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**Faculty of Education**  
**Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction**

# **The Effect of Using Computer Edutainment on Developing 2nd Primary Graders' Writing Skills**

**A Thesis Submitted in Requirements for the Master  
Degree in Education**

(Curriculum and Instruction: TEFL)

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# **Abstract**

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The present study attempted to examine the effect of using computer edutainment on developing 2nd graders' writing skills. The study comprised thirty-second year primary stage pupils enrolled in Bani Hamad primary governmental school, Minia governorate. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design. Thirty participants were randomly assigned to one group and they were taught through a suggested computer edutainment program. Data were gathered and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative instruments. A pre post electronic writing test, a pre post paper and pencil writing test, a writing scoring rubric, a vocabulary acquisition test, a self-assessment checklist, a writing skills strategies and concepts checklist, writing samples, a writing development record, and reflection logs were used in the study. Findings indicated that participants showed significantly higher levels of writing samples in the area of content and ideas, organization and form, style, and convention. Findings also showed significantly higher levels of vocabulary acquisition. Participants' writing samples and the writing development record showed that they internalized the writing strategies and concepts they were taught, and transferred them to their independent writing. Participants also showed that they moved from the emergent stage of writing to the conventional one. The improvement of pupils writing as demonstrated by multiple measures suggests that computer edutainment is an effective way for developing 2nd primary graders' writing skills in one of the governmental schools.

**Key words:** Computer Edutainment, Writing Skills

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# Chapter I

## The Problem

# **CHAPTER I**

## **The Problem**

### **Introduction**

Writing is a process of communicating information. It makes communication visible across space and time, exerting a strong influence on our life. It is an integral part of a child's literacy development. Children should be able to express themselves clearly and concisely in written form. Graves (1994) cited in Bryson (2003) states that written communication should be developed simultaneously with reading, speaking, and listening skills within a balanced literacy system.

Writing can make sense of the events in our lives and fulfill a human need to "represent our experiences". Helping pupils to represent their own experiences will enrich their lives and our own. Therefore, when pupils find purpose and meaning in writing, they want to write more and will work to better express the purpose and meaning in their writing. The goal is to produce self-motivated, self-assessing and self-correcting writers (Bryson, 2003).

For pupils, writing is a necessity that serves as one predictor of academic success which depends on an adequate degree of writing fluency. Writing skills can be categorized as (a) higher-level writing skills, which include planning, organizing, and revising, and (b) lower-level writing skills, which include handwriting, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. All of these skills may limit pupils' ability to respond successfully to demands of the general education curriculum. Pupils who have not acquired good writing skills cannot make full use of writing to support and extend their learning (Schumaker & Deshler, 2003; Graham & Harris, 2003 ; and Graham, 2006) cited in (Du, 2009).

Writing is a demanding task requiring attention to multiple processes. Not only do children need to learn the writing mechanics, but also they need to develop effective higher-level writing. Writing involves planning, organizing the composition, revising and improving the writing. Writing also requires self-regulation, self-assessing and attention to the composing process. The ability to regulate and monitor one's composing process is an important part of the writing process. Skilled writers use strategies to plan, write, and revise their compositions, as well as strategies to self regulate performance (Graham & Harris, 2003) cited in (Du, 2009). Writing is more than a piece of written work children write. It is the way children utilize strategies they have practiced during writer's lesson. This study focuses on developing not only basic writing skills of writing but also higher-level writing skills.

Although writing skills are important for communication, they do not receive their due attention for the part of the English syllabus of 2nd primary grade. The "Hand in Hand" English textbook series pays more attention to oral communication skills rather than writing skills. Writing skills in Hand in Hand are restricted to mechanics, especially copying and following principles of good handwriting. As mentioned in Hand in Hand teacher's guide, writing activities are designed specifically to help pupils acquire good life-long handwriting habits. According to Anderson & Keel (2002) and Brice (2004) cited in Du (2009) handwriting is considered one of the lower writing skills. Thus, an increasing number of pupils move to the third grade without sufficient exposure to writing skills. As a result, they are unprepared to begin formal writing instruction. Out of the researcher's experience, writing is not difficult to learn in the 2nd grade. As well as, written communication should be developed integratively with reading, speaking, and listening skills, within a balanced literacy system. Therefore, it is important for teachers to conduct enrichment writing activities, specifically designed to develop writing skills for these pupils.

Hence, developing writing skills through social constructivism may enhance them. Lin (2009) stated that writing is mainly a communicative and social act that requires a social context, audience, and other texts the writers may read while writing. Therefore, in the researcher's point of view, pupils can develop their writing through interaction, as it involves not just expression of one's own ideas but comprehension of those of the others. This view is also supported by Vygotsky who believed that children are active scientists whose cognitive ability is increased through interaction with a more knowledgeable one. This person can be a parent, teacher, or peer or technology. This notion led Vygotsky to identify an instructional area that he titled the Zone of Proximal Development 'ZPD'. It is the zone that bridges the gap between what is known and what can be known. This is the place where true learning occurs and where teachers should direct their teaching (Gomez, 2009).

Teaching children in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to advance children's knowledge is an important aspect for teaching children. To teach within the ZPD, teachers must provide learning experiences and activities that strike a balance between children's current skills and knowledge and children's potential (the high level they are expected to reach). Providing this support structure is important for children because it allows them to gain the skills needed to accomplish tasks that are just beyond their reach. With this type of support, children are able to advance without fear of failure.

To provide adequate instruction in the ZPD, teachers should use a support structure identified by Vygotsky as scaffolding which is a support structure provided by teachers and gives children the opportunity to extend their current knowledge and skills by providing them with tasks considered too hard without assistance but manageable through their teacher's support. It

is also described as all the things teachers do, and all the tools teachers provide to help learners be successful. The promise behind scaffolding is that what pupils can do with help today, they will be able to do by themselves tomorrow (Gomez, 2009 and Lehmann, 2004). In this study, scaffolding is an all-encompassing word for a myriad of tools, writing concepts, writing strategies and techniques that scaffold pupils in their writing. Additionally, through scaffolding, teachers of the primary stage can provide enrichment writing activities based on computer edutainment to develop 2nd graders' writing skills.

Computer edutainment is a constructive learning technique. It is the medium to introduce writing skills in this early stage. It provides a real opportunity for communication. Pour (2006) states that children learn best while playing. Computer edutainment applications combine entertainment and education in one package. Children learn best in a pleasant learning environment and the best learning environment is one in which children are able to have fun. Computer edutainment based learning is therefore a preferred vehicle for educating young children. So developing writing through computer edutainment, not through traditional methods, may enhance the writing skills.

Over the past decade, the computer has changed the ways we work and learn. A meta-analysis of research on computers and writing showed that the use of computers significantly improved the quality and quantity of student writing (Goldberg, Russell, & Cook, 2003). Writing with computer use involves the manipulation of certain applications. Computer edutainment is now used to describe a new computer based learning style in which education and entertainment are combined. The success of computer edutainment applications are often based on attractive visual presentation, interactive features, unlimited practice, and immediate feedback (scaffolds of the