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**A Suggested Program for Developing the English Writing
Skills of Secondary Stage Students and Reducing their
Apprehension in the Light of Writing as a Process Approach
and Using Electronic Learning**

A Dissertation

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(Curriculum & Instruction (EFL))

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Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of a suggested program for developing the English writing skills of secondary stage students and reducing their apprehension in the light of writing as a process approach and using electronic learning. Thirty first year EFL secondary school students from El Mahmoudia Secondary School for Boys, El Mahmoudia Administration, Behiera Governate, were randomly chosen to represent the study group. The study group received training through an e learning writing program in the academic 2017 -2018 .

A pre-post writing test was administered to the study group in addition to a writing apprehension test .

The results of the study supported the two study hypotheses. There is a statistically significant difference at 0.01 level between the mean scores of the experimental group students in the pre-and post-application of the English Writing Skills (content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, and Total score) in favor of the post test.

There is also a statistically significant difference at 0.01 level between the mean scores of the experimental group students in the pre-and post-application of the writing apprehension test in favor of the post test.

It was concluded that the suggested program showed effectiveness in using the suggested Program for developing the English writing Skills of secondary stage students and reducing their apprehension in the light of writing as a process approach and using electronic learning instruction in developing EFL secondary stage students' writing skills and its sub-skills as well as in reducing their writing apprehension

Keywords:

E Learning, writing skills , writing apprehension , Process writing

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Chapter One

Introduction and Problem

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Introduction

Teaching English has become increasingly important because English is an international language that people all over the world use in communicating ideas. In addition, the tremendous progress of modern science, the revolution of modern technology, the internet, and closer political and industrial links have highlighted the value of cross-cultural communication, a fundamental part of which is learning English. Besides, it is one of the necessities of getting an academic degree and obtaining a job.

The English language holds an eminent place in Egypt as well as in most countries. Consequently, English language teaching occupies a prominent position in the Egyptian schools and curricula. It is taught as a compulsory subject and as the first foreign language beginning from the first grade in all Egyptian government schools.

Writing is one of the four language skills that requires special attention, as it is a productive language process. It is the process of transforming thoughts and ideas into written communication. Writing proficiency plays a great role in conveying a written message accurately and effectively.

Writing is a tool of thinking. It is a tool for language development, for critical thinking and, extension, for learning in all disciplines. According to Fageeh (2011), “many EFL learners heavily rely on writing as an integral skill to language learning”. As supported by much research that EFL learners’ listening, speaking and reading skills mainly depend on their writing competence (Hefferman, 2006; Hinkel, 2004; Al-Ghamari, 2004).

Although the writing skill is considered important, a lot of research studies conducted in the various EFL contexts strongly suggested that EFL learners face severe problems in writing that hinder their academic progress (Tahaine, 2010; Rababah, 2003; Bacha, 2002).

Writing is a process through which writers explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete. It is a difficult skill for native and nonnative speakers alike, for writers should balance multiple issues such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics. Writing is especially difficult for nonnative speakers because they are expected to create written products that demonstrate mastery of all the aforementioned issues in a new language (Abu-Rass, 2001).

Previous researchers proved that EFL students face some writing problems. Those problems might hinder their ability to express themselves freely, as they are not interested in the topic that the teacher asks them to write about (Aly, 2001). They cannot link sentences into a coherent paragraph, nor can they express their thought in a lucid and organized way.

Alwasilah (2000, p. 12) points out that teachers are likely to teach students topic on spelling, word formation, vocabulary, grammar and theories of writing and consequently ignoring the practice of writing.

Katilie (2003) carried out a study investigating why the students had a poor quality in English writing composition. She found that the reason why the students achieved unpleasant result in writing English composition was because the practices of inappropriate teaching strategy in the class.

El-ghotmy (2004) conducted a study to develop preparatory stage students' writing skills. She stated that students make errors in language and fall into writing problems. The majority of students are not able to write complete sentences or good paragraphs. That is why she attempted to investigate the holistic approach and its effect on improving second year preparatory students' writing skills.

El-Shafie (2006) assures that writing is the most difficult skill of all the language skills taught to EFL students and is considered some sort of punishment for students. Students cannot develop their ideas when asked to write simple or compound sentences, and certain types of grammar mistakes dominate their writings (e.g. sentence structure, conjunctions, tenses, adverbs, adjectives, voice, prepositions, word-order, spelling, paragraph development, vocabulary choice, and punctuation). In addition, their sentences are almost Arabic structures literally translated. Their writing is unsatisfactory and poor and they are unable to express themselves in writing appropriately and correctly.

Alwasilah (2007) asserts that writing is complicated for students. He added that in the classroom activities, writing is considered as the hardest skill.

Selim (2008) conducted a study to improve first year preparatory stage students' writing skills and their interest in English. He stated that students make many mistakes when they write and consider composition the most difficult task for them. So, he attempted to investigate the effectiveness of a program based on individualized activities in developing first prep pupils' writing skills and their interest in English.

In addition, research also identified that other reasons for the problems of lack of EFL writing skills are the inefficient teaching strategies followed by English language teachers in teaching composition (Aly, 2001), and the absence of motivating pre-writing activities that can enable learners to collect enough ideas and information necessary for writing or the lack of due time and attention devoted to developing writing skills and its different sub-skills (Helal, 2003).

Besides, it has been noted that most students are usually apprehensive toward writing activities, and writing instruction remains an area of low interest for those students (Lidvall, 2008; Clark, 2004).

Writing apprehension is a term that has been introduced by Daly and Miller (1975). They defined writing apprehension as "A subjective complex of attitudinal, emotional, and behavioral interaction which reinforces each other" (Daly & Miller, 1975, p. 11). Researchers have used many terms to refer to writing apprehension such as anxiety and blocking (Al-Ahmad, 2003; Gungl & Taylor, 1989; Rose, 1980, 1983). They consider writing apprehension as a complex term because of the complexity of writing. Writing apprehension is a serious problem that can hinder the performance of both native and non-native learners (Al-Sobh & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2012; Graves, 1984).

Writing apprehension is associated with many kinds of experiences. First, it refers to a behavior of resistance by an individual writer in a situation when he/she cannot begin to write or is being interrupted in the writing process owing largely to writing avoidance. Second, it is used to describe a writer who negatively judges a particular writing project's value or any writing project's value; in other words, the avoidance stems from the writer's negative attitude. It is also used to refer to a general anxiety and agitation during the writing process in cases whereby the writer is blocked or otherwise (Hettich, 1994). In addition, writers generally experience one or more elements of writing apprehension including negative attitudes, emotional agitation or blocking. In some cases, the writer manages to finish the project but in others he/she fails to. Writers suffer from writing apprehension owing to feelings of anxiety or negative attitudes towards writing but there is no clear cut solution for their problem (Hettich, 1994). Researchers have found three levels of writing apprehension, ranging from high, moderate, and low level (Daly & Miller, 1975). A study conducted by Hanna (2010) revealed that writing apprehension may influence students at all levels even after they have graduated from universities.

The phenomenon of Writing apprehension has received much scholarly effort because of the importance assigned to it by many educators and writing specialists. Regarding the characteristics of the high apprehensives' written work , Daly (1978 , Daly and Miller , 1975) confirm that it is of lower quality and their papers appeared to be shorter and have less developed language and sentence structure (Faigley , Daly and Witte , 1991: 11-12). Reeves (1997: 39) adds the following :” They have more difficulty with getting new ideas; their ideas are not well-developed; they score lower on measures of syntactic maturity”.

Abdel Latif , (2007) further, provides the following factors accounting for high English writing apprehension : Lack of linguistic knowledge, low foreign language self-esteem, poor history of writing achievement and perceived writing performance improvement, low English writing self-efficacy and instructional practice of English writing tutors such as :

- a. Teachers' focus on teaching the theoretical concepts of writing and neglect of practical aspects.
- b. Lack of feedback given by the teachers on the essays students write.
- c. Teachers' overuse of criticism when commenting on the essays presented in the lecture.

Abdel Latif (2007) in his study reached the conclusion that writing apprehension is an effect; it is the result of lack of linguistic competence and writing skill. Likewise, Clark (2005:8) concluded that writing apprehension is a result not a cause. It is a result of lacking knowledge or understanding necessary to complete the writing task and the students' belief that writing is hard work.

As a result, the researcher, in the present study, searched for new methods for teaching writing that made students engaged and involved in the process of writing.

. Process writing is an approach to writing, where language learners focus on the process by which they produce their written products rather than on the products themselves. In the end, learners surely need to and are required to complete their products, yet the writing process itself is stressed more. By focusing on the writing process, learners come to understand themselves more, and find how to work through the writing. They may explore what strategies conform to their style of learning. Brown (2001, p. 336) states that writing is a thinking process, a writer produces a final written product based on their thinking after the writer goes through the thinking process.

In the Process approach, learners are looked upon as central in learning, so that learner's needs, expectations, goals, learning styles, skills and knowledge are taken