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The Effectiveness of a Process Writing Program in developing Some Functional Writing Skills of student-teachers of English Language

A thesis

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Abstract

The present study aimed at developing some functional writing skills (Email, Memo, Fax, Curriculum vitae & Application Letter and Report) writing skills for second year student-teachers of English language at Women's College-Ain Shams University. The study adopted the one experimental group pre-post test design. A group of twenty-four second year student-teachers of English language were the subjects of the study. To determine the most important Email, Memo, Fax, Curriculum vitae & Application Letter and Report writing skills to be developed throughout the proposed program, a checklist was designed and approved by a panel of jury specialized in the field of curricula & methods of teaching English Language. Based on these functional writing skills, Email, Memo, Fax, Curriculum vitae & Application Letter and Report writing skills pre-post tests were developed and used.

The proposed program was developed by the researcher in the light of the Process Writing Approach. This program aimed at developing some functional writing skills (Email, Memo, Fax, Curriculum vitae & Application Letter and Report) writing skills for second year student-teachers of English language. The program was taught over a period of two months and a week (two sessions weekly). Pre-Post of Email, Memo, Fax, Curriculum vitae & Application Letter and Report writing skills were implemented. Results of the study indicated that there was statistically significant difference at ٠,٠١ level between the mean scores of the study group students on the pre-tests and post-tests in overall functional writing skills (E-mail, Memo, Fax, Curriculum vitae "CV" & Application Letter and Report writing skills) in favor of the post-tests. It was concluded that the proposed program based on the Process Writing Approach proved to be effective in developing Some Functional Writing Skills of second year student-teachers of English Language.

Chapter One
Instruction and Problem

Introduction:

Writing is one of the main four language skills. It is considered as a means of strengthening and enhancing other main language skills (i.e. reading, listening and speaking) and subsidiary skills (e.g. the correct use of punctuation marks, grammatical rules and vocabulary). Furthermore, writing is one of learners' means of expressing themselves and communicating ideas. Moreover, writing provides evidence of learners' achievement, and a source for later reference. It is a significant language skill that should be developed at an early stage of learning the foreign language; writing is a major classroom procedure and an important language activity (e.g. composition, summary making, written exercises tests and so on). Al Mutawa & Kailani (١٩٨٩:١٢٥) and Helal (٢٠٠٢) emphasized the idea that writing is an active means of communicating ideas.

Chapell (٢٠٠٧) listed the following points which make writing so important in her point of view:

- Writing is the primary basis upon which your work, your learning, and your intellect will be judged—in college, in the workplace, and in the community.
- Writing expresses who you are as a person.
- Writing is portable and permanent. It makes your thinking visible.
- Writing helps you move easily among facts, inferences, and opinions without getting confused—and without confusing your reader.
- Writing promotes your ability to pose worthwhile questions.
- Writing fosters your ability to explain a complex position to readers, and to yourself.
- Writing helps others give you feedback.

- Writing helps you refine your ideas when you give others feedback.
- Writing requires that you anticipate your readers' needs. Your ability to do so demonstrates your intellectual flexibility and maturity.
- Writing ideas down preserves them so that you can reflect upon them later.
- Writing out your ideas permits you to evaluate the adequacy of your argument.
- Writing stimulates you to extend a line of thought beyond your first impressions or get responses.
- Writing helps you understand how truth is established in a given discipline.
- Writing equips you with the communication and thinking skills you need to participate effectively in democracy.
- Writing is an essential job skill.

Tan (٢٠١٠) stated that the ability to represent yourself well on paper will help you secure a job after you leave University, as you will be more attentive to the importance of the quality of the presentation of your written work (like a resume and cover letter). How you write says a lot about you as a person, and recruiters know this. It is not just what is on the paper that distinguishes one resume from another in a competitive job market. Presentation, clarity, and professionalism can help distinguish you from the pack. Further, in the workplace, good writers are highly prized (because so few people *can* write well). Writing well, thus, opens the door to advancement in almost any field you might choose.

Types of Writing:

Many researchers who work in the field of teaching languages classify writing into different types according to their views and opinions:

❖ **According to the various discourse aims: Kern, ٢٠٠٦ adopted Kinneavy J.L. ١٩٧١ classification:**

١. Expressive Writing.

٢. Exploratory Writing.

٣. Informative Writing.

٤. Scientific Writing.

٥. Literacy Writing.

٦. Persuasive Writing.

❖ **According to the style of writing (Kroitor & Martin ١٩٩٤):**

١. Narration (Telling).

٢. Description (Showing).

٣. Argumentation (Persuading).

٤. Exposition (Explaining).

❖ **According to the purpose of writing (Zahler, Lichtenstein, Sorsby & Hillman (١٩٩٥) :**

١. Fiction Writing.

٢. Non-fiction Writing.

٣. Business Writing.

٤. Personal Writing.

❖ **According to the way/method of writing (Lannon ٢٠٠٤ and Arron ٢٠٠٥):**

١. Descriptive Writing.

٢. Narrative Writing.

٣. Division or analysis Writing.

٤. Classification Writing.

٥. Comparison and contrast Writing.

٦. Definitive Writing.

٧. Cause and effect analysis Writing.

٨. Argumentative and persuasive Writing.

٩. Process analysis Writing.

❖ **According to the field in which the writer is writing about (Pfeiffer (٢٠٠٧):**

١. Academic Writing.

٢. Personal Writing.

٣. Business Writing.

❖ **In the Egyptian context, the language methodology specialists Shehatah, ١٩٩٦ & Madkour,١٩٩٧ have divided writing according to the writing purposes into two main types:**

١. Creative Writing.   ٢. Functional Writing.

This division was the adopted one in the present study.

Fadlallah (٢٠٠٢:٦٢) defined Functional writing as a kind of writing which is related to daily dealings, administrative requirements, facilitating work in banks, companies, governmental offices and so on.

Functional writing is considered as the official writing which has specific rules, definitive foundations and followed traditions between the employees and their managers, between the employees and their colleagues or between the employees and the people who come to finish their businesses in these places.

About ٩٥٪ of man's writing activities is regarded as Functional Writing, therefore, this kind of writing is essential in a language teaching program because when we teach, we have to teach learners how to perform their daily needs. (Qassim ٢٠٠٠: ٧٦).

Kondrat (٢٠٠٩) highlighted that Application essays, CVs, cover letters, and even e-mails often have to represent an individual. In such cases the person's writing is to form the reader's opinion about the individual's personality and abilities. She added that: Excellent writing is sure to earn respect. Poor writing will, on the contrary, be difficult to understand, and will leave a bad impression about the individual. Writing structures and crystallizes one's thoughts, improving learning in such a way. Writing improves the effectiveness of the person's word usage in both written and oral speech. A survey conducted among ٦٤ American companies revealed that half of them pay attention to writing when considering a person for employment or promotion.

Depending on a questionnaire designed by the researcher to investigate the most appropriate fields of Functional Writing for second year student-teachers of English Language. Results indicated that writing E-mail, Memo, Fax, CV & Application Letter and Report gained the highest vote.

Tschabitscher (٢٠١٠) clarified that **E-mail** (electronic mail) is the exchange of computer-stored messages by telecommunication. E-mail messages are usually encoded in ASCII text. However, you can also send non-text files, such as graphic images and sound files, as attachments sent in binary streams. E-mail was one of the first uses of the Internet and is still the most popular use. A large percentage of the total traffic over the Internet is e-mail. E-mail can also be exchanged between online service provider users and in networks other than the Internet, both public and private. There are two types of e-mails: Formal E-mail and Informal E-mail.

Oscar (٢٠٠٦) pointed out that sending an email is more efficient than writing and sending a normal physical letter, for its fast and inexpensive. Email provides enhanced features; such as file attachments, Rich Text Format, and delivery confirmation and so on, which is otherwise not possible when sending a normal letter. It is time-saving and more efficient. Email can be sent to more than one person at a time, and can be received as an information, that has been mailed to more than one person. It is a more private and reliable form of information.

Perkins & Brizee (٢٠١٠) defined **Memo** or Memorandum as an internal communication whereas a letter goes to an external audience. In a professional setting, a memo is the most common form of written communication next to the email. Memo is a very important way of internal communication because it saves time and effort as one memo is more effective than ١٠ different conversations on the same issue. Perhaps it is just

easier to write one notice and post it in a common area where the majority of the workforce will see it. Ðirective Memo, Response Memo, Trip Report Memo and Field Report Memo are the common types of Memo.

Fax (short for facsimile, from Latin *fac simile*, "make similar", i.e. "make a copy") is a telecommunications technology used to transfer copies of documents, especially using affordable devices operating over the telephone network. The original document is scanned with a fax machine, which treats the contents (text or images) as a single fixed graphic image, converting it into a bitmap. In this digital form, the information is transmitted as electrical signals through the telephone system. The receiving fax machine reconverts the coded image and prints a paper copy of the document. Although Email has replaced the large scale generic text based communication, faxes still rule when it comes to sending hand written notes, or when you need to send a form that can be filled in and sent back. Fax and email, like radio and TV, offer consumers similar content in different media formats over different networks. There are three types of Fax: Informing, Request and Reply. SearchNetworking.com Definitions (٢٠٠٦).

Innes (٢٠١٠) and Doyle (٢٠١٠) stated that **a Curriculum vitæ (C.V.) is** a Latin phrase meaning "course of life". In popular usage curriculum vitæ is often written "curriculum vita". It provides an overview of a person's life and qualifications, experiences, skills and so on. The **CV** is typically the first item that a potential employer encounters regarding the job seeker and is typically used to screen applicants, often followed by an interview, when seeking employment. **A letter of application** is also known as "Cover letter", is a document sent with your CV to provide additional information on your skills and experience, and these two items form a package. A letter of application typically provides detailed information on why the applicant is qualified for the job he/she is applying for. Effective application letters

explain the reasons for the applicant's interest in the specific organization and identify his/her most relevant skills or experiences. If a man looking for a job, then it is very important that he/she understands how to offer himself/herself in the best way to an employer. This is done by writing a 'CV'. They added that the application letter the applicant chooses for transmitting the applicant CV to an employer or important networking contact can be one of the most significant factors in the success (or failure) of the applicant job-hunting campaign. In fact, a survey of nearly ٦٠٠ employment professionals, conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), suggests some ٧٦٪ of employers may automatically eliminate an employment candidate from any further hiring consideration, based solely on the quality of his or her cover letter alone. Further, ٤٣٪ of survey respondents also reported they view the cover letter as equal to the resume in importance.

Bartle (٢٠١٠) and Chapple (٢٠١٠) identified **Report** as a specific form of writing that is organized around concisely identifying and examining issues, events, or findings that have happened in a physical sense, such as events that have occurred within an organization, or findings from a research investigation. These events can also pertain to events or issues that have been presented within a body of literature. The key to report writing is informing the reader simply and objectively about all relevant issues. A very precise and well written report can prove to be very helpful to a person's career as it gives all the relevant information related to the subject while on the other hand a poorly written report can cause a problem for a person as the credibility of his work gets on stake.

In the last three decades, writing research has undergone tremendous shift, instead of focusing on the end product of writing, the words on the page and their degree of correctness. Researchers have become more interested in the process in which the writer is engaged on the way to that end product.

Consequently, **Process Writing Approach** is considered as one of the most important approaches which support the mentioned ideas. Roe. et. al.(١٩٩٥) defined it as follows " the process approach involves the students with concern for the message and the audience for the writing from the beginning the development of the written material is guided through various stages of development, with students receiving feedback from teacher and peer at each stage: prewriting, drafting, revision, and publishing and sharing". Process Writing Approach stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models". Thus, the focus shifted from the final product itself to the different stages the writer goes through in order to create this product.

Stanley (٢٠٠٣) highlighted that the Process Writing Approach treats all writing as a creative act which requires time and positive feedback to be done well. In PWA, the teacher moves away from being someone who sets students a writing topic and receives the finished product for correction without any intervention in the writing process itself.

Helal (٢٠٠٣) stated that recent trends regard writing as a process that goes through several steps. Several scholars and educators have dealt with the steps/ stages of the writing process. Although they differed in the number of these steps or the titles / headings they attributed to each step / stage. It is clear that these differences are only superficial. Nearly all of these scholars and educators have reached the conclusion that the writing process goes through a series of prewriting activities, drafting, writing or composing then revising and editing. However, it is important, here, to take into consideration the recursive nature of writing.

McClosky (١٩٩٠:١٩), Stanley (٢٠٠٣), Lee (٢٠١٠) and Nordquist (٢٠١٠) saw that the writing process consists of six steps. These steps are follows:

١) **Pre-writing:** Students here are encouraged to collect necessary ideas and information for writing through different prewriting activities.

٢) **Drafting:** Students in this stage start writing their first drafts based on the information and ideas they collected in the previous stage.

٣) **Sharing and Responding to Writing:** Students read aloud their first drafts and listen to their classmates' and the teacher's opinions and suggestions that aim at helping them improve the content and organization of ideas of their written pieces.

٤) **Revising:** In this stage, students revise the quality of the content of their writing, the organization of ideas and the charity of expressions used.

٥) **Editing:** Students correct their grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors with the help of a dictionary and a grammar book.

٦) **Publishing:** Students' good mature writing is published on the classroom walls, in student made books or in a classroom/ school newspaper or magazine. This stage motivates students to write and improve their writing as they are writing for a reader. (i.e. their friends and the teacher).

McCloskey (١٩٩٠:١٩) clarified that not all steps are used with all types of writing: neither are all used with every piece a student writes. Therefore,