



Ain Shams University
Faculty of Women for Arts, Science and Education
Department of Curriculum & Instruction

A Program Based on Self-Regulated Strategy Development Approach for Developing the Teaching and Writing Performance of EFL Student Teachers

A Thesis

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By

Hemmat Ali Abdullah Mansour

Assistant Lecturer in Curriculum & Instruction Department
Faculty of Women, Ain Shams University

Supervised by

Dr. Aida Abdel Maksoud Zaher

Professor of Curriculum & Instruction (EFL)
Faculty of Women, Ain Shams University

Dr. Manal Muhammad Abdel Aziz

Assistant Professor of Curriculum & & Instruction (EFL)
Faculty of Women, Ain Shams University

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The Researcher's Curriculum Vitae

Researcher's Name: Hemmat Ali Abdullah Muhammad Mansour

Title of the research: A Program Based on Self-Regulated Strategy
Development Approach for Developing the
Teaching and Writing Performance of EFL Student
Teachers

Qualifications:

- B.A. in English Language and Education, English Language Department, Faculty of Women, Ain Shams University, 2004 (very good with honors)
- Professional Diploma in Education, Faculty of Women, Ain Shams University, 2006, Excellent
- Special Diploma in Education, Faculty of Women, Ain Shams University, 2007, Very Good
- Master's degree in EFL curriculum and instruction, Faculty of Women, Ain Shams University, 2010, excellent

Position:

Assistant lecturer in Curriculum and Instruction
Department, Faculty of Women, Ain Shams University

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ABSTRACT

A Program Based on Self-Regulated Strategy Development Approach for Developing the Teaching and Writing Performance of EFL Student Teachers

Hemmat Ali Abdullah

Developing English as a foreign language (EFL) prospective teachers' teaching skills is essential for qualifying them for their future careers. A training program based on Self-Regulated Strategy Development approach was designed for developing EFL student teachers' teaching and writing performance. The program comprised mainly two sections, theoretical and practical. Two main writing genres were considered, Persuasive essay and story writing. The study adopted the one experimental group design. A group of EFL student teachers were selected and received the training program. A pre-post achievement test, an observation checklist and a writing test, designed by the researcher, were administered to twenty one second-year EFL student teachers at Women's College -Ain Shams University. Results of the study indicated that the proposed program is effective in developing the study participants' teaching and writing performance. The study results supported the study hypotheses. Recommendations and suggestions for further research were presented.

Key words: Self-Regulated Strategy Development approach, training program, writing performance, writing teaching.

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Chapter One

Chapter One

Introduction and Problem

1.1 Introduction

English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers have a basic role in building EFL learners' language proficiency. Since most of these learners do not have first-hand knowledge and experience with the foreign language or direct access to native speakers, teachers are the responsible vessels for not just transforming but also formulating students' both macro and micro language skills. It is important therefore to train and prepare those teachers to be able to fulfill their mission successfully and competently. Developing prospective EFL teachers' teaching skills and capabilities is a one important step for assisting those teachers to be ready for their future careers.

One of the essential and demanding skills that EFL student teachers need to be competent at is writing. The importance of writing, not only in the field of education but to survive in today's society, makes the ability to write and teach writing indispensable for a language teacher. Zimmerman (1997) agrees with the latter idea adding that during this era of cyberspace and microcomputers, skill in developing ideas and expressing them in written form has become essential to success in not only school but also in the personal and professional world beyond.

Writing involves the discovery of the very best language to express one's thoughts, ideas, and information. It entails an interaction between the writer, the text, and the reader and in doing so, it includes a purpose and an audience (North Carolina State Dept. of Public Instruction, 1998). The act of composing hence requires thinking-about suitable words for the writer's message, audience, purpose- so that the writer would be able

to communicate the intended meaning and at the same time achieves the intended purpose.

It is evident that writing is a difficult skill for native and nonnative speakers alike. This is because writers should balance multiple issues such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics (Ibrahim, 2006, 2). Saddler (2006, 291) adds that writing poses challenges for many students. While composing, a writer must manage complex problem-solving writing processes that include planning, considering the audience's needs and perspectives, generating organized content, and revising for form and ideas.

Kiely (2013) argues that writing now is differently viewed as a social practice, where the emphasis is on communicating messages which are meaningful in terms of the context of writing (purpose and identity of the writer) and of the context of reading (expectations and identity of the reader). As our understanding of writing has become more comprehensive and more complex, the challenge for teachers of second language writing has also increased. Their pedagogy has to focus on many more aspects of writing than sentence-level grammatical accuracy.

Admittedly, if writing is a challenging work, teaching others how to do it is likely even more so (Rossi, 2014, 23). Estrem & Reid (2012) note that learning to teach writing is a complex process requiring sustained mentoring and support throughout the early years of teaching. Hence it is evident that writing teachers are faced by a task requiring a great effort and perseverance.

Much research have proved and called for the necessity that in order to teach writing effectively, teachers must themselves be writers first. They must experience and go through the different stages of the writing

process to be able to teach this process to their students (Graves, 1995; and Bowie 1996, 3). The Commission on Composition, National Council of Teachers of English emphasizes that through experiencing the struggles and joys of writing, teachers learn that their students will need guidance and support throughout the writing process, not merely comments on the written product. Furthermore, writing teachers who write know that effective comments do not focus on pointing out errors, but go on to the more productive task of encouraging revision, which will help student writers to develop their ideas and to achieve greater clarity and honesty (NCTE, 2008).

Being writers, helps teachers and prospective teachers alike realize the complexities of the writing process, thus guiding and supporting students till they achieve their goal of having a finished product. But this seems to be insufficient as Martin & Dismuke (2013, 106) recommend that future teachers should write with their students. During the writing class they should involve themselves in creating a product in the intended genre through modeling. This is critical as modeling makes the steps and the thinking processes that students should go through while composing visible.

It is worth mentioning here that writing teachers should have adequate knowledge about writing and be ready to transfer this knowledge to the students. Kim (2006, 30) points out that language teachers tend to teach writing by focusing on the surface-level of language forms. Although linguistic competence is important to create good writing, writing competence also involves a different body of knowledge which plays a critical role in generating good writing. In order to teach writing, teachers need to reach beyond language teaching and teach about writing competence so that students can learn about writing,

such as what are the characteristics of good writing and what are good writing strategies to employ.

To be successful, writing teachers should be knowledgeable about what research says about effective writing instruction and this knowledge should be reflected in their writing classes. Asserting this point, The Writing Study Group of the NCTE Executive Committee (November 2004) recommended that teachers of writing should be well-versed in composition theory and research, and they should know methods for turning that theory into practice.

Moreover, writing teachers should also be aware that writing is a skill that can be taught, learnt and improved -not a skill that is only mastered by certain people. Hammann (2005: 16) indicates that the belief of writing as learnable is particularly important for pre-service teachers, especially since their own beliefs have the potential to affect the learning of many of their future students. It may be that if students believe that writing is a fixed ability, they may not see the value in academic writing tasks, writing-intensive courses, or in providing writing instruction to future students.

Qualified teachers need to be cognizant of their role in the writing class. Rickards & Hawes (2004) state that teaching students to write is a complex process that requires teachers to play five important roles: model, coach, assessor, planner, and consultant. They discuss in detail what each one of these roles involves. First, through modeling students gain valuable insight into the writing process as they watch their teacher select a topic, plan, write, revise, and edit. Teachers may craft a whole piece in front of the students over the course of several days or simply compose a sentence highlighting a specific target skill that they want their students to apply. They add that Writing teachers act as coaches when