adopting the process approach***

Due to the criticism against the product approach, there was a shift to the process approach. Unlike the product approach or the traditional approach, which deals with the production of parallel texts based on the models provided by the teacher, the process approach focuses mainly planning and drafting with less emphasis on the grammatical knowledge and the text structure. Advocates of this approach consider writing as an “explanatory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (Zamel, 1983, p. 165). According to Raimes (1983) “composing means expressing ideas, conveying meaning; composing means thinking” (216). As a result, accuracy is no longer the emphasis of writing instruction, and the main concern for classroom activities “would, therefore, be generating preliminary ideas, doing prewriting activities, outlining, getting started, producing first drafts, editing, revising, etc”. (Jordan, 1997, p.167). However,

Alodwan and Ibnian (2014) claim that Arab students show a real resistance to the planning stage. They are reluctant to engage in any pre-writing or planning activities, and most of them would
engage in drafting without a pre-designed outline. Even in exams, they tend not to use them
unless the teacher obliges them to do so.

The process approach emphasizes the process of writing itself, not the product (Sun & Feng, 2009). Thus, writers should be trained to constantly ask themselves how to write and how to get the writing started. Training should also include generating ideas for writing, thinking of the purpose and audience, and writing multiple drafts in order to present written products that express their own ideas. Teachers who use this approach give students time to develop ideas and get feedback on the content of what they write in their drafts because writing becomes a process of discovery for them as they discover new ideas and new language forms to express them. Students should be also engaged in pre-writing, planning, drafting, and post-writing activities and be given a greater responsibility for their own learning through making decisions about genre and choice of topics besides collaborating while writing.



Figure 1 from Venecia William’s online book-Chapter 2- Fundamentals of Business Communication 2020

Pre-writing as the first stage of the writing process precedes drafting, revising, editing and
publishing, which includes invention activities and arrangement activities (Mogahed, 2013). At this stage, writers may inquire, make an outline, explore ideas, brainstorm, write down notes or simply have a thought about the topic (Williams, 2020). They also gather information and explore ideas through engagement with different prewriting experiences. While invention includes different techniques for practicing prewriting activities such as brainstorming, freewriting, listing, clustering, interviewing, and looping, arrangement includes concept mapping and webbing. Starting the writing class with a free writing activity helps learners to think, and explore new ideas (Darling (2004). While clustering means associating ideas around a topic (Tomlinson, 1998), listing refers to putting ideas about a topic in a list and related ones in sub-lists (Mogahed, 2013). Interviewing is another pre-writing activity that helps learners learn more about a certain topic. Looping as a free writing activity happens when the writer tries to discover a topic for writing by writing freely for five to ten minutes (Mogahed, 2013).

However, revising does not happen automatically. Alodwan and Ibnian (2014) argue that when revising, students astonishingly continue to prefer teachers’ attention to surface errors until an advanced level (3rd year). They always focus on form in terms of grammar, spelling, and mechanics, neglect content, and never revise ideas although teachers do not stress language correctness.

To organize the content, concept mapping and webbing are graphic organizers. While the former includes putting a circle around the main idea and using lines to connect it with the details, the latter means connecting words or phrases to a concept or a topic. For example, the teacher places a topic in the middle of the board or on the computer’s screen, and learners add words, either nouns or verbs, and phrases to connect them to the topic. It helps learners visualize the connection between ideas (Bada, 1996).

 Composing is the second stage, which includes also drafting, which means students write the first draft including the information that has been gathered in the pre-writing stage. Revising follows to include thinking about organizing the content in a logical way. Williams (2020) encourages students to do that first, seeking help from colleagues or friends for reorganizing the content, warning students that it might be a frustrating experience since they may have to go back-and-forth searching for more information, rewriting the draft and revising it.

However, the process approach was attacked since it neglects the social-cultural factors of writing learners. Considering this criticism, more attention was paid to the social and cultural context of writing, focusing on the sociolinguistic and socio-cultural aspects of writing. Therefore, the communicative approach, the functional approach, and the genre approach were adopted. It is important to mention that the first two approaches are the same in essence, but different in terminology. However, the genre approach is “subsumed under the functional approach” (Ezza, 2010, p. 34).

Teachers’ responsibility is to adopt, modify or even develop remedial procedures and techniques that can minimize the learners’ errors and elevate their level of writing. Students should always be encouraged to do remedial exercises in order to improve their writing ability. For example, brief grammar rules may be essential to help students realize the errors that result from overgeneralization and wrong parallelism (Al-Buainain, 2007). Hunt et al. (2009) stress detailed instruction as one of the factors in effective teaching, which includes the teacher’s ability to explain exactly what students are expected to do and how they perform their tasks successfully. Similarly, Hall and Verplaetse (2000) argue that teachers can make classroom learning effective playing a crucial role in enhancing the proficiency of language learners by acting as motivators, providers of accurate language models and evaluators. In addition, the task of teaching is important in language learning because only a teacher can diagnose the learners’ needs and problems to consequently help them learn a language that matches these needs (Corbett, 2003). Therefore, teachers have to employ activities that bring about language learning. Writing instruction is one of the most demanding jobs for EFL writing instructors since it requires writing teachers to dedicate much time and invest efforts to assist students to write better in English (Salem & Abu Al Dyiar, 2014).

The interviewed teachers in Ahamed's research (2016) recommend diagnosing students' problems in academic writing for addressing them by providing many opportunities for practice in and out of class, employing cooperative teaching methods such as pair and group work. To improve writing competence among learners, these teachers think that students should access a variety of grammatical resources besides focusing on discourse features for writing cohesive texts. In addition, while writing students should use writing for expressing meaning and focus on the text as a whole rather than on individual sentences. To have adequate vocabulary items, there is a need to provide students with reading materials. Teachers should also respond to students' pieces of writing giving them immediate feedback and organizing their writing as a series of stages.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has grabbed the attention of ESL/EFL educators as a process-oriented approach to language teaching that focuses on communicative language teaching (Littlewood, 2004; Nunan, 2004; Richards, 2005), which requires learners to work cooperatively and to support each other in doing the task. It is an example of learning by doing, which aims to provide learners with skills to analyze their real world communicative needs (Long, 2015). In other words, it is experiential learning, which means that language learners learn through doing tasks, allowing implicit and incidental learning to occur. Learning is task-based, not text-based, which emphasizes mutual aid and cooperation among learners in collaborative methods such as pair and group work. Long adds that the philosophy of education underlying TBLT emphasizes the power of reasoning and inquiry and raises the challenges of implementing task-based pedagogy such as the influence of the first culture on language learners’ performance and lack of experience. Alqahtani & Elumalai (2020) note that language learners’ engagement with tasks promotes their confidence since they have many opportunities to practice language inside the classroom and have no fear of making mistakes once they begin to analyze the language. In addition, the learners used lexis, discourse markers, and organizational patterns, showing how a text should be understood during group work.

However, some language learners might be skeptical about the usefulness of task-based pedagogy since they perceive teachers as a source of knowledge who has the ultimate authority to dismiss it or they simply haven’t experienced such a pedagogy previously. In addition, others have been raised to believe that competition is the only way to advancement, not cooperation. Therefore, writing teachers should language learners with opportunities to practice this kind of pedagogy to realize its benefits.

The research study by Alqahtani & Elumalai (2020) investigated the analysis of lexical and cohesive ties usage in undergraduate students’ writing by applying a task-based language learning methodology to thirty-five students from an advanced ESL reading class at King Saud University, Arts College in Riyadh for 15 weeks. Analyzing the required four written passages show that the subjects improved their language abilities in grammar and vocabulary, especially in the discourse analysis passages. In addition, they learned more about structure, identifying, cause and effect, purpose and function. The authors recommended giving special attention to sentence structure, grammar, syntax, discourse markers, or connectives. They also reported that shy learners tend to become very anxious when they have to analyze a sentence/ clause in front of the whole class. Practice, planning, and encouragement can take care of these challenges.

Alward et al. (2012) examined the role ofexplicit instruction on the learners’ use of hedges and boosters in persuasive writing texts, selecting a persuasive task by forty third-year Yemini undergraduate students majoring in English at Sana’a University. While hedges such as *“might”* or *perhaps”* imply reluctance and withhold writer’s full commitment to proposition, boosters like *“in fact”* and *“definitely”* emphasize writer’s certainty in proposition (Hyland, 2015). Findings showed that prior instruction of hedges and boosters had a positive impact on the learners’ use of them. The participants of the experimental group improved their use of hedging and boosting significantly; in contrast, those of the control group did not.

Another recommended technique as part of the process approach is freewriting, which means jotting down ideas continuously for a set time from ten to fifteen minutes, without thinking about what words or grammatical items to use (Jacobs, 1986) and without reviewing the sample for modification (li, 2007) and stresses quantity rather than quality. Casanave (2004) related writing fluency to “writers‟ ability to produce a lot of language (or to read) without excessive hesitations, blocks, and interruptions”. (p. 67).

Initially, freewriting was discussed by Elbow (1973; 1989; 1998 & 2000), who supports practicing it to improve students’ writing skills and emphasizes its continuity. Elbow (1998) argues that it is a tension-free activity since students do not “think of words and also worry at the same time whether they are the right words” (p. 5). Freewriting requires students to have two skills: creating ideas and criticizing them (Elbow, 1989). At the first stage, they write freely and generate ideas without paying attention to words or structures; however, at the second stage, they are expected to criticize their own ideas, keeping the good ones and leaving the irrelevant and the less expressive. It could be unguided and guided (Hwang, 2010). The former is self-sponsored by the student, and the latter is focused and teacher-sponsored (Elbow, 1998; Elbow & Belanoff, 2000; Lannin, 2007). While the former is perceived positively for increasing writing fluency, the latter is considered a tool for helping students overcome the difficulty of getting started writing (Elbow & Belanoff, 2000).

Freewriting also helps students stimulate their thinking by writing briefly for some minutes, which results in generating more ideas about the topic (Jacobs, 1986), enjoying the experience of writing, and feeling liberated and empowered (Elbow, 2000). As a student-centered activity, it allows students to ease the burden of writing and increases their motivation to write in English (Dickson, 2001).

On the one hand, practicing freewriting could play an important role in helping students develop their autonomy as L2 writers, and on the other hand, it could help them enjoy the experience and be proud of their achievement, either minor or major (Harmer, 2004).

To achieve the aims of freewriting successfully, teachers should be organized, disciplined, and methodical (Dickson, 2001). It requires teachers to prepare the students for freewriting, set up the task, ask the students to write, collect their samples, and provide feedback on the content later, suggesting tips for improving their writing. In addition, Dickson (2001) suggests some prompts that would provoke the students’ thinking and motivate them to write such as responding to a quotation, or a proverb, writing a short story, listening to music, providing a picture, asking a question, and watching a video segment, emphasizing sharing and providing feedback.

Park (2020) conducted a study to examine the possible benefits of freewriting for EFL students’ writing in terms of reducing anxiety and increasing fluency among EFL university students in an academic writing class. For data gathering, the participants filled in pre- and post-writing anxiety surveys and wrote freewriting samples, pre- and post-essays, and reflections. The findings showed that students reported different degrees of writing anxiety, revealing poor performance of anxious students on the writing test. However, analysis of 540 freewritings showed improved fluency with the progress of the semester. In addition, students generally expressed positive attitudes toward the freewriting activity, indicating that it enhanced their confidence, decreased their fear of evaluation, and deepened their thinking skills. However, they preferred having feedback on their writing and suggesting topics from their writing instructors. They also did not like limiting the freewriting activity with time. The results do not prove that freewriting is the remedy of EFL problems in writing; however, they suggest that practicing freewriting regularly during class time could be helpful for struggling EFL students to develop a habit of reading, improve their writing fluency, enhance their confidence and lessen their anxiety that results from writing.

In addition, Penn & Lim (2016) examined the effects of freewriting on the development of EFL Korean students on English proficiency in all language skills. An experimental group and a control group participated in the study. Results showed positive effects on the 51 participants in the experimental group in the four language skills. In terms of writing, they were able to write extended texts using a variety of lexical items.

Regarding the benefits of freewriting in reducing anxiety, Chen (2019) conducted a qualitative in an EFL three-credit writing course at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the National Sun Yat-Sen University in Taiwan. The eighteen freshmen were required to practice freewriting in the first thirty minutes of each week for fifteen weeks and to write a reflection on freewriting in the eighteenth week. Data analysis shows that seventeen out of eighteen students expressed positive comments on freewriting practices and revealed some beneficial effects, indicating that freewriting can be a powerful teaching tool in EFL writing courses. They mainly mentioned writing freely without pressure and expressing their thoughts without worrying about choosing the wrong words in English.

Journal entries or dialogue journals are part of the free-writing approach, which has many benefits. First, it involves writers writing freely without worrying about errors and time pressure (Spaventa, 2000; Yoshihara, 2008). In addition, it arouses the interest of students in writing, develops their fluency (Yoshihara, 2008), and accuracy (Lagan, 2000), and raises their awareness of the need of clarifying writing to the reader (White & Arndt, 1991). In addition, practicing journals makes writers closer to their teachers, lowers their anxiety, and increases their motivation (Tin, 2004).

Several researchers conducted research studies to examine the usefulness of adopting journal writing in ESL/EFL classrooms. For example, Tuan (2010) conducted a research study that aimed at investigating the benefits of students’ engagement in journal writing, where 85 second-year students at the Faculty of English Linguistics and Literature of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City participated in two classes: an experimental group and a control group. The researcher employed quantitative as well as qualitative methods, using pre-posttests of essay writing to measure students’ proficiency levels in terms of fluency and accuracy. While the former relates to the student’s ability in producing language in real-time unhesitatingly, the latter concerns avoiding making mistakes. Qualitative methods included observation notes and occasional interviews. Results substantiated previous arguments about the benefits of journal writings in terms of increasing motivation, enhancing writing skills, and building close relations between teachers and learners. Results also showed that students in the experimental group were able to produce more words in the post-test and to complete the task faster. However, the accuracy level did not substantially differ between the two groups. Regarding scoring, while the students in the experimental group increased their scores by 1.49, the students in the control group only by o.46. In terms of motivation, 75% of the students in the experimental group responded positively to the questionnaire items regarding that. However, they indicated that they still generate ideas in their mother tongue and translate them into the target language. Qualitative data, which includes occasional interviews and observations, revealed that the experimental group students get accustomed to journal writing relatively quickly.

 Yoshihara (2008) examined the effect of dialogue journal writing in three creative writing classes at a private Japanese university, where thirty students participated in each class. Thirty-six volunteered to write dialogue journals, and only nine continued doing so throughout the course. The purpose of the study was to connect class content to students’ lives. For data collection and analysis, the researcher used journals written by 19 students who completed journals throughout the course outside the classroom. In addition, she administered a self-report questionnaire aiming at learning about students’ feelings towards improving their writing and attitudes toward writing journals in English, who had never previously written journals in English. They emailed the journal entries to their teacher once a week and he provided them feedback in the same week, limiting them to content and excluding error correction. The researcher expressed his approval and disapproval of the content, raising questions about the meaning, thoughts, or suggestions about the topic. Analyzing their responses to the self-report questionnaire revealed positive results. Many students expressed positive feelings about submitting dialogue journals to their teacher and getting her feedback, considering this exchange as an enjoyable experience. Some students indicated their ability to express their ideas in writing in English; in contrast, others did not express their confidence doing that.

***8.2 Genre-based approach***

The term genre is defined "as a social, dynamic and interactive process that emphasizes the nature of language as a social action" (Ezza, 2014, p. 575). Ezza (2014) reviewed writing courses in four Arab universities, King Saud University in Saudi Arabia, Birzeit University in Palestine, Qatar University in Qatar, and An-Najah University in Palestine, and concluded that the focus of these courses was on lexicon and grammatical exercises. Such pedagogy is weak owing to insufficient paid attention to the writing stages. Instead, he proposes the genre approach. Therefore, he advocates practicing different genres in teaching English writing such as academic prose, fiction, letter writing, email writing, review writing, and journal writing, aiming to encourage learners to write with a purpose and proposes including genre analysis in the writing syllabus.

#### *Integrating reading and writing in EFL writing classes*

Integrating reading and writing for effective instruction in EFL writing classrooms is not a new idea. Different researchers reached evidence for the usefulness of connecting reading and writing for the sake of enhancing EFL students’ academic writing. Elley (1991) reviewed some studies that indicated the effectiveness of extensive reading programs compared to regular ones in terms of reading comprehension and enriching learners’ vocabulary as Nagy & Herman (1987) claimed that children between grades three and twelve learn up to 3000 words a year. Besides that, Stotsky (1983) and Krashen (1984) research studies showed the positive results of reading on learners' writing skill. Moreover, it enhances the students’ confidence in dealing with longer texts as Kembo (1993) pointed out, and it helps develop literacy skills in terms of reading and writing as Zamil (1992) noted. fact, reading involves many complex skills that should come together to help reader recognize the purpose of reading, be able to use effective learning strategies, and can monitor their comprehension of the text (Zaubal & Husin, 2011).

Many Arab EFL scholars the lack of reading long authentic texts in English by Arab university students (Ahmed, 2010; Al-Qahtani, 2016, Hassan & Dweik, 2021). They may read simplified versions of novels and plays (Ahmed, 2010). They are not ready to put efforts and read for long hours, which affects the level of their writing because the more the person reads, the better the writing style and vocabulary s/he develops.

# **8. 4 Using rubrics**

Some scholars claim that using scoring rubrics improves teachers' capacity to correct students’ written work precisely, assess and grade them, enhancing their writing skills (Gulzar et al., 2017; Qasim & Qasim, 2015; Rini & Purnawarman, 2018; Sharma, 2019). Others proved the importance of involving students in establishing WSRs’ criteria for helping them understand learning expectations (Rini & Rini & Purnawarman, 2018).

Chowdhury (2018) defines WSRs as scoring guides for pursuing different tasks that require reflective thinking skills, carrying out projects, and delivering presentations, and they are used as “a scoring tool that sets criteria and standards for the students' expected performance in a specific task, across 3 to 5 levels" (p.62). Moskal (2000) adds that a WRS is "a descriptive scoring scheme developed to judge the quality of a given writing sample depending upon established criteria" (p.1). It enables teachers to provide students with a guide to help them understand teachers’ instructions and to limit ignoring small mistakes (Gulzar et al., 2006), to obtain detailed feedback through self-assessment (Qasim & Qasim, 2015), and do self-monitoring (Bradford, et al. (2016), which is a useful and important source of feedback for students and teachers as well. On the one hand, it enhances transparency by students of the assessed aspects of every task (Chan & Ho, 2019), and on the other hand, it facilitates evaluating students’ achievements and progress (Narvaez et al., 2019). For example, Qasim and Qasim's (2015) conducted a study on the use of writing rubrics by Pakistani EFL teachers and found that four of their six participants (66.7%) recommended using a scoring rubric for addressing students' mechanical writing errors. In addition, Turgut and Kayaoğlu's (2015) study revealed that rubrics aided Turkish EFL students to realize the criteria for excellent writing. Moreover, Kulprasit (2016) showed that raising awareness of the positive impact of WSRs among EFL Thai students helped them improve their attitudes towards rubrics, considering them as useful tools for improving their writing proficiency and producing language.

Aldukhayel (2017) reported contradicting results when he investigated the clarity and familiarity of three scoring rubrics in a Saudi university’s preparatory year program (PYP), where 281 Arabic-speaking students enrolled in three different academic levels, aiming at assessing students’ achievement in midterm and final writing exams, and administering a 13-item online questionnaire was administered to collect the data. Data analysis shows that roughly 55% of students indicated that the rubrics help them to diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in terms of seeing what they are good at and what they need to do better. In contrast, about 41% of students believed that the information from the rubrics about their writing is not clear. These results raised questions regarding the quality of the rubrics used in the predatory program, claiming that it is insufficient and that the criteria set for providing evidence for the rubric qualities were not met. The study implies that there is a need for administrators and teachers to consider the clarity and familiarity of rubrics carefully to justify their use because unclear and unfamiliar rubrics can confuse and frustrate students. In addition, it can hinder their self-awareness in having a clear sense of their writing scores, their strengths, and weaknesses.

Alamri & Adawi (2021) employed a mixed-method study to investigate the EFL Saudi teachers’ perspectives using writing scoring ratings for correcting the written work of their students. One hundred and six EFL Saudi teachers filled in the questionnaire voluntarily from a pool of 1470, 62 (58.5%) females and 44 (41.5%) males. Results showed that 80.2% generally corrected the tasks and provided feedback in class, with about 26.4% using WSRs (25.5%) students' self-assessment, (17.0%) peer editing; and 5.7% alternative assessment techniques such as using journals or portfolios. Findings also show that using writing scoring ratings allowed teachers to reflect on the progress of their students. While more than two-thirds of the research participants (67.92%) considered writing scoring ratings as benefiting students, only 21.70% reported similar benefits to EFL teachers and about eleven (10.38%) remained neutral. The analysis of the participants’ comments concerning the usefulness of writing scoring ratings correlates with the quantitative results. The participating teachers described WSRs as beneficial in terms of guiding the pupils, provoking their creativity and critical thinking skills, and enhancing their motivation. 76% of the participating teachers indicated that they noticed some improvement in the writing of their students after using WSRs, which could be explained by making fewer mistakes, getting higher points, or improving the quality of their written texts. Results also revealed that the majority of EFL Saudi teachers prefer correcting their students’ writings in class rather than using other techniques like WSRs, self-assessment, or journal entries and portfolios. Almari Adawi’s (2021) study proved that EFL Saudi teachers comprehended the usefulness of WSRs for improving students' performance by giving constructive feedback, fostering critical thinking, and using self-assessment techniques without neglecting mistakes in spelling and punctuation. The researchers reported positive results regarding WSRs users who were able to identify their writing difficulties and strengths. Moreover, the research participants agreed that WSRs help users pinpoint mistakes in grammar, mechanics, coherence, and handwriting and promote higher-order thinking skills. It could be concluded that EFL Saudi teachers consider the use of WSRs favorably, and if they use them, they do it infrequently.

***8.4 Providing feedback***

Correcting errors has been a controversial subject for many years. Because of this notion, providing corrective feedback has been a subject of discussion among EFL experts and researchers for many years. For example, some researchers like Hinkel (2004), Hyland and Hyland (2001), and Hyland (2003) strongly support feedback to ESL students, attributing that to the positive attitudes of ESL students regarding having back their written texts corrected not only at the linguistic level but also at the global level.

Besides grading exams, Diederich (1974) discussed the importance of responding to students’ writing by providing comments, holding individual conferences, and having discussions with the students to provide positive feedback. This type of informal evaluation would make teachers close to their students. Other scholars believe that teachers’ comments and feedback play a crucial role in helping learners produce better writing samples like (Al-Hazzani & Altalhab, 2018; Williams & Jasmine, 2003); however, others don’t believe so (Doff, 1988, Truscott, 1996). Providing teacher’s feedback directs and aids students to produce written good quality work (Al-Sawalha, 2016; Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012). For example, Al-Hazzani & Altalhab (2018) state that providing feedback is “an extremely valuable tool for indicating whether students are going in the right direction with their work or not”, claiming that it reinforces their understanding and corrects them through employing a variety of methods (p. 16). Williams & Jasmine (2003) hold similar perspectives claiming that providing feedback for learners’ writing samples helps them develop EFL writing abilities since they are required to revise their written assignments. According to Ferris (2003), if positive and effective written feedback is provided effectively, it will encourage writing learners to continue developing their skills. However, it should be provided constantly to help learners be aware of their current level of writing and how to improve it through time matching the writing instructors’ goals and expectations.

##### 8. 4. 1 Written corrective feedback

Written corrective feedback is a written response to a linguistic error that has been made in the writing of a text by a second language (L2) learner (Bitchener & Storch, 2016), which is considered an instructional strategy that is commonly used in ESL settings aiming to improve students’ writing. It is crucial for error correction (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). However, many ESL experts question its usefulness in the improvement of the learners writing skills, which makes it an ongoing debate that aroused the interest of many researchers to conduct research studies examining its usefulness to ESL/EFL writing learners. For instance, Bitchener & Knoch (2010) examined the effectiveness of written corrective feedback provided in a 10-month study focusing on two functional uses of the article system for 52 low-intermediate ESL students in Auckland, New Zealand. The participants were divided into four groups; where three groups received direct corrective feedback and the fourth had no corrective feedback. While the direct corrective feedback to the first group included written and oral meta-linguistic explanations, the second included only written meta-linguistic explanations. The control group didn’t receive any corrective feedback. The participants produced five written texts (pre-test, immediate post-test, and three delayed post-tests). The results show that the participants in the three treatment groups outperformed those in the control group on all post-tests. In addition, there was a difference in effectiveness between the three treatment groups.

Two years earlier, Bitchener (2008) conducted a two-month study to investigate the efficacy of written corrective feedback to 75 low-intermediate international ESL students in Auckland, New Zealand. Similar to the previous study, which is mentioned above, four groups were assigned. To examine the effectiveness of such corrective feedback, the participants were required to describe what is happening in a given picture, producing three pieces of writing as the pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test, targeting the functional uses of the English article “a” and the definitive “the”. The analysis of the writing samples revealed that the accuracy of students who received feedback in the immediate post-test outperformed those in the control group.

In the last ten years, many EFL writers in the Middle East started to examine the usefulness of written corrective feedback in improving writing accuracy, which showed positive evidence of the effectiveness of corrective feedback over no feedback (Khoshsima & Farid, 2012; Hashemnezhad & Mohammadnejad, 2012; Alharbi, 2016). For example, a study by Khoshsima and Farid (2012) investigated the effectiveness of explicit as well as implicit corrective feedback on descriptive writing accuracy of 39 Iranian intermediate EFL learners in Hamedan Isalmic Azad University, where they were divided into two groups. The first group included 22 students who were given explicit corrective feedback, and the second was composed of 17 students who received implicit corrective feedback. They received corrective feedback on three grammatical structures: The researchers concluded that corrective feedback on grammar could be useful for the short run, not the long one.

***8.1.3 Peer feedback***

Al-Hazmi and Schofield (2007) examined the effect of requiring enforced revision and peer feedback on the quality of the students’ writing. The study aimed at improving the writing of low-proficiency Saudi college students. Fifty-one third-level students at King Khalid University participated in the experiment, where they wrote two drafts at the pre-test stage; only the experimental group was provided with a checklist to consider at the post-test stage. The researchers concluded that the subjects ‘were not ready to abandon the traditional surface error focus of their classroom’ despite the research effort to improve their English writing (p.237). Similarly, my students focus on grammatical errors all the time, perceiving that correcting them is the most essential thing to improve their writing.

***8.3 Integrating technological tools for teaching and evaluation*** Technology is the trend in education in the last twenty years, which is defined by Lim and Morris (2009) as “the appropriate mix and use of face-to-face instructional methods and various learning technologies to support planned learning and develop subsequent learning outcomes” (283). It is considered vital for learning skills since it helps learners to attain knowledge (Alqahtani & Elumalai, 2020) and enhances their confidence, giving learners an easy entry to web-based sources that enhance their learning opportunities (Ziegler, 2016). In addition, employing technology in education has shifted the focus from teacher-centered to more learner-centered classrooms (Ali, 2022), allowing students to gain face-to-face learning experiences in classrooms (Xu et al., 2020), to have a more effective educational environment (Bonk & Graham, 2012), and to organize the content (Ata, 2016). Moreover, it goes in line with education in the twenty-first century (Porter et al., 2016). Alqahtani & Alumalai (2020) add that digital networking motivates learners and boosts their attitude toward language learning. Moreover, technology use increases the range of tasks in the classroom with web resources and improves communication among pupils (Skehan, 2003; Stone & Wilson-Duffy, 2009). Furthermore, it facilitates learners’ ownership of the tasks (Kern, 2006; Kern, Ware, & Warschauer, 2004; Reinders & White, 2010) since they use their personal computers and access information in available web resources.

 Some educators believe that blending technology may enhance learning because WebQuests, forums, Zoom, blogs, and other online platforms help writing instructors use different tools for accessing information to carry out projects. Ali (2022) conducted a research study to examine the effectiveness of combining project-based approach and blending technology in EFL writing, hoping that this combination would improve students’ writing skills and reduce their writing apprehension.

***8. 5 Remedies: My personal experience of teaching and assessing writing***

Following the recommendation of Al-Khatib (2017) of adopting an eclectic approach in language teaching, I adopt the process approach, the genre-based approach and different techniques and activities. Besides error and text analysis, contrastive analysis, which is based on Grammar Translation Method is used occasionally to acquaint the students with similarities and differences between the two languages. Therefore, in the first session of the writing course for first-year students, the students write a paragraph about their choice of attending the English department. Then they compare and contrast their samples with a paragraph in the book “Writers at work: The short composition” by Ann O. Strauch pages 4 and five, which appears in appendix (1). Immediately, they realize that their samples are different in terms of organization and clarity; however, they do not indicate the differences exactly. Then, they try to answer the provided questions to identify the components of the paragraph: main idea, supporting details and conclusion.

Following the recommendations of Ahmed (2016) regarding the importance of diagnosing the students’ difficulties to identify problems and to provide solutions to help them improve their writing, and be fully engaged and consciously involved in understanding obstacles facing them in writing in English. I ask the students to write a paragraph about their choice of the teaching profession in the first meeting of the writing course and compare it with the first assignment to make sure that the identified mistakes are similar. The aim is to determine the focus of instruction and feedback.

Adopting the process approach requires students submit three drafts of each writing assignment. They revise and edit them, answering the raised questions and following the provided comments and corrections. In addition, they are engaged throughout the process of writing; for example, when they work in class activities, I involve them in analyzing and correcting their mistakes, analyzing texts and contrasting others. Although the focus is on communicating meaning and on content rather than form, I use explicit and descriptive instruction of grammar and vocabulary sometimes to help them acquire the structure of English. In terms of mechanics, many students ignore indenting five spaces at the beginning of each paragraph. Therefore, they are reminded consciously almost in every session to do that.

 Following Arab students’ collective mentality and social interaction preference, which was explained in detail in Chapter 7, task-based approach is used frequently in class, allowing them to work together on a specific task. However, time limit is needed to make sure that they focus on working on the task since they tend to waste time chatting or discussing irrelevant issues.

To provide opportunities for practicing writing in tense-free environments, students not only practice free writing in class by writing for five minutes non-stopping about every day topics like or respond to a quote, but also write personal journal entries frequently, sharing their personal experiences or perspectives in social issues as violence. I make sure to include my positive encouraging comments without paying attention to any type of mistake included in these entries. Students usually express their reluctance to practice free writing in class, especially at the beginning of the first semester, claiming that they do not have ideas and cannot concentrate, but their attitude improves through time. However, they react very positively to journal writing since they share their personal experiences and receive positive feedback only. Examples of journals appear in appendix (2).

 Due to the advantages of integrating reading and writing for developing EFL learners’ proficiency and being aware of the fact that one of the Arab EFL problems is the lack of reading, I choose short articles from English newspapers about actual news and cases is part of my instruction. The aim is to provide opportunities for comprehensible input of authentic English and practice writing in class. To vary my methods, after posting the short article in Moodle and loading it on the screen, I read it aloud, emphasizing some words and phrases. After having oral discussion and explaining the meaning of the new words in context, students are encouraged to work in pairs to find affixation and to identify the parts of speech of these words, aiming to raise the students’ awareness to word formation in English and their sense of the English language. The next lesson, I review the content of the article, asking specific questions about the sequence of the events, the meaning of the new words and their parts of speech. Using them in context follows. Other times, I draw the students’ attention to the title only to predict the content of the article. After reading it individually, students work in groups of three to four to discuss the content of the article and to guess the meaning of the new words in context. Appendix (3) includes two examples of these articles and a worksheet that aims to help students understand the content and learn the new words in context, realize their use and usage.

Similarly, blending media, mainly watching news broadcasting from English international channels, breaks the routine, exposes students to world events like flooding, fire erupting, etc… and provides them other opportunities for comprehensible input. After watching the news, I expect the students to recall some events or to say something that catches their attention in the broadcasting. Then, the video is played again with pauses to help them follow the sequence of the news. Later, they work either individually or with a partner to rewrite the news in their own words.

As it is mentioned in Chapter 2, error analysis is used as a technique to study learners’ errors and to make inferences about the language learning process. Therefore, I collect the students’ mistakes from the first draft, categorize them and post the file in Moodle to work on it in class. I make sure to include at least one error from each students and not to mention their names, aiming to promote the sense of equality. Based on my observations, the students are hesitant to acknowledge their mistakes at the beginning. However, through time some are more willing than others to start acknowledging their mistakes and claiming them. By the end of the school year, almost all of them talk openly about their mistakes, emphasizing their realization to the fact that every student makes mistakes.

At the early stages of the writing course that focuses on sentences and paragraphs, the categories could include (1) inappropriate topic sentences, (2) long sentences, (3) excessive use of commas, (4) fragments or run-on sentences, (5) inappropriate conclusions, (6) subject-verb agreement, (7) cultural transfer, and (8) grammar, (9) word choice, and (10) cultural transfer. When the focus of the course is on essay writing, the categories include thesis statements. In many cases, the sentences are grammatically correct, but they are inappropriate culturally. To help students understand the influence of their culture on their writing that obstructs meaning and communication, samples of these mistakes are included in the error analysis sheets. Appendix (4) includes a sample of an error analysis sheet.

Data analysis in Chapter 3 shows that Arab students transfer the style of Arabic, writing long sentences with excessive use of coordinators and commas. Therefore, the focus of error analysis at the beginning of the first writing course is on the length of sentences To help students realize the source of their mistakes and to be able to correct them, I ask them to compare their drafts and sample drafts either from the book or from the Internet. Many of them figure out the problem indicating the length of the sentences; however, at this stage, they do not demonstrate any knowledge or ability to shorten the sentences. Therefore, I try to help them gradually and carefully. I take the students’ permission to show their sentences on the computer’s screen, making sure not to mention their names. I try to involve them by reading the sentences aloud and asking them to stop me when the sentence is meaningful enough. I also ask them to use the appropriate punctuation, reminding them that sentences end with a full stop. Similarly, I remind them of the structure of compound sentences, indicating the use of *fanboys* (for, and, but, or, yet, so). In the beginning, I avoid mentioning complex sentences. Later on, I ask them to underline all sentences in the samples of writing that appear in the book that include subordinators such as when, although, as soon as…etc. I also remind them of the use of the comma in complex sentences, which separates the two clauses if the sentence starts with a subordinate. To help students master the types of sentences, they practice not only recognizing such sentences but also writing others in the class. Acquainting the students with the structure of sentences helps them improve themselves in terms of including commas excessively; however, the problem is not eliminated. They continue including commas inappropriately. Therefore, I continue acquainting them with the use of commas consciously and frequently to help them overcome such a problem. Many times, they work in pairs to justify the use of commas in their samples, following a set of rules provided to them on either a sheet of paper or a file in Moodle. To draw their attention to subject-verb agreement and the inappropriate use of articles (a/an), I usually underline them during correction and indicate the reason. Similarly, I underline the wrong word choice to draw their attention to the inappropriate use of vocabulary, providing the right word.

Chapter 4 addresses problems facing Arab students in expressing meaning, providing examples and reasons, and considering the audience. Samples of students’ paragraphs show that many topic sentences are long and indirect; while some of them do not reflect the title, others deviate from it and include unnecessary information. In addition, the paragraphs lack idea development, relevant content and adequate organization. Other examples show text deviation, which means that students start a new topic in the concluding paragraphs. Data analysis shows enough evidence of transferring features of Arabic language prose such as repetition, indirectness, circularity, lack of parallelism and lack of variation. Results also show transferring the features of Arabic language and cultural modes of thinking. In terms of mechanics, many students ignore indenting five spaces at the beginning of each paragraph.

To help students state good topic sentences, I collect good samples of topic sentences and inappropriate ones from their first drafts and post them in Moodle for class work. Students work in pairs to identify the reason for considering the samples as good and inappropriate that need a revision. See appendix (5) for such an activity.

To clarify their meaning, the following comments are very common in my feedback:

1. Do you mean….?
2. Please add a specific example here.
3. Please add a reason here.
4. Please add more information here.
5. What do you mean?
6. What are you trying to say?

To address problems related to logical development of ideas and organization, peer review of students’ paragraphs is carried out following a checklist of questions, which is provided at the end of each chapter in the book. For example, at end of chapter three, which focuses on providing examples, the list for peer feedback includes the following questions:

1. “Does the draft have any places they are unclear?
2. Is the draft organized clearly, according to the outline form on page 62?
3. Does the draft have a complete main idea sentence and a clear conclusion?
4. Does each example include a transition signal?
5. Are there sufficient specific, supporting details for each example?” (Strauch, 2005, p.70).

In addition, data analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 shows enough evidence of transferring features of Arabic language prose such as repetition, indirectness, circularity, lack of parallelism and lack of variation. Results also show transferring the features of Arabic language and cultural modes of thinking. Analysis of errors and texts and contrasting texts of L1 and their samples are employed to acquaint the students with these types of errors, aiming to help them avoid including them in future samples. See appendix (4) that includes different types of errors. While correcting these errors, I draw the students’ attention to the sources of each errors and first language interference.

Data analysis in Chapter 5 shows that students face difficulties in creating cohesive essays. At this level, error analysis sheets include an additional category, cohesive devices (CD) to remind the students of their functions and categories and highlighting them in context. For example, for adding more information to the sentences, the following are used: also, in addition, moreover, and furthermore. The contrasting category includes the following: however, in contrast, while, whereas…etc. A file that includes the most common transition words and their categories is available to students, and they use it frequently to analyze their functions. Moreover, students work in pairs to find hedges and boosters appear in English samples of essays either in the book or other texts downloaded from the Internet.

Analyzing different samples of good essays from the book called “Writers at Work: The Essay” by Dorothy E. Zemach and Lynn Stafford –Yilmaz acquaints the students with the structure of the paragraph essay, focusing on the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph, showing how it is developed in the body paragraphs. The book also includes outlines that illustrate the contents of the body paragraphs. To facilitate the task of developing a five-paragraph essay, the students develop the introductory paragraph, highlighting the topic sentence and the thesis statement, which is developed by including an outline. The first essay is based on a paragraph that had been submitted in a previous course. The students rewrite it to include only the relevant information. It means that they add background information to the topic sentence and some sentences that lead to the thesis statement. Then, they develop the outline, taking ideas from the paragraph and extending them. Adopting the process approach for evaluating the students’ samples requires the students to revise and edit the samples at least twice, following my comments and corrections that address content, organization, and cohesion besides grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. The focus at this stage is on how to achieve a cohesive text, using coordinators, sub-coordinators, transition words, and introductory phrases. Modelling and error analysis are employed to help students sense the use of cohesive devices. Modelling includes providing authentic paragraphs are essays and asking the students to underline the cohesive devices and to try explain their functions. Then, I do so trying to engage them as much as I can. In addition, when their mistakes are collected, they are required to check the use of these devices in their texts.

To do so successfully, developing outlines is part of the classes’ agendas. After showing them samples of outlines, the students work in small groups to complete an outline for an essay in the book. They underline the main ideas and double-underline the supporting details in the essay’s paragraphs to complete the missing information in the outlines. After practicing this at least three times, they develop an outline for another essay. When they submit the first draft of the first assignment of writing an essay. They submit only the introductory paragraph, underlining the thesis statement, with an outline that includes the three topic sentences for each body paragraph, three details in form of phrases, not complete sentences, and a concluding paragraph. After having my comments for revising the first draft, they revise and edit the introductory and the concluding paragraphs and the outline and add the first body paragraph. In each lesson, the students follow the same process to add one more body paragraph.

One of the objectives of the course is to acquaint the course participants with different genres of essays, focusing on explanatory, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, and persuasive essays. Similarly, peer review is also practiced here extensively at this level to help each other develop the content of the body paragraphs, and revise and edit them.

Students’ examples in appendix (6) show the improvement two students, an advanced student, an average student and a less advanced one, made from the first draft at the beginning of the year and the last one at the end of it. Unlike the first assignment, the advanced student wrote a good topic in the last assignment, used signals for providing examples, and grammatically correct sentences, and a well-stated conclusion.

 Writing samples of the average student shows a leap in her writing. Although the topic sentence is inappropriate and very long, the student succeeded to use not only signals for expressing reasons, but also transition words like “therefore and in addition” to link between ideas, and a good conclusion.

Chapter 6 discusses problems encounter undergraduate and graduate Arab students write seminar papers and follow the standard conventions of academic writing. The focus is more on analyzing information, paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing. Data analysis reveals that Arab students lack the necessary language proficiency skills as well as the academic skills to conduct research, including the necessary knowledge of research paper writing process, sources and methodology. The analyzed samples show the tendency in relying on one or two sources for developing arguments, facing difficulties in synthesizing information from different sources and including their voices.

Besides plagiarism and patchwriting, students do not follow integral and non-integral citation rules consistently, including the full name of the author, deleting the year of publication, the page number of the direct quote or the quotation marks. Despite modelling, explaining and practicing intensively in the classroom, writing the list of references at the end of the paper poses another challenge.

To acquaint the students with the structure of English texts, aiming to help them summarize articles, they sit in pairs or small groups to analyze texts following written guidelines, which include the following:

1. Underline the title.
2. Find the main idea in each paragraph.
3. Underline the supporting details of each paragraph.
4. Link between the paragraphs and the title.

At the beginning, I use modelling of summarizing one paragraph only. Then, I engage them in summarizing other paragraphs. At a later stage, they practice summarizing one paragraph in class either individually or in pairs. Gradually, they summarize more paragraphs at once. At the last stage, they summarize a whole text.

For paraphrasing, I start with modeling, and paraphrasing sentences at first. Then, the students sit in small groups to paraphrase sentences while I move from one group to another to monitor their work and answer their questions. Gradually, we move to paraphrase paragraphs, explaining the importance of avoiding plagiarism, the rationale behind it and the possible of its consequences.

To summarize articles, I start with short paragraphs to long articles. After modeling and summarizing at least two paragraphs, the students sit in small groups to summarize short paragraphs. Gradually, the students summarize other paragraphs, adding one paragraph in each class meeting. In the end, they will be able to summarize one article.

The same path is followed for synthesizing, giving many examples before requiring the students to synthesize. I usually choose at least three sources that discuss the same issue and summarize them with the help of the students. Then I highlight the targeted information in one article and ask the students to work collaboratively, finding similar or different information on the same issue. We combine the common information from the two sources and move to do the same with the third source. At this stage, the students learn how to quote directly from the sources and how to combine similar information in one sentence, adding the sources. In direct quotations, they practice two options: surrounding the quote with quotation marks, the name of the author, the year of publishing, and the page number at the end of the quote or including the author’s name and publication’s year before the quote, and the page number after at the end of it. Similarly, they learn to include indirect quotations either at the beginning of the sentence or at the end of it, using the right conventions. They practice including the name of the author followed by the year of publication in brackets at the beginning of the sentence, or put them in brackets at the end of the sentence, separated by a comma.

They also learn to develop their arguments including not only supporting research results but also mentioning contradicting results, using the right transition words. These exercises take a lot of class time to make sure that the students can synthesize information from different sources, using the right verbs and expressions. Providing examples of reporting verbs in grammatical patterns like “acknowledge that” and “admit that” used in context helps learners choose the right verb for developing their arguments, using the intended nuance. To avoid using biased language, the in-class practice includes exercises for using inclusive terms and pronouns. Instead of writing the word men that excludes women, the word humans is an unbiased alternative. Similarly, avoiding generalizations in developing arguments includes practicing using the right terminology like women instead of females, an adjective as a collective noun, and hearing-impaired instead of deaf. To provide extra help and promote students’ self-monitoring skills, some websites are provided to follow the guidelines for writing a research paper and to choose the right verb for referring to sources, a link to the 7th edition of the APA style, and a sample of an outline are provided. See appendix (8) to find files that are relevant for writing a RA. At the graduate level, the college posts the guidelines for developing a RP in its website, encouraging the students to consider them seriously.

***8.4.2 Providing feedback***

 With this extensive experience in teaching writing courses, I make sure to provide positive feedback, especially at the beginning to encourage the students to write and not to be inhibited from their mistakes. In addition, their primary focus at this stage is on grammar and spelling. Therefore, I try not to challenge their perceptions, and I start providing corrective feedback gradually, starting with positive feedback. For example, I start the written feedback by thanking the student for submitting the draft, mentioning the included details. Drawing the writers’ attention to the needed revision follows.

Oral feedback is also given frequently. While checking the drafts, I keep a record of students’ improvement and their errors and report them in class, aiming to encourage them and to arouse their attention consciously to the repeated errors. Holding individual conferences with students twice a semester is beneficial. The students feel that their work is appreciated, which enhances their self-confidence. It is another chance for them to realize their strengths and weaknesses besides the sources of their mistakes.

Evaluation students’ performance and progress includes drafts and their revisions, which constitute 40% of the total grade. Due to the influence of the first culture and prior learning experiences, Palestinian Arab EFL students, still, highly values exam; they are willing to invest efforts to pass them successfully, the evaluation criteria include two quizzes and a final exam. 30% of the total grade is assigned to the former together and 40% to the latter. Appendix (9) includes a sample of an exam that includes criteria and a division of grades, and appendix (10) has a copy of my feedback after the first quiz.

***8.4.2 Getting feedback from peers***

As I mentioned previously, my students’ main concern is surface level errors of grammar and spelling. Therefore, at the beginning, I conduct peer assessment sessions using rubrics focusing on grammatical errors such as subject-verb agreement, prepositions, and mechanics. Only the most advanced students may assess content and organization in terms of using conjunctions and transition words appropriately. Therefore, peer assessment sessions that deal with meaning and clarity are delayed to the beginning of the second semester. Appendix (7) includes a form for peer review.

***8.4.2 Integrating technological tools***

 Integrating digital tools in writing instruction has started in the last fifteen years by launching a website of the course in Moodle, where all materials including the syllabus are posted. The posted materials for writing paragraphs and essays include short articles from newspapers, worksheets, files of coordinators, transition words, appropriate use of commas, types of sentences and some exercises. During the pandemic of Corona, scanned pages from the used books were posted too. For the advanced course, samples of articles, guidelines for paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing, paraphrased, summarized and synthesized paragraphs and articles are loaded. The collection includes files of academic writing guidelines and samples of outlines.

In addition, students submit their drafts in the assigned boxes in Moodle. Draft correction is carried out on-line too, using track changes. Error analysis sheets and other exercises are carried out in groups, using Padlet. In some cases, the lesson is delivered via Zoom. In the last years, a Form has been created in the website of the course for students to share experiences and ask questions to their classmates when writing their research articles. In addition, I some use some websites for detecting plagiarism. Lately, the college inserted a special computer program to do that.

Exchanging messages with students via Moodle or email is another platform for communication and provides an opportunity for practicing writing informally, which improves their writing abilities indirectly.

***8.4.5 Using rubrics***

Despite the advantages of using rubrics for developing students’ reflective thinking skills and promoting self-monitoring skills, using them at the undergraduate level seems to be infeasible due to a shortage of time and the level of students’ proficiency. However, the M. Ed students are encouraged to use the rubrics provided in the websites of advanced programs in the colleges for revising their papers before submitting them and to understand the adviser’s comments. Due to my long experience working with Arab Palestinian students who pursue their master’s degrees in teacher training colleges in Israel, I doubt their use of such rubrics.

**Discussion:**

Many researchers attribute the struggle of Arab EFL students in writing classes to the traditional methods that focus on surface level errors and mistakes such as grammatical errors (Almari & Adawi, 2021; Alzamil, 2020; Anwar & Ahmed (2016); Ezza, 2020); Gulzar et al. (2017), Ketabi (2015) and Tseng (2018). Therefore, I have adopted more updated approaches that bring better results, specifically the process approach (Al-Hamzi, 2006; Al-Hamzi & Schofield, 2007; Jordab, 1997; Raimes, 1983; Sun & Feng, 2009; Zamel, 1983). Samples of students’ paragraphs and essays show improvement in students’ writing in terms of adopting a linear style, and clarifying their writing by providing examples and reasons.

 Adopting the process approach includes drafting, revising and editing (Mogahed, 2013 and Williams, 2020). I put great efforts practicing not only drafting that includes revising and editing, but also pre-writing activities such as brainstorming the topics and outlining. Since some topics are offered in the book, most of the students choose them. It seems that it is easier for them to do brainstorming, especially in class. However and based on my observations, many students tend to resist outlining as a pre-writing activity, and submit drafts without it. These observations correlate with claims of Alodwan and Ibnian (2014) that Arab students tend to be reluctant to submit an outline.

Engaging students in task-based seems to work in fostering communicative learning and skills since students work together on a specific task and specific time as Littlewood (2004), Long (2015), Nunan (2004) and Richards (2005) claim, and to promote cooperation among learners (Long, 20015), and to enhance their confidence (Alqahtani & Elumalai, 2020). However, the results of Alqahtani & Elumalai’s (2020) study regarding improving students’ grammar and vocabulary should be investigated separately in the future.

 Freewriting activities seem to work as a tension-free activity (Elbow, 1998) since writers should not worry about grammar, vocabulary and spelling, easing the burden of writing and increasing their motivation to write in English (Dickson, 2001), enjoying the experience and feeling liberated and empowered (Elbow, 2000). Despite these advantages, most of my students do not express enthusiasm to practice freewriting activities at the beginning of the school year. It takes a while to understand and feel its advantages. However, they like the idea of writing journals because they receive positive feedback only, but they complain about the load of writing activities.

The genre-based approach is carried out mainly to practice different genres of essays. There is no time for exposing the students to letter writing or review writing. However, writing journals could be considered as part of the genre-based approach and freewriting.

The results of Krashen’s (1984) study show positive effects to reading on enhancing learners’ writing. Despite these positive results, EFL students do not read voluntarily. If they are given reading materials in writing classes, they are more likely to read them partially or ignore them completely. My observations seem to be true and match with the claims of Al-Qahtani, 2016, and Hussam & Dweik, 2020). However, being realistic by requiring students to read short articles seems to work better since the students show interest when I read the articles in class, express enthusiasm to engage themselves in the activities and learn not only some vocabulary items, but also chunks of language. Based on my observations, many students recall the events of these short articles, the new vocabulary, and their parts of speech.

It is believed that using rubrics in writing classes helps learners follow teachers’ guidelines, draws their attention to small mistakes and take care of them (Gulzar, et al., 2006), assess themselves (Qasim & Qasim, 2015), and monitor their work (Bradford, et al., 2016). However, these studies did not show exactly if using rubrics by students improves the level of their writing. For example, the results of research studies indicate students’ perceptions to rubrics, focusing on mechanical errors (Qasim & Qasim, 2015) and attitudes (Turgut and Kayaoğlu's, 2015 and Kulprasit, 2016). The results of Qasim & Qasim (2015) and Aldukhayl’s results could be relevant to my students’ perceptions of rubrics who focus on mechanical errors and not many of them are eager to use rubrics, which could be related to cultural perceptions of learning, preferring teachers’ authority controlled classes.

The results of Aldukhayl’s (2016) research regarding the clarity and familiarity of Saudi students in a preparatory course to rubrics show that 55% of the participants indicated the usefulness of rubrics in terms of identifying strengths and weaknesses, but 41% did not see the rubrics as clear. Research results obtained by Alamri & Adawi (2021) showed only a quarter of the participating teachers (25.5%) use rubrics. Although 67.92% believe that rubrics are beneficial to students, only 21.70% have the same belief to EFL learners. In this sense, rubrics could be beneficial if they are simplified and practiced systematically, consistently and gradually, taking into consideration cultural interference.

Literature review shows that providing feedback is a controversial issue concerning EFL writing researchers; while some think it is beneficial (Al-Hazzani & Altalhab, 2018; Ferris, 2003 & 2004; Williams & Jasmine, 2003), others hold contradicting beliefs (Doff, 1988, Truscott, 1996). Since EFL issues at the college level started to have momentum in the Arab world, some Arab EFL scholars started to address writing instruction including providing feedback. The results of Alamri & Adawi’s (2021) research corrected the tasks and provided feedback in class. In this sense, providing feedback in class correlates with my perception; however, I doubt the effectiveness of correcting assignments during class time, which should be dedicated to instruction and practice.

Similarly, examining the usefulness of corrective written feedback in the Middle East has started in the last ten years, showing evidence on improving writing accuracy over no feedback (Hashemnezhad & Mohammadnejad, 2012; Alharbi, 2016); however, it serves the objectives only for the short run (Khoshsima & Ma’Farid, 2012). Being aware of the ineffectiveness of focusing on accuracy, corrective feedback addresses content, clarity and organization.

My observations are in line with the results of some of peer review or peer feedback research studies that show that students usually focus on surface errors in terms of grammar and mechanics (spelling and capitalization) (Al-Hazmi and Schofield, 2007sources). In addition, Alamri & Adawi (2021) reported that only 17% of the participating teachers in their research used peer editing. To avoid focusing on surface errors, students can peer review the writings of each other following samples of peer feedback forms provided in the books.

 Technology supports planned learning, develops subsequent learning outcomes (Lim & Morris, 2009), and organizes the content (Ata, 2016). In the context of the described writing courses in this book, integrating technology is manifested in posting syllabi, and materials, submitting assignments on time, receiving feedback, receiving messages and responding, promoting learner-centered classrooms and decreased students’ dependency on teachers (Ali, 2022) and having a more educational environment ((Bonk & Graham, 2012). The discussion of (Skehan, 2003; Stone & Wilson-Duffy, 2009) improving regarding communication among pupils is relevant here. In this sense, students sent me messages and responded to mine.

Using personal computers for accessing information in available web resources facilitates students’ ownership of the tasks (Kern, 2006; Kern, Ware, & Warschauer, 2004; Reinders & White, 2010). These claims could be true specifically when students write research papers.

 Other factors that hinder the development of Arab EFL learners at the college level should be considered too to understand the challenges facing them in writing classes and to provide the necessary help and support. The discussion of Mohammed & Alshenqeeti (2020) and Yong (2010) regarding the gap between the L2 writing requirements and skills in the two educational settings, high schools and universities is relevant in this context, which should be taken into consideration for designing writing programs and syllabi for writing courses.

**Conclusion:**

This chapter includes a review of writing instruction and evaluation, adopting an eclectic approach. It discusses different factors such as ineffective outdated teaching methods that do not bring good results in improving college Arab EFL learners when writing in English.

Adopting the process approach is demanding for writing teachers and EFL students as well. It requires both to work hard to achieve satisfying enough results by many students who manage improve their writing by the end of each course, meeting its objectives, especially those that focus on paragraph and essay development. However, students should be ready in terms of language proficiency and intellectual abilities to write research papers. At the undergraduate level, it should be offered only to those who demonstrate the required skills in English and thinking abilities. At the graduate level, there is a need for offering a preparatory course at the colleges and universities to ambitious students to acquaint them with the necessary skills to meet the academic demands for writing a research paper.

The genre-based approach is also used to acquaint the students with different types of essays. Time and effort should be devoted more to help students unfamiliar genres such as argumentation and persuasion.

In the different levels of writing courses, error analysis, text analysis, and contrastive analysis were employed to help learners understand and identify the sources of their errors. While text analysis at the first level included paragraph structure and development, it focused on essay writing at the second level, emphasizing the function of the thesis sentence and how it is supported by other sentences, aiming to reduce repetition and elaboration would be reduced by exposing Arab students to more texts in English. At the advanced level, texts were analyzed in terms of structure, the use of unbiased language, and developing arguments.

Contrastive analysis is used at all levelsto familiarize our students with the differences of L1 writing and Standard English academic writing, showing similarities and differences. First culture interference as a factor for causing errors was also part of not only error and text analysis, but also contrastive analysis.

Using rubrics could be also useful to promote students’ reflective skills, thinking about their mistakes and identifying their strengths and weaknesses. However, they should be simplified and practiced frequently to achieve their objectives.

 Time should be assigned in writing classes to provide teachers’ written or oral feedback as well as peer review, which should be practiced using ready forms available in books used for teaching writing.

The discussions in Chapter 7 addressed the impact of first cultural interference on the writing of Arab EFL students, which poses another obstacle in expressing themselves well in English and hinders communicating effectively with native speakers. Besides considering this type of interference as a factor that hinders learning, there is a need for acquainting the writing instructors with the culture of their students to help them overcome difficulties that stem from the native culture of the EFL students.It would be beneficial for EFL teachers in the Arab world who do not come from the Middle East to review some literature about Arabic-Muslim culture and its effect on Arab student writing.

Technological tools could facilitate instruction, develop discipline and enhance students-centered classroom in levels 1 and 2. At the advanced level, it allows accessing information on-line, facilitates students’ ownership and promotes their autonomy. However, teachers should be aware of some students’ attempts of plagiarism and find ways to detect that.

It could be concluded that writing instruction is very demanding and tiring for teachers and students. It requires needs investing efforts constantly and continuously. It is rewarding when students manage to improve their writing.

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