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# THE EFFECTS OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH ON LEARNER'S WRITING ACHIEVEMENT A CASE STUDY OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS AT BISKRA UNIVERSITY

Thesis submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in candidacy for the degree of 'Doctorat Es-Sciences' in Applied Linguistics

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### Dedication

### This work is dedicated:

To my beloved mother, my daughter and my grand son whose support, encouragement and constant love has sustained me throughout life. To my brothers and sisters;

> to my son-in- law, Yacine; to all my relatives and friends and finally to you, dearest reader.

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### Abstract

Most of the Algerian students find it difficult to master all the aspects of writing and to produce acceptable paragraphs or essays. This is due to the complexity of the writing skill and also to the writing instruction which remains form-focused. This research work attempts to investigate the effects of the Competency-Based Approach on first-year students' writing achievement in the department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University and more precisely in the section of English. It aims to show that if this approach failed in middle and secondary education, it could be a success at the university. This is based on the belief that if a socio-cognitive writing approach, complying with the principles of the Competency-Based Approach, were implemented in teaching writing, it would succeed in promoting students' writing in terms of fluency, accuracy and grammatical complexity. This can be realized through the use of the Process-Genre Approach which is assumed to be the most appropriate one in developing students' writing proficiency under the Competency-Based Approach. In order to confirm or reject the hypothesis that the implementation of such a writing approach would bring on positive results if compared to the Product Approach, a control group (N = 40) and an experimental group (N=40) were selected for a quasiexperimental study. This investigation was carried out, first, by the administration of two questionnaires, one to teachers of written expression (N=10) and the other one to a sample of first-year students (N=180) to check out the effects of the Competency-Based Approach. Second, we compared the pre and post experiment writing tests to show the effects of the treatment. This was supplemented by the qualitative data gathered from two post interviews conducted with a sample of the same informants (N=15) and from the teacher who implemented the experiment. In fact, the pre-experiment questionnaires revealed the failure of the Competency-Based Approach in developing students' writing proficiency in previous education. Conversely, the scores obtained from the post t-tests, measuring the four areas formulated in the hypotheses, if compared to those obtained in the pre-test, revealed that the participants achieved statistically greater levels in fluency, accuracy and complexity. In addition, the qualitative data gathered from the two post interviews validated the efficiency of the Process-Genre Approach if compared to the Product Approach used previously. Summing up, both qualitative and quantitative

findings obtained in this research indicate that such a socio-cognitive approach can help students develop their writing competencies because they experience a whole writing process and they learn about the organizational structure as well as the linguistic features of different genres. All this develops students' writing competencies necessary for conveying appropriate messages in real situations.

### List of Abbreviations

ALM: Audio-Lingual Method

**CBA:** Competency-Based Approach

**CBE:** Competency-Based Education

**CBET**: Competency-Based Education and Training

**CBI:** Content-Based Instruction

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

**CNRSE**: Commission Nationale de la Réforme du Système Educatif (National commission

of the Educational System Reform)

**CRA**: Criterion-Referenced Assessment

**DESECO:** Definition and Selection of Competencies

**EFL**: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

KWL: What you already know, what you want to know, what you have learnt

L1: Mother Tongue/ First Language

L2: Second language

LMD: Licence/ Master/ Doctorat

NRA: Norm-Referenced Assessment

**SLT**: Second Language Teaching

TBI: Task-Based Instruction

TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching

UK: United Kingdom

**PPP**: Presentation, Practice, Production

USA: United States of America

**ZPD**: Zone of Proximal Development

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### **General Introduction**

#### 1. Background of the Study

Because of rapid changes including huge development of high technologies and fast growing economic conditions, skills that were appropriate two decades ago no longer prepare students for the real world beyond school. They need to be able to use a wide range of tools for interacting effectively with the environment such as information technology and to use the language necessary for interacting with people from different nations. In addition, the fact that society has also changed its world views, values and norms urges educational institutions worldwide to search for the most suitable way to educate young people in a way that enables them to take responsibility for managing their own lives and acting autonomously.

Being aware of the importance of language, Algeria cannot neglect the fact that English is the lingua franca of international affairs. The role of English as the language of international trade, the global informational technology and the imminent path of globalization are factors which cannot be ignored if Algeria hopes to become a highly competitive player. Therefore, as there is a clear need for future generations to master the language, the Competency-Based Approach, a socio-constructivist and cognitive design, has been set with the purpose to install competencies in the learner. This new vision concerning not only English, but education, in general, was the result of the influence of socio-constructivism and new life demands. It is why a number of countries, including Algeria, have adopted the Competency-Based Approach. In this perspective, teaching and training are considered as instruments for the development of autonomous individuals able to face challenges and to adopt critical positions in order to adapt to new situations, believing that the accent on the development of competent individuals necessitates a new conceptualization of teaching. For more precision, this approach has been implemented in both middle and secondary education to enable learners to reach an acceptable level of performance which allows them to communicate in a written or oral form whenever it is needed, especially in the era of globalization and job requirements. This approach has also been implemented in higher education in a number of countries and may be used in line with the LMD system.

Writing, which is the dependent variable of this study, plays a vital role not only in conveying information, but also in transforming information to create new knowledge in such a demanding life. It is thus of central importance for students in academic, second and foreign settings. Based on the natural order hypothesis, writing is generally considered to be the language skill obtained last; nevertheless, it is as important as the rest. However, teaching it tends to be a much neglected part of the language programme in both middle and secondary education. Writing is also a complicated cognitive task because it is an activity that demands careful thought, discipline and concentration. It thus appears to be a challenging task for EFL learners including the Algerians, who still find difficulties in producing an adequate piece of writing in spite of the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach based on the development of competencies among which writing is an important one. Being a means of communication, its development occurs through different stages; in other words, in order to be a competent writer, the learner should develop not only linguistic competence as in traditional approaches but also social and strategic competences. Therefore, teachers should try to look for an integrated approach which allows students to develop all the required competencies.

#### 2. Statement of the Problem

Although the teaching of writing has undergone major changes in the last two decades, and in spite of the change undergone in middle and secondary education through the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach as well as the change from the classic system to the LMD system in higher education, the teaching of writing remains traditional. It is predominantly form-focused due to the fact that writing teachers who grew up learning to write in traditional product-oriented classes would bring into their own writing classes the same preconceptions that have been forged through their own learning experiences. Another reason is that EFL teachers, in particular, view themselves as language teachers rather than writing teachers. Therefore, their students' compositions are seen as products to be judged solely for the assignment of grades. In addition, heavy emphasis is put on examination as the only yardstick for measuring academic achievement in the Algerian educational system.

In fact, writing is one of the biggest challenges that many Algerian students face throughout their academic life in higher education because it is one of the main criteria used to measure progress. Students are often required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through various forms of academic writing, including paragraphs, essays, reports, projects, exams, dissertations and theses. The fact that the writing proficiency is deteriorating is not a secret and that even students who have high test scores struggle to produce coherent pieces of writing. However, teaching English writing has not received much attention in the Algerian school. As a result, the product of the Algerian English teaching system is not satisfying. The dominating assumption is that the more grammatical rules and vocabulary items a foreign learner acquires, the better he/she becomes. The focus of grammar was at the expense of teaching other techniques such as planning, organization and support. The main thing was to memorize a lot of grammatical rules and structures with the view to moving ahead to the next level. In fact, the issue of deemphasizing useful writing strategies can also be attributed to L1 instruction. In teaching the Arabic composition, the Algerian school does not emphasize strategies such as planning, revising and editing that skilled writers normally use. Consequently, learners transfer their L1 behaviours into the foreign language. Hence, urgent measures have to be taken to train learners to become effective writers; however, this should be started earlier, we mean at the middle school as pupils start learning English from the first year.

The focus of this study is to apply the Competency-Based Approach adopted in the reform, being socio-constructivist, in order to prove that if the principles of such an approach are applied in teaching writing, it is possible to reach better results. We should note here that in spite of the adoption of the Competency-Based Approach in middle and secondary education, teaching English remained traditional, and the writing skill continues to be neglected. It is why we receive students at the university unable to write correct sentences or to express themselves in a clear way. In the context of this study, it has been noticed that learners face problems both at lower and higher level skills; i.e., they are not equipped with the necessary skills of writing in grammar, spelling, organization, planning, monitoring and reviewing. They also lack motivation for the writing skill which is considered as the most difficult one. In fact, people may acquire writing through reading, imitating, experiencing and getting feedback. They need to learn the skill through hard work and the help of experienced motivated teachers. It is what this research intends to apply through the Competency-Based Approach as part of the change in teaching writing. We believe that this would affect students' writing positively and motivate them enough by providing them with constructive feedback necessary fort the development of the writing competency.

This study is limited to the university level and more specifically to first-year students, who normally have studied under the Competency-Based Approach for seven years, in order to achieve continuity to teaching in the secondary school. This can allow us to prove that we can reach better results if we choose the right methodology underlying such an approach which has not been well- implemented; in other words, its principles have not been taken into consideration despite the fact that if we refer to secondary course books, we notice that a new writing approach is introduced implicitly through writing activities under the Competency-Based Approach.

#### 3. Aim of the Study

We should note that we have chosen to investigate the writing skill for four main reasons. First, we can mention the importance of writing because of the crucial role it plays in social, cultural, professional and academic contexts, mainly nowadays in the global era in which the position of communication plays the most important roles including the ability to express oneself either in speaking or in writing.

Second, writing is a complex skill which requires more competencies than speaking. There are many situations which are involved in speaking activities to support the people in understanding communication ignoring mistakes, but writing needs the complete information to understand what the writer means. Besides, its components are numerous including: grammatical ability which means producing sentences acceptable in terms of accuracy in addition to diction; i.e., the ability to choose correct and appropriate words and also mechanical ability which includes punctuation, capitalization, spelling...etc. Moreover, the writer is required to gain stylistic and organizational abilities enabling him to use sentences and paragraphs appropriately and to organize them according to English writing conventions. Furthermore, the ability to make judgments about what is appropriate according to the task, the purpose of writing and the audience seems to be of great importance.

Third, having taught in both middle and secondary education and ultimately at the university, we think that we are aware of teachers and students' difficulties at all levels either in teaching or learning to write. This is perceivable in students' productions which reveal many weaknesses in all areas including fluency, accuracy, grammatical and lexical complexity and organization. In addition to the lack of sufficient language knowledge, the difficulty faced by many students is largely attributed to the composing skills and strategies necessary to accomplish the specifically assigned writing tasks. Thus, this requires commitment from teachers to find an integrated approach capable of developing learners' writing proficiency in the Algerian context.

Fourth, as a teacher and a researcher, we are motivated to know about the effects of the Competency-Based Approach on students' writing proficiency. For more precision, this approach has been implemented in previous education as a reform seeking improvement that enables students to act autonomously in the changing life by developing their competencies including those of the writing skill. Therefore, we chose an experimental group for this study as a representative sample from the first population trained according to this approach. On the one hand, we assume that the Competency-Based Approach did not bring on efficient results, the thing which was confirmed in the situation analysis before proceeding to the treatment. On the other hand, we believe that the use of a writing approach which fits the Competency-Based Approach to teaching and learning would be efficient to develop writing as a skill in its own right.

Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of the Competency-Based Approach and more specifically to show that the implementation of the Process Genre Approach, a writing approach fitting the Competency-Based Approach, would significantly affect the quality of the Algerian EFL learners' compositions in terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity. The overall aim is translated into more specific objectives which are expressed in the form of research questions and hypotheses.

### 4. Research Questions

The present study is an attempt at answering a set of questions related to writing under the Competency-Based Approach. The objectives of the investigation are guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the Competency-Based Approach?

2. How would the implementation of the characteristics of the Competency-Based Approach in writing instruction affect students' writing if compared to the Traditional Product- Oriented Approach?

- 3. What effects would the Competency-Based Approach have on students' writing in terms of fluency?
- 4. What effects would the Competency-Based Approach have on students' writing in terms of accuracy?
- 5. What effects would the Competency-Based Approach have on students' writing in terms of complexity?

### 5. Hypotheses

This study is designed to test the following hypotheses:

1. Students who receive instruction according to the Competency-Based Approach would better develop their writing in terms of fluency if compared to those who received instruction according to the Traditional Product Approach.

2. Students who receive instruction according to the Competency-Based Approach would better develop their writing in terms of accuracy if compared to those who received instruction according to the Traditional Product Approach.

3. Students who receive instruction according to the Competency-Based Approach would better develop their writing in terms of grammatical and lexical complexity if compared to those who received instruction according to the Traditional Product Approach.

#### 6. Rationale for the Study

The fact that the writing problems exist even after seven years of English instruction in middle and secondary education under the Competency-Based Approach is definitively a cause of concern because writing tends to be a neglected area in English language teaching in secondary schools in Algeria. It is why we receive students at the university considered as poor writers. This reality has been confirmed in the fourth chapter in which the situation has been analyzed by the administration of two questionnaires which enabled us to gather sufficient data.

The current emphasis on structure, mechanics and linguistic knowledge in the teaching of writing sidelines the importance of teaching writing as a process and ignores the social nature of writing. This study is expected to provide insights into whether the application of the principles of the Competency-Based Approach to writing instruction, instead of the Product-Based Approach used by university teachers in Algeria, would develop students' writing proficiency. The findings of this study will have significant pedagogical implications for EFL Algerian teachers at the university level and will also show that if the Competency-Based Approach had been used appropriately in secondary education, it would have brought better results, and we would have received students with better writing proficiency. We want to stress that a change in any educational system should undoubtedly involve a change in teaching the different skills in a way that suits the reasons of that change and that instruction at the university should be a continuity to secondary education. Hence, it is expected that this study will shed light on the feasibility of ensuring continuity to secondary education by incorporating a writing approach, based on the principles of Competency-Based Approach, at the University level.

### 7. Research Methodology

Methodology refers to the main approaches and paradigms that guide the manner with which the research is conducted while methods refer to specific research tools, instruments or techniques that a researcher uses to collect data to answer research questions. The decision to choose a particular research method is generally determined by its being fit for the purpose of the research problem, questions, objectives and other practical considerations.

### 7.1 Experimental Design

The informants in this study were randomly selected according to groups assigned by the department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University. The way of selecting the sample of this study refers to the naturally occurring group design or quasi-experimental design. These are groups into which students were randomly assigned because they naturally belong to one group or another. Thus, the two groups used in this study were existing groups at the time of undertaking this research since it was not possible once again to randomly select and reassign students to form a group in a formal institutional setting. This design requires a pre-test and a post-test. Both tests in this study were given to the control and experimental groups before and after the treatment which consisted of the manipulation of the independent variable (the implementation of the Process-Genre Approach to writing instruction, seen as the most appropriate approach to be used under the Competency-Based Approach to learning versus the Product Approach used with the control group. The purpose of this treatment was to examine its effects on writing, the dependent variable, and more precisely on fluency, accuracy and complexity in students' performance.

#### 7.2 The Sample

The students used in the experiment consisted of two groups of forty students each, a control group (N= 40) and an experimental group (N= 40) registered in the first year at the Department of Foreign Languages, Section of English at the University of Biskra in 2010/2011 and selected according to the use of the quasi-experimental design appropriate to a formal institutional setting. The subjects represented homogeneous groups as they were aged between 18 and 20 and have the same educational background as all of them received the same instruction in English in both middle and secondary schools under the new reform, adopting the Competency-Based Approach as an alternative to the Communicative Approach. The subjects were likely to represent a normal distribution of the population, composed of 500 students, or a range of writing abilities that could be expected from the whole population registered in the same level.

#### 7.3 Data Gathering Tools

Because the present study aimed first at diagnosing students' writing proficiency, then proving that they really needed a kind of treatment to develop this proficiency, we have opted for the following data gathering tools: - Two pre-experiment questionnaires, one administered to teachers of written expression and the other one to first -year students in order to analyze the situation before the experiment.

- Second, an experiment was conducted on a group of first year students (N=40), implementing the Process-Genre Approach, approach in writing considered as a kind of treatment, believing that it would bring positive results as stated in the hypotheses, whereas the control group received an instruction based on the Product Approach usually used in teaching writing. This project followed a tradition of studies that employed the pre- post tests techniques (Min 2006; Ellis *et. al.*, 2008). Thus, a pre-test was intended to determine the student' proficiency level before the treatment, then a post writing test to yield required data for analysis of the effectiveness of the Process-Genre Approach on students' writing proficiency. However, many experts in educational research (Gall *et.al.*, 1996; & Cohen *et.al.*, 2005) stressed that the use of tests raised a number of ethical concerns. For instance, they have reported the fact that individuals may suffer from anxiety in testing situations. It is therefore the researchers' responsibility to elicit participants' best performance, while minimizing their anxiety if they plan to use a test as part of the data collection process.

- Third, in addition to the data gathering tools cited above, we opted for two post- experiment interviews to both students used in the experiment and the writing teacher who conducted it. This was done for the purpose of confirming the quantitative results recorded in the post-test, and thus, giving more validity to the results obtained from the experiment. Triangulation, the use of different methods, from this perspective is a strategy that gives the research more credibility and is likely to produce more accurate and comprehensive data; in other words, it enhances the validity and reliability of the information gathered. In fact, the use of quantitative and qualitative measures serves the purpose of validating the results. Triangulation is also a valid technique to check the consistency of the gathered data (Brymon, 2004, Cohen *et. al.*, 2007).

### 8. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is presented in seven chapters divided into two parts. The first three chapters are devoted to literature review which provides the theoretical framework regarding the evolution of language teaching approaches from Communicative
Language Teaching to the Competency-Based Approach, being the independent variable in this research, writing under the Competency-Based Approach and writing assessment. These chapters delimit the theoretical framework, and consequently, lead to practical implications. The second part consists of four chapters starting with situation analysis, implementation of the experiment and ultimately provides both quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the results leading to pedagogical implications and suggestions.

The first chapter, Current Approaches to Language Teaching: From Communicative Language Teaching to the Competency-Based Approach examines communicative language teaching, being the theoretical background for the competency-based approach, and considered as classical, if compared to current approaches, giving much importance to fluency at the expense of accuracy. Second, it explores the Competency-Based Approach which is as an extension of Communicative Language Teaching, a weak version if compared with content-based instruction, taskbased instruction, text-based instruction and the competency-based instruction, which puts much emphasis on the development of higher order intellectual and life skills stressing not only fluency but accuracy as well.

The second chapter, Writing under the Competency-Based Approach, presents an overview of writing approaches and ends up with a personal deduction implying that the Process-Genre Approach is the most appropriate to be used under the Competency-Based Approach being both social-cognitive. We should note that on the one hand the cognitive model of writing considers writing as problem -solving, goal-setting and decision-making activities that are used by the writer when he/she plans, translates thought to print and revises before editing them. On the other hand, the social view of writing is based on interaction in social contexts. Hence, the writer should take into account the socio-cultural norms, and this can be done by knowing the conventions of each genre in order to be able to convey appropriate messages through writing.

In the third chapter, Writing Assessment, types of assessment are presented because of their usefulness in teaching writing and obviously in the experiment, mainly formative assessment which is helpful for students' writing development in addition to emphasis on the concept of measurement that will be used to measure students' progress before and after the experiment.

Chapter four, Situation Analysis, relies on teachers and students' questionnaires which helped us determine the learners' educational background and their writing proficiency revealing their learning experiences in previous education and their difficulties. This helped us to prove that the Competency- Based Approach failed to develop students' writing proficiency. Moreover, this also made us aware of university teachers' qualifications and attitudes towards their students' writing difficulties and the need for an approach fitting the change undergone at the university.

Chapter five, Experiment Implementation, describes the content of the experiment and shows how it was implemented using the Process-Genre Approach, as an approach fitting the Competency-Based Approach, taking into consideration the way the lessons were prepared based on the descriptive and persuasive genres. Feedback from the teacher and peers and also self and peer assessments were stressed during writing lessons.

Chapter six, Evaluation of the Results and Findings, as its title suggests, deals with the evaluation of the experiment results through a pre-test and a post-test which are thoroughly described and measured according to the criteria presented at the beginning of this chapter. The results and achievements of both tests are compared, analysed and discussed quantitatively, followed by qualitative results obtained from post interviews with some selected informants who participated in the experiment and also the teacher who conducted it. Qualitative data are to supplement quantitative results and thus to validate the gathered data.

In the seventh chapter, Pedagogical Implications, we tried to provide teachers and foreign language learners with some pedagogical implications which may contribute to the improvement of students' writing proficiency. They include the benefits of using the Process-Genre Approach in that it can develop students' higher-order thinking because students are involved in higher-order skills such as application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In addition, teachers should stress reading and writing connection and engage students in authentic writing activities. However, designing new writing and grammar syllabuses meeting first-year students' needs becomes a necessity.

Finally, a general conclusion on the findings and future prospects is supplied.

# **Chapter One**

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# **Chapter One**

# Current Approaches to Language Teaching: From Communicative Language Teaching to the Competency- Based Approach

# Introduction

A number of methods and approaches in second and foreign language learning were used in the last century. They came and went, influenced by new ones in a cycle that could be described as a competition in the methodology underlying foreign language teaching. Finally, by the end of the mid-eighties or so, there was an increasing move towards the concept of a broad approach that encompasses various methods, motivation for learning English, types of teachers and students. The one which has become the accepted norm in this field was Communicative Language Teaching known as CLT or the Communicative Approach. Such a teaching methodology was required because of the students' need to attain a high level of fluency and accuracy, or in other words to master English for communicative purposes. This was also a prerequisite for success and advancement in many fields including the world of work in which the fact of mastering English is one of the most important requirements. In this chapter, we will examine the methodology known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), its background and most importantly how CLT approaches developed from classical to current trends, including the Competency -Based Approach, the core of this research work.

# 1.1 Communicative Language Teaching

# **1.1.1 Definition of Communicative Language Teaching**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), referred to as the Communicative Approach, is an approach which emphasizes interaction as both the means and ultimate goal of learning a language. Historically, it has been seen as a response to the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), and as an extension to the Notional-Functional Syllabus. CLT makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication; therefore, the teacher'

goal role is to set up situations that students are likely to encounter in real life through various activities. Unlike the ALM which relies on repetition and drills, CLT views that language is interaction, it is an interpersonal activity and has a clear relationship with society. In this light, language has to emphasize the use (function) of language in context both its linguistic context and its social, or situational context (who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak) (Berns, 1984: 5).

The Communicative Approach does a lot to expand on the goal of creating 'communicative competence'. Teaching students how to use the language is considered to be at least as important as learning a language itself. Brown (2001: 18) describes the 'march' towards CLT stating that:

Beyond grammatical discourse elements in communication, we are probing the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language. We are exploring pedagogical means for 'real-life' communication in the classroom. We are trying to get our learners develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy that has consumed our journey. We are equipping our students with tools for generating unrehearsed language performance 'out there' when they leave the womb of our classrooms. We are concerned with how to facilitate lifelong learning among our students, not just with the immediate classroom task. We are looking for learners as partners in a cooperative venture. And our classroom practices seek to draw on whatever intrinsically sparks between learners to reach their fullest potential.

This is clarified in the table below in which Finnochiaro and Brumfit (1983: 91-92) compared CLT to the Audio- Lingual Method as follows:

Audio-lingual Method	Communicative Language Teaching	
Attends to structure more than meaning	Meaning is paramount	
	Dialogs, if used, centre around communicative function and	
	not normally memorized.	
Language items are not necessarily contextualized	Contextualization is a basic premise	
Language learning is learning structures, sound or words	Language learning is learning to communicate	
Mastery of 'over learning' is sought	Effective communication is sought.	
Drilling is a central technique	Drilling may occur	
Native-like pronunciation is sought	Comprehensive pronunciation is sought	
Grammatical explanation is avoided	Any device which helps the learners is accepted varying according to their age	
Communicative activities only come after a long process of rigid drills and exercises	Attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning.	
The use of the students' native language is forbidden	Judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible	
Translation is forbidden at early levels	Translation may be used where the students need or benefit from it.	
Reading and writing are deferred until speech is mastered	Reading and writing can start from the first day	
The target linguistic system will be learned through the over teaching of the over teaching of the patterns of the system		
Linguistic competence is the desired goal	Communicative competence is the desired goal	
Varieties of language are required but not emphasized	Linguistic variation is a central concept in materials and methods	
The sequence of units is determined solely on principles of linguistic complexity	Sequencing is determined by any consideration of content function, or meaning which maintains interest.	
The teacher controls the learners and prevents them from doing anything that conflicts with theory	Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with language	
"Language is habit" so error must be prevented at all costs	Language is created by the individual often through trial and error	
Accuracy, in terms of correctness, is the primary goal	"Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context	
Students are expected to interact with the language embodied in machines or controlled materials	Students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or their writings	
The teacher is expected to specify the language that students are to use	The teacher cannot know exactly what language the students will use	
Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in the structure of the Language	Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated by the language	

 Table 1.1: Comparison between the Audio-lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching according to Finnochiaro and Brumfit (1983: 91-93)

If we refer to the history of language teaching, we will find that linguistics has been one of the most influential disciplines. Furthermore, given the fact that the central concern of linguistics for the past 50 years has been on the structure of the language, it is not surprising that the emphasis in second language or foreign language has been on the mastery of the structures of language. The ALM influenced by Structural Linguistics and Behavioural Psychology, focuses on the inductive learning of grammar via repetition, practice and memorization, later the Cognitive-Code Approach influenced by Cognitive Psychology and Transformational Grammar was based on deductive learning principles associated with rule-learning and hypothesis-testing. Although the two methods represented fundamentally different views of linguistics, they both emphasized language structure sometimes to the virtual exclusion of other features of language.

We can also add that methods such as the ALM, based upon a behaviourist theory of learning and on Bloomfieldian linguistics, were challenged by the theories of language and language learning of Chomsky (1957). He argued that it was impossible for people to acquire a language by simple repetition and reinforcement. The idea that the overlearning of typical structures would lead to the mastery of a foreign language seemed to be very doubtful in the light of Chomsky's critique of the behaviourist approaches to language learning (*ibid.*). However, Chomsky's own model came under fire. This was because it appears to construct an ideal and unreal image of a language user. Chomsky's extended distinction between De Saussure's 'langue', and 'parole' resulted into the proposition of two alternative concepts 'competence' and 'performance' by Chomsky (1965). The proper object of study for the linguist, he says, is not language as it is produced in everyday situations- that is performance- but the inner and the ultimately innate knowledge of grammar that everyone has in mind (*ibid.*, 42). One of the most critiques was made by the sociolinguist Hymes (1972) who draws attention to the image of the ideal speaker that Chomsky's model draws. He finds that even this image is misleading, it abstracts the child as a learner and the adult as a language user from the social context within which acquisition and use are achieved. He adds that a child with just this ability (Chomsky's competence) will be handicapped because some occasions call for being ungrammatical (*ibid.*). This leads us to say that a child acquires sentences not only as grammatical but also as appropriate. He acquires competence as to when to speak and when not. In short, a child becomes able to

accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events and to evaluate their accomplishment by others.

From Finnochiaro and Brumfit's comparison, we deduce that the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching includes several distinct aspects. Applying these aspects means that language teaching and learning become far more than a series of grammar lessons and vocabulary lists. For language teaching and learning to be truly communicative, it must be used in context to convey ideas, preferences, thoughts, feelings and information in a way that is addressed to reach others.

CLT is usually characterized as a broad approach to teaching, rather than a method, with a clearly defined set of principles. According to Nunan (1999: 98) five principles of CLT are:

- 1. Learners learn a language through using it to communicate
- 2. Authenticity and meaningful communication should be the Goal of classroom activities
- 3. Fluency is an important dimension of communication
- 4. Communication involves the integration of different skill
- 5. Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error

This is also supported by Brown (2001: 43) who offered six interconnected characteristics as a description of CLT:

- 1. Classroom goals are focused on all the components (grammatical, discursive, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic) of communicative competence. Goals therefore must intertwine the organizational aspects of language with pragmatics.
- 2. Languages are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic and functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus, but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes.
- 3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
- 4. Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts.
- 5. Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.

6. The role of the teacher is that of a facilitator and guide, not an allknowing bestower of knowledge. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with other.

This shows that learners' needs are very important, and the connection between the language as it is taught in the classroom and as it is used outside the classroom is also of paramount importance. In the classroom, CLT engages learners in pair and group activities requiring negotiation and cooperation between learners to develop their fluency.

# **1.1.2 The Rationale for Implementing Communicative Language Teaching in Education**

The rationale for the CLT approach is that the teacher should act as a facilitator to create a student-centred classroom and to engage learners in authentic-like and meaningful communication that requires meaningful negociations with the goal to increase comprehensible input for learners and enable them to generate more input (Huang & Liu, 2000: 4). Language is used for communication. We use it to express what we mean in real life; however, it is more than a tool of communication; it also represents social and cultural background. Learning merely the target linguistic knowledge cannot successfully engage learners into real-life communication in the target culture; they also need to acquire the target pragmatic competence, the capacity to incorporate cultural knowledge into language use and choose appropriate language in different socio-cultural contexts (Hymes, 1972; Bachman, 1990). Unlike the Grammar Translation Approach or the ALM that merely focus on learners' ability to produce accurate language form and structure, the CLT approach emphasizes the learners' ability to efficiently use the target language in different contexts. Lightbown and Spada (1999) state that by pairing up learners and involving them in a wide range of meaningful interactive discussion tasks, the teacher expects learners to promote their communicative goal rather than merely form grammatical sentences.

The other purpose of the CLT Approach that involves learners into meaningful communication is to create more comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) and interaction Long (1983) which holds that when learners are involved in two-way meaningful communication requiring information exchange, they tend to produce more negotiation language modifications. Although learners are not always able to produce

comprehensible language essential for a successful communication they are able to obtain more comprehensible input than in teacher-centred interactions (Lightbown & Spada, *ibid*.) and have more chances to notice the linguistic gap between their non-native like language and the target language. It is proposed that gap-noticing can help students to know what is still needed to be learned and benefit the learning (Blake, 2000).

Richards (2006: 3) argued that "Communicative Language Teaching sets as its goal the teaching of 'communicative competence' ". He also finds that it is very worth comparing this concept with the concept of 'grammatical competence'. According to him, grammatical competence refers to the knowledge we have of language that accounts for our ability to produce sentences in a language. It refers to knowledge of the building blocks of sentences (e.g., parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses, sentence patterns.) and how sentences are formed (*ibid.*) while communicative competence is the ability to use language for meaningful communication. This concept will be examined in detail while dealing with the CBA.

# 1.1.3 Communicative Language Teaching Activities

Unlike the Grammar-Translation or the ALM that merely focus on learners' ability to produce accurate language forms and structures, CLT emphasizes the learner' ability to efficiently use the target language in different contexts; i.e., the emphasis is more on fluency than on accuracy. Brumfit (1984) regards accuracy and fluency as the basic polarities in language learning not being opposite but complementary. According to him, the acquisition of accuracy is the result of conscious learning to change the acquisition system while fluency is formed in active communication, with the emphasis on native-like use. Rivers & Temperly, 1978; Brumfit 1984; Nunan, 1989 and Schmidt, 1992 explain their relation as follows:

Fluency	Accuracy	
- Focus on meaning, process and quantity	- Focus on form, product and quality	
- Informal skill using ( use)	- Formal skill getting (usage)	
- Students dominated	- Teacher dominated	
- Automatic and unconscious acquisition	uisition - Controlled and conscious learning	
- Experiential approach	- Analytic approach	
- Mother-tongue like use	- Not mother tongue like use	

 Table 1.2: Fluency versus Accuracy

The range of exercise types and activities compatible with CLT is unlimited, provided that such exercises enable learners to attain the communicative objectives of the curriculum and that they engage them in communication. Littlewood (1981: 20) distinguishes between 'functional activities' and 'social interaction activities' as two major types. Functional activities include tasks such as learners comparing a set of pictures and noting similarities and differences, working out a likely sequence of events in a set of pictures, discovering missing features in a map or a picture, communicating behind a screen to another learner and giving him instructions on how to draw a map, a picture or a shape solving problems from shared clues. Social interaction activities include conversation and discussion, dialogues and role plays, simulations, skits, improvisation and debates.

# **1.2 Background to Communicative Language Teaching**

The English language teaching tradition has been subjected to a tremendous change, especially throughout the twentieth century. Perhaps more than any other discipline, this tradition has been practised in various adaptations in language classrooms all around the world for centuries. Richards (2006: 6) grouped trends in teaching in the last 50 years into three phases:

**Phase 1**: traditional approaches (up to the late 1960s)

Phase 2: classic communicative language teaching (1970s to 1990s)

Phase 3: current communicative language teaching (late 1990s to the present)

We are going to proceed in the same way as Richards (2006) did by considering the transition from traditional approaches to what is referred to as classic communicative language teaching.

# **1.2.1 Traditional Approaches (up to the late 1960s)**

Prior to the twentieth century, languages were not learnt for the purpose of oral and aural communication, but for the sake of being 'scholarly' or for gaining reading proficiency (Brown 2001:18). The chief means was the Grammar-Translation Method (or called previously the classical method). Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979: 3) list its major features:

- 1. Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language.
- 2. Much vocabulary is taught in the form of isolated words.
- 3. Long elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given.
- 4. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words.
- 5. Reading of difficult classical texts is begun early.
- 6. Little attention is paid to the context of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis.
- 7. Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.
- 8. Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

So, the Grammar-Translation Method is based on the assumption that the main purpose of second/foreign language study is to build knowledge of the structures of the language either as a tool for literary resource and translation or for the development of the learner's logical powers, and that the process of learning must be deductive requiring much effort, and is carried out with constant reference to the learner's native language.

Though the Grammar-Translation Method remains popular, it does nothing to enhance a learner's communicative ability in the language. Most of the approaches coming after it gave priority to grammatical competence as the basis of language proficiency. They were based on repetitive practice and drilling, and the teaching of grammar was deductive. Examples of these approaches are: Situational Language Teaching in the United Kingdom and Audiolingualism in the United States of America. According to either the Audio-lingual Method or Situational Language Teaching, a lesson is generally planned using the PPP also called the three Ps which stand for: presentation, practice and production (Harmer, 1998: 31). First, the teacher presents the target language through a dialogue or a text, and then gives the students the opportunity to practise it through controlled activities like substitution drills and sentence transformations. In the final stage of the lesson, the students practise the target language in freer activities which bring in other language elements.

The purely structural approaches have been criticized as they tend to produce students who, despite having the ability to produce accurate language, are generally deficient in their ability to use the language and understand its use in real communication. Thus, an approach to language teaching has been developed in order to overcome the weaknesses of the Structural Approach. According to the Communicative Approach, communication is not simply a matter of what is said (structure and lexis), but where it is said, by whom, when and why it is said. In short, this is basically' communicative function' or 'purpose of language.

Under the influence of the Communicative Approach, grammar-based methodologies gave way to functional and skill-based teaching and accuracy activities have been replaced by fluency-activities (Brumfit, 1984). In fact, CLT developed from classic communicative language teaching to current communicative language teaching. These standpoints also referred to as the weak version and the strong version of CLT (Beacco, 2007).

# **1. 2. 2** Classic Communicative Language Teaching (1970s to 1990s)

By the end of the sixties both the Audio-lingual Method and the Situational Language Teaching had run their courses. This was partly due to Chomsky's criticism concerning structural approaches to language teaching. Another impetus for the need of a different approach to foreign language teaching came from changing educational realities in Europe. The need to develop alternative methods of language teaching was considered a high priority. As stated previously, the behaviourist and structuralist foundations of the ALM were put in doubt by the work of Chomsky (1957) who was able to demonstrate that the behaviourist approach to language learning could not account for the fact that children do not repeat what their parents say, nor are they rewarded for grammatical correct sentences.

There is a marked change of emphasis from concentrating upon the language as a set of structures towards the use of language as a means of communication. Language tends to be analysed functionally rather than structurally. Hymes (1972) referring to Chomsky's concept of linguistics states that for language to be used to exchange information, ideas, or feelings, the speaker must possess both the capacity to produce grammatically correct sentences -linguistic competence- but also the competence to produce socially pertinent utterances; communication, then, depends on communication competence which can be seen according to Hymes (*ibid:* 51), as inclusive of the following components:

1. A linguistic component

2. A discursive component – knowledge and understanding of different types of discourse and of their organizations, as a function of the situation of communication within which they are produced.

3. A referential component – knowledge of the domains of experience and the objects of the world and their relationships.

4. A socio-cultural component – knowledge of the social rules and norms of interaction between individuals and within institutions, including knowledge of cultural history and of the relations between social objects.

So, what was needed to use language communicatively was 'communicative competence' (Richards 2006: 9). The concept 'communicative competence' will be discussed later on. Another question raised was how new syllabuses look like. Van Ek and Alexander (1980: 149) argued that a syllabus reflecting communicative competence should identify the following aspects:

 As a detailed consideration as possible of the purposes for which the learner wishes to acquire the target language; fro example, using English for business purposes, in the hotel industry, or for travel.
 Some idea of the setting in which they will want to use the target

language; for example, in an office, on an airplane, or in a store.

3. The socially defined role the learners will assume in the target language, as well as the role of their interlocutors; for example, as a traveller, as a salesperson talking to clients, or as a student in a school 4. The communicative events in which the learners will participate: everyday situations, vocational or professional situations, academic situations, and so on; for example, making telephone calls, engaging in causal conversation, or taking part in a meeting

5. The language functions involved in those events, or what the learner will be able to do with or through the language; for example, making introductions, giving explanations, or describing plans

6. The notions or concepts involved, or what the learner will need to be able to talk about; for example, leisure, finance, history, religion

7. The skills involved in the "knitting together" of discourse: discourse and rhetorical skills; for example, storytelling, giving an effective business presentation

8. The variety or varieties of the target language that will be needed, such as American, Australian, or British English, and the levels in the spoken and written language which the learners will need to reach
 9. The grammatical content that will be needed
 10. The lexical content, or vocabulary, that will be needed

This gave rise to two new types of syllabuses such as the Skill-Based Syllabus and the Notional-Functional Syllabus, and to the ESP movement (Richards, 2006: 11); however, the Notional-Functional Syllabus proposed by Wilkins (1976) was considered as one of the most used in language teaching in that period of time and was predominant in English teaching in Algeria. It is why we find it worth presenting.

#### 1.2.2.1 The Notional -Functional Syllabus

The Notional-Functional Syllabus originated in Europe in the early seventies through the effort of the Council of Europe. In reality two kinds of syllabuses developed almost simultaneously -the Functional Syllabus and the Notional Syllabus. These overlap; however, to such an extent in terms of ideas and outcomes that very soon the term functional-notional was used. Wilkins (ibid.) was the applied linguist who proposed such a syllabus based on the premise that communication is a meaningful behaviour in a social and cultural context that requires creative language use. Krahnke (1987: 27) states that Hymes also prepared the theoretical grounds for notionalfunctionalism in language teaching with his sociolinguistic work in the 1960s and 1970s. Hymes (1972) opposed Chomsky's view that -only 'linguistic competence' constitutes our knowledge of language, and proposed a communicative competence which means both knowledge of the rules of the language code and knowledge of the conventions governing the use of the code which are established within social and cultural groups. We can also mention Wilkin's colleagues in the Council of Europe Project, Van Ek and Alexander in their book 'The Threshold Level in English' which is notional-functional in essence. The syllabus provides a comprehensive source for educated adult learners through Europe. It was also adapted for young children.

A Notional-Functional Syllabus is a way of organizing a language learning curriculum not in terms of grammatical structure as it had often been done with the Audio-lingual Approach, but instead in terms of notions and functions. The term notion refers to a particular context in which people communicate examples of notions like time, quantity, space, location and motion (Van Ek and Alexander, 1980: 32). A function is a specific purpose for a speaker in a given context. Communicative functions are such as evaluating, persuading, arguing, informing, questioning, expressing emotions and so forth (*ibid*). For example, the notion of shopping requires numerous language functions such as asking about prices or features of a product and bargaining. The Notional-Functional Syllabus takes three meaning components into account (Yalden, 1987: 42):

The semantic	basic concepts ( what to communicate)	notions
The functions	interactional aspects ( why we communicate)	functions
The formal	grammatical knowledge ( how we communicate)	structure

 Table 1.3: Possible Components of a Syllabus (Wilkins, 1976)

For Yalden (*ibid.*), the selection and sequencing of the content of a syllabus is of great importance. Yet, to be able to prepare the syllabus, the needs, motivation, characteristics, abilities, limitations and resources should be specified as the first step. Munby's model (1978; cited in Yalden, 1987: 43) of needs analysis states that the notional-functional syllabuses fall into the content category of syllabus types and that this category represents the most external social control. In a functional-notional syllabus, although the objectives are set based on the learners' needs, and the content is sequenced accordingly, the learners' role is passive from then on.

The Notional-Functional Approach is based on a set of characteristics. Barnett (1980: 44) listed the following:

- 1. a functional view of language focusing on doing something though language,
- 2. a semantic base as opposed to a grammatical or situational base;
- 3. a learner-centred view of learning,
- 4. a basis in the analysis of learners' needs for using language that is reflected in goals, content selection and sequencing, methodology and evaluation,
- 5. learner-centred goals, objectives and content organization reflecting authentic language behaviour and offering a spiralling development of content,
- 6. learning activities involving authentic language and
- 7. testing focused on ability to use language react and operate in the environment.

She further explained that a Notional-Functional Approach focused on:

- 1. sentences in combination instead of sentences as a basic unit in language teaching;
- 2. meaning over form;
- 3. relevance of what is taught for meeting the immediate and future language needs of learners;
- 4. participation in authentic language use; and
- 5. effectiveness, fluency, and appropriateness in learner performance over formal accuracy (*ibid.*).

Finoccchiaro and Brumfit (1983: 15) stated that in terms of linguistic components, a notional-functional curriculum takes the basic needs of all human beings into consideration. The curriculum that is designed to serve the actual social and cultural needs of learners is self-motivating. The Notional-Functional Approach helps learners at the linguistic level to acquire a reasonable, basic knowledge of the phonological, grammatical and lexical subsystems of language. What is important, too, is to raise students' motivation in the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

However, Notional-Functional Syllabuses have been criticized as representing a simplistic view of the communicative competence because they fail to address the process of communication (Widdowson, 1979: 5). This means that students' learning from a notional-functional course may have considerable gaps in their grammatical competence because some important grammatical structures may not be elicited by the functions that are taught in the syllabus. Therefore, Notional-Functional Syllabuses are now considered as only a partial component of a communicative syllabus.

Nunan (1988a: 36) also criticized that when turning from the structurally-based syllabus design to the design of syllabuses based on notional-functional criteria, the selection and grading of items become much more complex. Decisions about what to include in the syllabus can no longer be made on linguistic grounds alone but on items which help learners to carry out communicative purposes for which they need the language. In order to determine these purposes, it is necessary to carry out some form of needs analysis.

#### **1.2.3 Process-Based Communicative Language Teaching Approaches**

Content-based and task-based instruction, two current methodologies, described as the extension of CLT, are considered as process-based in that they focus on creating classroom processes that promote language learning.

# **1.2.3.1 Content- Based Instruction**

Content-based instruction (CBI) is considered as one of the most prominent approaches in the field of language teaching education. The proponents of CBI such as Krahnke, 1987; Brinton *et al.*, 1989; Striker and Leaver, 1997 claim that CBI integrates learning of content and language allowing students to use the language as a vehicle for acquiring the content of the course. CBI has the potential to enhance students' motivation, to accelerate students' acquisition of language proficiency, to broaden cross –cultural knowledge and to make the language learning experience more enjoyable and fulfilling (Striker & Leaves, 1997: 5). Moreover, it fosters students' critical thinking and autonomous learning skills.

Wesche and Skehan (2002: 228) point out that the Content-Based Approach is a truly holistic and global approach to foreign language education, and it is likely to continue to flourish in contexts where learners have a clear and present need to develop their academic language skills. CBI implies the total integration of language learning and content learning. It represents a signified departure from traditional foreign language teaching methods in that language proficiency is achieved by shifting the focus of instruction from the learning of language to the learning of language through the study of subject matter (Stryker & *Leaver, ibid.*). CBI has been found to be an effective approach to teaching English as a second language because students develop their language skills and also gain new concepts through meaningful content (*op.cit.*). Although CBI is not new, there has been an increased interest in it over the last years, particularly in the USA and Canada, where it has proved being effective in ESL immersion programmes. This interest has now spread to EFL classrooms around the world.

In CBI, communicative competence is acquired during the process of learning about specific topics such as business, social studies, history and many other topics. Seven strong rationales were suggested for content-based instruction by Grabe and Stoller (1997: 19-20):

- 1. In content-based classrooms, students are exposed to a considerable amount of language while learning content.
- 2. Content-based instruction supports contextualized learning; students are taught useful language that is embedded within relevant discourse contexts rather than as isolated language fragments.
- 3. Students in Content-based instruction classes have increased opportunities to use the content knowledge and expertise that they bring to the class.
- 4. Content-based itself promises to generate increased motivation among students.
- 5. Content-based instruction supports, in a natural way, such learning approaches as cooperative learning, apprenticeship learning, experiential learning and project-based learning. It also lends itself to strategy instruction and practice, as theme-units naturally require and recycle important strategies across varying contexts and learning tasks.
- 6. Content-based instruction allows greater flexibility and adaptability to build into the curriculum and activity sequence.
- Content-based instruction lends itself to student-centred classroom activities; in content-based classrooms, students have opportunities to exercise choices and preferences in terms of specific content and learning activities. (Grabe and Stoller, *ibid.*, 17).

CBI is a new paradigm in language education centred on fostering students' competence in a second or a foreign language while advancing in the knowledge of a subject matter. This approach is widely used in an extensive number of contexts and educational settings. Some of the most common models implemented by increasing numbers of second and foreign language educators worldwide include sheltered content courses, adjunct courses, theme-based and area studies modules, language for specific purposes, discipline-based instruction and foreign languages across the curriculum (Stryker & Leaver, 1997: 3).

A number of issues have been raised in implementing a CBI approach. The one worth mentioning is whether the focus on content enables learners to develop the language skills. In addition, another key issue is concerned with assessment. The question raised is whether students should be assessed according to content, language use or both of them. Students cannot be evaluated in the traditional way because they are exposed to input and content information. CBI learners can" interact with authentic, contextualized, linguistically challenging material in a communicative context (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 4). According to Kasper (2000: 20), "designing authentic and interactive content-based assessment was required because learners in CBI had to complete discourse tasks". Crandall (1999: 604) among other researchers mentioned that it would be impossible for teachers to separate conceptual understanding from linguistics proficiency. This means that both content and language should be assessed in CBI. This can be done through "paper and pencil tests to include journal entries, oral responses to questions or reports, demonstrations of understanding, and students' projects (ibid.). In addition, checklists or inventories can be used to assess language development: they may show each student's mastery of the lesson including concepts and structures. However, the most important thing is that the philosophy of CBI aims at empowering students to become independent learners and continue the learning process beyond the classroom.

# **1.2.3.2 Task-Based Instruction**

Both Second Language Teaching (SLT) and Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) have experienced changes and challenges thanks to the development of psychology and research into the nature of language teaching and learning. Consequently, "the assumption seemed to be that it was not enough in language teaching to focus only on language structure, but that this needed to be accompanied by a concern to develop the capacity to express meaning" (Widdowson, 1978). These pedagogic development influenced SLT and FLT and gave rise to task-based approaches (Prabhu, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Long, 1991; Ellis, 1994; Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Robinson, 2001). According to task-based learning, a language can be learned by the balance of form and meaning.

Some of the proponents of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (e.g., Prahbu, 1987; Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1998) present it as a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching since it draws on several principles that formed part of the CLT movement" (cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 223). The contemporary view of learning based upon research finding in both linguistics and psychology is that learners do not acquire the target language in the order it is presented to them no matter how carefully teachers and textbooks writers organize it. Language is a developmental organic process that follows its internal agenda. Errors are not necessarily the results of bad learning, but are part of the natural process of interlanguage forms gradually towards target forms (Ellis, 1994: 43). Such a view of language learning has profound implications for teaching and has led to the development of task-based approaches proposed by syllabus designers and educational innovators such as (cf, Prabhu, 1987; Nunan, 1989, Long & Crookes 1991; Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Robinson, 2001; Ellis 2003).

These approaches are somewhat disparate, but they share a common idea: giving learners tasks to transact rather than items to learn. Prabhu applied TBLT in secondary education in Bengalore in India in his Communication Teaching Project. He noted that the structure-based courses required a good deal of remedial re-teaching which, in turn, led to similarly unsatisfactory results (*ibid:* 11). His assumptions are based on the belief that language is learnt when it is being used to communicate messages; therefore, the communicative task has become prominent as a unit of organization in syllabus design. Nunan (2004: 70) also proposed a task-based framework because it "leads to students holistic outcomes in the form of written reports, spoken representations and substantial small group conversations that lead to decision- making outcomes". By engaging students in meaningful activities, such as problem-solving, discussions, or narratives, the learners' interlanguage system is stretched and encouraged to develop. However, the claim is that language learning will result from creating the right kinds of interactional processes in the classroom, and the best way to create these is to use specially designed instructional tasks (Richards, 2006: 30), but what exactly is a task?

# 1.2.3.2.1 Definition of the Concept 'task'

Just as there are weak and strong forms of CLT, there are different definitions of the word 'task'. Most of the definitions include achieving an outcome or attaining an objective. They also show that tasks are meaning focused. Richards et.al. (1992: 373) offered the following definition "A task is an activity which is designed to help achieve a particular learning goal such as using the telephone to obtain information, drawing maps based on oral instruction and other activities. In contrast, Candlin's (1987: 12) emphasis on the learner's learning preferences as opposed to the language or language learning processes and on his social and problem-solving orientation leads him to the following notion of task "one of a set of differentiated, sequenceable, problem-posing activities involving learners and teachers in some joint selection from a range of varied cognitive and communicative procedures applied to existing and new knowledge in the collective exploration and pursuance of foreseen or emergent goals within a social milieu". On the basis of Prabhu's definition, however, a task is "an activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some processes of thought, and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process" (1987: 24).

All the definitions stress the importance of meaning in the process of accomplishing a task. This is also confirmed by Ellis (2003: 16) who says that "a task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or propositional content has been conveyed". To this end, it requires learners to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may dispose them to choose particular form. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, oral and written skills and also various cognitive processes (Nunan, 2004: 3). Different kinds of tasks have been suggested in teaching according to TBLT. Willis (1996:53) proposes six types of tasks:

- 1. **Listing tasks**: For example, students might have to make up a list of things they would pack if they were going on a beach vacation.
- 2. **Sorting and ordering**: Students work in pairs and make up a list of the most important characteristics of an ideal vacation.
- 3. Comparing: Students compare ads for two different supermarkets.
- 4. **Problem-solving**: Students read a letter to an advice column and suggest a solution to the writer's problem.
- 5. **Sharing personal experience**: Students discuss their reactions to an ethical or moral dilemma.

- 6. Creative tasks: Students prepare plans for redecorating a house.
  - a. draw objectives from the communicative needs of learnersb. involve language use in the solving of tasks
  - c. for co-evaluation by learner and teacher of the task and of the performance of the task
  - d. promote a critical awareness about data and the processes of language learning

TBLT advocates have described a task in terms of some specific characteristics. Among them, Skehan (1998: 74) puts forward five characteristics of a task:

- Meaning is primary
- Learners are not given other people's meaning to regurgitate
- There is some sort of relationship comparable to real-world activities
- Task completion has some priority
- The assessment of the task in terms of outcome

Candlin (1987: 9-10), however, offers pedagogic criteria for judging the quality of what he calls 'good learning tasks'. He claims that good learning tasks should be based not only on learners' communicative needs, but should also involve them in language use through problem-solving tasks. Besides, he stressed the importance of promoting a critical awareness about data and the processes of language learning of both the learners and the teacher because this allows them to evaluate the task and its performance. According to Nunan (2004: 16), pedagogically, task-based teaching has strengthened the following principles and practices:

- A needs-based approach to content selection.
- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language
- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process itself
- An enhancement of the learners' own personal experiences as important contributing Elements to classroom learning.
- The linking of classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom.

### 1.2.3.2.2 Types of Tasks

Tasks are classified into two types. For instance, Nunan (*ibid*: 35) drew a distinction between what he calls "real-world or target tasks and pedagogical tasks. Target tasks as the name implies, refer to uses of the language beyond the classroom; pedagogical tasks are those that occur in the classroom". As we are interested mainly in pedagogical tasks, we find the definition of this kind of tasks provided by Nunan (*ibid*: 3) stated in a clear way:

A pedagogical task is a piece of work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right.

In addition to the emphasis on meaning and interaction required by a pedagogical task and the use of grammatical knowledge, the task should have a sense of completeness. This can be clarified by the TBL cycle proposed by Willis (1996). According to him, a task is done in three phases: pre-task, task and post-task. The pre-task consists of introducing the topic through conscious-raising by using an activity that requires the students to recognize the essential vocabulary for the lesson. It is a kind of brainstorming (*ibid:* 42). During the task, the learners work in pairs or in small groups to do the task monitored by the teacher. They prepare to report to the whole class orally or in writing helped by the teacher's feedback. In the post phase, the teacher selects some groups to present their report orally or in writing (*ibid:* 53).

Another important conceptual basis for task-based language teaching is experiential learning. This approach takes the learners' immediate personal experience as the point of departure for the learning experience. Intellectual growth occurs when learners engage in and reflect on sequences of tasks. The active involvement of the learner is therefore central to the approach and a rubric that conveniently captures the experiential nature of the process is 'learning by doing'. In this, it contrasts with a 'transmission' approach to education in which the learner acquires knowledge passively from the teacher. The most articulated application of experiential learning is provided by Kohonen (1992: 62)). In many respects, his model can be seen as a theoretical blueprint for task-based learning and teaching as it can be seen from the following precepts for action derived from his work:

- Encourage the transformation of knowledge within the learner rather than the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the learner.
- Encourage learners to participate actively in small, collaborative groups.
- Embrace a holistic attitude towards subject matter, rather than a static, atomistic and hierarchical attitude.
- Emphasize process rather product, learning how to learn, self-inquiry, social and communication skills.
- Encourage self-directed rather than teacher directed learning.
- Promote intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation (ibid.)

Some issues arise in the implementation of the Task-Based Approach. Among them, we can mention the cognitive difficulty of the task, the degree of contextual support and the amount of assistance provided to the learner and also the complexity of the language which the learner is required to process and produce (Nunan 1989: 48). Besides, in courses that have specific instructional outcomes to attain (e.g., examination targets) and where specific language needs have to be addressed rather than general communication skills targeted in task work, task-Based Instruction seems too vague as a methodology to be widely adopted (Richards 2006: 35). However, the Task-Based Approach remains one of the recent approaches applied in EFL.

# 1.2.4 Product-Based Communicative Language Approaches

A number of approaches have been implemented in CLT depending on whether they are process or product-based. Both the Text-based approach and the competencybased approach belong to the second category.

# **1.2.4.1 Text-Based Instruction**

Text-Based Instruction, also known as 'a Genre-Based Approach' is an approach which consists of using different types of texts to develop learners' communicative competence. It is claimed that "language happens as text and not as isolated words and sentences" (Thornbury, 2005: 5). Therefore, learning foreign languages should be based on handling texts, either written or oral. It is assumed that learners approach texts from different directions and different expectations. Thus, teachers need to bear in mind that the text on the page may generate very different texts in the mind of learners (*ibid*: 7-14). To be comprehensive, texts should be cohesive, coherent and they should also make sense. Moreover, the selection of texts should be based on learners' needs as it is used in different settings in order to be efficient.

#### 1. 2.4.1.1 Contents of the Text-Based Syllabus

The Text-Based Syllabus has much in common with the ESP approach to language teaching. However, the syllabus also usually specifies other components such as grammar, vocabulary, topics and functions; hence it is a type of mixed syllabus which integrates reading, writing and oral communication.

### **1.2.4.1.2 Implementation of the Text-Based Approach**

The Text-Based Approach has been implemented in teaching according to some stages as suggested by Feez and Joyce (1998: 28-29) and which are: Developing control of the text, modelling, joint construction and individual construction as shown in figure 1.1. In the first phase, the teacher sets the context helping learners to recognize the genre purposes to be used in the course. Thus, they develop control of the text through selected activities. In the second stage, the learners analyze a representative sample or a model trying to identify its feature, assisted by the teacher. In the third stage called, joint construction, the learners construct a text guided by the teacher who provides them with appropriate tasks focusing on the different stages of writing. In the fourth stage, each learner constructs a text individually, relying on the knowledge acquired in the previous stages. Finally, learners may receive feedback from the teacher through conferencing in order to correct any deficiency in the final draft.



Figure 1.1: Teaching and Learning Cycles According to Feez & Joyce (1998: 28)

After having presented an overview of the Text-Based Approach which is regarded as a product-based approach, and how it can be implemented in language teaching, it is worth mentioning that emphasis on individual creativity and personal expression is missing and the fear is that repetition throughout the implementation of such an approach may lead to boredom.

# **1.2.4.2 Competency-Based Instruction**

The Competency-Based Approach is considered as another product-based approach which is designed not around the notion of knowledge, but around the notion of competency. The focus on competencies or learning outcomes underpins the curriculum framework and syllabus specification, teaching strategies and assessment (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 144). However, after having investigated on the CBA, we realize that it is eclectic in nature in that it can rely on problem solving through different tasks and draws from other approaches such as the Text-Based Approach. Being the core of our research, this approach will be deeply examined later on.

Summing up, Communicative language teaching has passed through different stages, from classical to current trends and undergone a marked development from the Product-Based Approaches to the Process-Based Approaches. The theory underlying the former focuses on communicative performance and social issues of language, while the latter lays stress on procedural capacity for relating functions and forms and is much concerned with individual growth. The goal of language learning in product-based approaches is the mastery of rules and conventions of communication and appropriate practice of the four skills; but on the contrast, process-based approaches aim at fostering negotiation of rules and conventions of communication. We can also add that the Product-Based Syllabus is based on language functions, while the Process-Based Syllabus is activity-based.

# **1.3 The Competency-Based Approach**

There is a change in most of the educational systems in the world in terms of the implementation of new curricula and a new approach based on competencies. This is the case of Algeria in which the Competency-Based Approach was introduced in 2002 as a result of the educational reform in primary, middle and secondary education; new books were published for this aim for all the levels. The CBA has been adopted in

teaching English as a foreign language in order to prepare learners to be competent in real life tasks. However, in spite of the government's plan for teacher development in the language, a large number of teachers are just using new books and ignoring the theoretical aspects of the CBA and the objectives of using such an approach. Thus, we find it useful to shed light on its theoretical side, to trace its history and development and the reasons for its implementation in the Algerian educational system. The terms 'competence' and 'competency' should be clearly defined as they are two confusing terms usually used interchangeably.

# 13.1 Definition of Competence, Competency and Communicative Competence1.3.1.1 The Notion of Competence and its Numerous Interpretations

Over the last two decades, discourse around education and training has shifted towards the use a pseudo-commercial language of markets, investment and products. The interest in competence and competency has been part of this move. These two terms remain difficult to define in a satisfactory way and are often used interchangeably. The former is the quality of being adequately or well-qualified physically and intellectually, or the ability to do something well measured against a standard, especially the ability acquired through experience or training.

"The term competence focuses attention on learning outcomes. It is what people can do. It involves both the ability to perform in a given context and the capacity to transfer knowledge" (Harris *et. al.*, 1995: 16). Competence indicates sufficiency (state of being good enough) of knowledge and skills that enable one to act in a variety of situations because each level of personality has its own requirements. A competency is defined simply as 'a combination of skills, abilities and knowledge to perform a specific task (US Department of Education, 2002: xii). Kouwenhoven (2003: 36) presents a comprehensive definition of competency, according to him:

it is the capability to choose and use an integrated combination of knowledge, skills and abilities with the intention to realize a task in a certain context, while personal characteristics such as motivation, self –confidence and will power are part of that context, and competence, is the capacity to accomplish up to a standard the key occupational tasks that characterize a profession.

De Se Co (2002; cited in Lobanova and Shunin, 2008: 47) defines competence as "a system of internal and external mental structures and abilities assuming mobilization of knowledge, cognitive skills and also social behavioural components such as attitudes, emotions for successful realization of activity in a particular context". In this respect, competence can be understood as a dynamic, organizing the structure of activity characteristic allowing a person to adapt to various situations on the basis of gained experience and practice.

Competency refers to superior performance. It is a skill or characteristic of a person which enables him or her to carry out specific or superior actions at a superior level of performance. However, we can say that competency is not the same as performance, but it is what enables performance to occur. Armstrong (1995: 49) supports this by saying that "competence as a fully human attribute has been reduced to competencies – a series of discrete activities that people possess, the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to engage in effectively". We can also add that the term competency varies from a school of thought to another. According to behaviourism, it is used to design an observation and measurable behaviour resulting from a certain training while in constructivism it is used to illustrate the construction of capacities acquired from an interaction between individuals engaged in the same situation (Ertmer & Newby, 1993: 56)

Another definition has been provided about teaching English in Algeria which considers 'competency' as "a system of conceptual and procedural parts of knowledge organized into schemes that help identify a problem task and its solution through an efficient action within a set of situations" (Ameziane, 2005:12). A competency is a "know -how to act process which integrates and mobilizes a set of capacities, skills and an amount of knowledge that will be used effectively in various problem-solving situations in circumstances that have never occurred before" (*ibid.*). In other words, 'a competency' may be simply defined as the ability of a student or worker to accomplish tasks adequately, to find solutions and to realize them in real life situations. Besides, competencies are the various skills learners have to be taught; this may lead them to acquire the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an interactional way to be able to use them later on either in their jobs or in the demanding daily life. For more precision, an analysis of the term 'competence' and 'competency' has been illustrated in the form of a ladder (fig 1.1.) or an ascending scale by Schneckenberg and Wildt (2006 ; cited in Lobanova and Shunin, 2008: 12).

According to them, the process of competency achievement is complex because it requires the development of necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to carry out successfully specific or superior tasks. This process begins with the perception of information which accommodates and adapts in mental structures and leads to the second step; i.e. to knowledge. If this knowledge is applied adequately in a certain context, it may enable the learner to do a certain task provided he is motivated enough and has a positive attitude towards it. This can lead to competence if the task is adequate to the required level. But on the way to competency achievement, the learner may become proficient in doing that task through much experience in order to reach a superior level of performance. All of this requires from him much effort and involvement.



Figure 1.2: Competence Development Model

As we have already emphasized, 'competence' is a dynamic, objective characteristic which is strongly rooted in experience and situational practice. Through activities in various situations, a person constructs competency. We conclude that competency as a realization of a need for self-development and self-actualization is a basic component of a social mature person. The meaning of the term 'competency' becomes clearer than before and confirms the definition relating it with superior performance or ability relating it to excellence in a specific activity. The concept 'competency' can be used in different fields, but while dealing with language learning, it is communicative language competence which is dominant in communicative language teaching and which includes a set of competencies to develop to make learners proficient.

### **1.3.1.2 Definition of Communicative Competence**

As mentioned above 'competence' is developed through activity in contextual situations. So, we will attempt to define the nature and the essence of communicative language competence. Many linguists enrich the contents and features of communicative competence, starting with Chomsky's who made the distinction between competence and performance. By 'competence' Chomsky (1965: 4) means the unconscious knowledge of the ideal speaker-listener set in a completely homogeneous speech community. Such underlying knowledge enables the user of language to produce and understand an infinite set of sentences out of a finite set of rules. 'Performance', on the other hand, is concerned with the process of applying the underlying knowledge to the actual language use. However, 'performance' cannot reflect competence except under the ideal circumstances because it can be affected by such variables as memory limitations, distractions, shift of attention and interest, errors and some other variables (*ibid:* 3).

Hymes (1972) finds Chomsky's distinction of competence and performance too narrow to describe language behaviour as a whole. He points out that the theory does not account for socio-cultural factors. He deems it necessary to distinguish two kinds of competence, 'linguistic competence' that deals with producing and understanding grammatically correct sentences and 'communicative competence' that deals with producing and understanding sentences that are appropriate and acceptable to a particular situation (*ibid:10*). In developing his theory of language teaching and learning, he considered language as social behaviour as well as the integration of language, communication and culture. The core of his theory constitutes a definition of what the user of language has to know to be a competent communicator in a social group.

According to Widdowson (1978: 10), "communicative abilities have to be developed at the same time as the linguistic skills; otherwise the mere acquisition of the linguistic skills may inhibit the development of communicative abilities". He strongly suggests that we have to teach communicative competence along with linguistic competence. He also distinguishes two aspects of performance: 'usage' and 'use'; He explains that ' usage' makes evident the extent to which the language user demonstrates his knowledge of linguistic rules, whereas 'use' makes evident the extent to which the language user demonstrates his ability to use his knowledge of linguistic rules for effective communication. He suggests that grammar must be based on the semantic concepts and must help a learner to acquire a practical mastery of language for the natural communicative use of language (*ibid*: 3)

Canale and Swain (1980) believe that the sociolinguistic work of Hymes is important to the development of a communicative approach to language learning. Their work focuses on the interaction of social context, grammar and meaning (more precisely, social meaning). However, just as Hymes (1978: 3-4) says that there are values of grammar that would be useless without rules of use. Canale and Swain maintain that there are rules of use that would be useless without rules of grammar. They strongly believe that the study of grammatical competence is as essential as the study of socio-linguistic competence. They define 'communicative competence' as integrating at least three main competences: grammatical, sociolinguist and strategic competence (*ibid.*). Grammatical competence includes knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar and phonology. They point out that grammatical competence will be an important concern for any communication approach (*ibid.*). Sociolinguistic competence is made up of two sets of rules: sociolinguistic rules and rules of discourse. Knowledge of language alone does not adequately prepare learners for effective and appropriate use of the target language. They must have knowledge which involves what is expected from them socially and culturally. Besides EFL learners must develop discourse competence, which is concerned with intersentencial relationships. Therefore, effective speakers should acquire a large repertoire of structures and discourse markers to express ideas, show relationships of time and indicate cause, contrast and emphasis. Finally, strategic competence, which is "the way learners manipulate language in order to meet communicative goals" (Brown, 1994: 228), is perhaps the most important of all communicative competence elements. It

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is made up of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient grammatical competence (*ibid.*).

The discussion of communicative competence is mainly based on the recent version from Bachman (1990). He divided communicative competence into: organizational competence, pragmatic competence and strategic competence. Organizational competence consists of two types of abilities: grammatical and contextual. As Bachman (1990: 87-88) defines, grammatical competence comprises the competencies involved in language use, while textual competence includes the knowledge of joining utterances together to form a unit of language by applying the rules of cohesion and rhetorical organization. All this can be generalized as linguistic competence. Pragmatic competence is broadly defined as the ability to use language appropriately in a social context (Taguchi, 2009: 1). It includes the knowledge of pragmatic conventions to perform acceptable language functions as well as knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions to perform language functions. To sum up, language competence consists of two types of competence, organizational and pragmatic (Bachman, op.cit.). Having competence means that learners are capable of applying knowledge of grammatical rules and cultural patterns to a particular context to achieve particular communicative goals appropriately, effectively and successfully. Finally strategic competence is "the way learners manipulate language in order to meet communicative goals" (Brown, op. cit: 228). It is regarded as an important part of communicative competence because it enables learners to compensate for imperfect knowledge of linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse rules (Berns, 1990). Strategic competence is considered as a general ability (a technique or a tool). It can be considered as a technique or a tool to make the most effective use of verbal or nonverbal tasks as he said (ibid: 106).

Richards (2006: 13) supports this by simply saying that communicative competence includes the following aspects of language:

- Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions
- -Knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)

- Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)
- Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g., through using different kinds of communication strategies).

In the epoch of 'global communication', it is necessary to consider communicative competence in reference to international communication. In this case, numerous opportunities of interactions are required in professional, political and other domains such as business negotiations, in-trainings, conferences, professional and cultural symposiums. Such kinds of communication require the acquisition of a variety of communication strategies.

Therefore, key competencies should be determined according to the analysis of external demands and the careful consideration of students' needs to provide them with a stance that gives them firm grounding and ability to coordinate their actions with high-speed changes in the world in a highly synchronized fashion. Based on the definitions of De Se Co (2002; cited in Lobanova and Shunin, 2008: 54-57), six key competencies have been worked out:

- Autonomous competence: This involves cognitive strategies needed to perform cognitive activities and apply the gained knowledge and skills to processing information, adapting and transforming knowledge, to construct knowledge and judgments. This is viewed as a central feature of modernity, democracy and individualism.
- **Interactive competence** which assumes effective use of communication tools and personal resources. The English language, for example, as well as knowledge, strategies, laws information, new technologies according to the requirements of a modern society for the solution of everyday-routine and professional tasks.
- **Social competence** which is an integral personal system of knowledge, skills, verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies that provide the capacity to form, join and function effectively and democratically within complex and socially heterogeneous groups
- **Linguistic competence** as mentioned before and which includes: lexical competence, grammatical competence, semantic competence, phonological competence, and orthographic competence.
- **Strategic competence**: is an integrated personal system of knowledge and skills to solve (unexpectedly occurred) communicative problems, to organize and purposefully regulate a line of verbal and non –verbal actions selected for the achievement of communicative goals in a certain context and in specific conditions, especially if there is insufficiency in linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge.
- **Pragmatic competence** is an integrated personal system of personal system of principles according to which messages are:
  - organized, structured and organized in coherent messages (thematically, logically, stylistically) discursive competence.
  - used in oral and written form to perform a certain communicative functional competence.
  - sequenced according to interactional and transactional communicative design
  - (question, answer, statement- agreement/ disagreement, request/ offer/ apology...).

#### **1.3.4 Definition of the Competency-Based Approach**

After having defined such concepts, 'the Competency-Based Approach' will be examined to understand its theoretical principles. There are different models of curriculum development, some focusing on knowledge transmission and assessment of such knowledge and others more on skills and personal development. The CBA is a very recent approach which focuses on outcomes of learning. Rodgers *et.al* (1995) argue that "the broader general outcomes associated with education can be described in competency terms, measured and effected through learning experiences". It addresses what the learners are expected to do rather than on what they are expected to learn about (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 141). It consists of teachers basing their instructions on concepts expecting to foster deeper and broader understanding.

The CBA has become a privileged topic in curriculum discourse as it claims that learners should mobilize their values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours in a personal and independent way to address challenges successfully. Challenges are present everywhere, and they can be academic, but also practical and life- oriented. The CBA in education and learning requires a focus not only on input but also on outcomes or results. Such results, however, do not pertain only to academic knowledge, as in traditional testing where rote memorization of pre-fabricated knowledge is required. Competencies are not just skills as opposed to knowledge, but represent a complex articulation of knowledge, attitudes and skills that learners can use whenever they are needed not just in examination. The CBA curricula fostering learner-friendly teaching and learning strategies could engender a shift from sheer memorization to the development of higher order intellectual skills and life skills, including communication, social, emotional and other relevant skills. Competency-Based Education (CBE) focuses on outcomes of learning. "It refers to an educational movement that advocates defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable descriptions of knowledge, skills and behaviours students should possess at the end of a course of study" (ibid.).

CBE is a functional approach to education that emphasizes life skills and evaluates mastery of those skills according to actual learner performance. It was defined by the U.S. Office of Education as a performance-based process leading to a demonstrated mastery of basic life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society (Savage, 1993: 15). We can simply say that the CBA is an
outcome-based instruction which is adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and the community. Competencies describe the ability to apply basic and other skills in situations that are commonly encountered in everyday life. Thus, CBE is based on a set of outcomes that are derived from an analysis of tasks typically required of students in life situations.

# 1.3.5 Background to the Competency-Based Approach

Differences in the values of various systems of education are what is worth exploring rather than historical details because we need to make values more explicit. Values are, however, relative things, and one person's construction of the inherent values of any educational system or curriculum offering may not ring true for another. The concept of the CBE is both an old and an evolving idea; details of which are still being worked out. The thought pattern that gave us CBE was Experimentalism. There are three fundamental ideas associated with experimentalism: 1) the world is in constant change. 2) Educational practice should be based on evidence provided by psychological data. 3) Man's psychological and social behaviour is based on an economic and well-being motive (Richards, *et. al.*, 1973: 9).

The notion of CBE was first introduced in the USA in the late 1960s and evolved through applications to other professional education programmes in the USA in the 1970s, vocational training programmes in the UK and in Germany and many others in the 1980s and vocational professional skills recognition in Australia in 1990s (Velde, 1999). It has been argued that the theoretical roots of the CBA lie in the behaviourist models of human psychology from the 1950s. This is based on the view that CBA is about making inferences about competency on the basis of performance. The CBE has its roots in teacher education, later development extended applications of the idea to elementary schools, to minimum competency standards for high school graduation and vocational education (Burke, 1989: 10). The genesis of the Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET), as a distinct response to social changes, was fuelled by the US Office of Education in 1968 when it gave ten grants to colleges and universities to develop training programmes for the preparation of elementary school teachers.

The experimentalists, among whom John Dewey (1960) stands as the central figure, believing that man is a biological animal and as such controlled to some extent by economic and well-being motives. These motives are the force behind one's sociological and psychological behaviour. The CBA developed in ways that were influenced by more than one narrow approach to learning. For example, Harris et al. (1995: 36), like Bowden and Master (1993), have argued that: "In the 1970s there were five approaches related to the design of CBE teaching. These were: mastery learning (Bloom 1974), criterion-reference testing (Propham, 1978), minimum-competency testing (Jaegan, 1980), competence in education (Burke *et. al.*, 1975) and programmed learning (Skinner 1952)". These movements shared three things in common: modules design and assessment around a list of observable behaviours and the concept of mastery (cited in Harris *et. al.*, 1995: 396).

Although CBE has its roots in experimentalism, it is the latest educational approach, and is claimed by the extravagant to be the panacea of educational issues. Others who are driven by economic rationalism see it as the reform agenda that will lift the workforce to productivity levels of internationally competitive standards (*ibid:* 7). All countries which have introduced CBE in the last two decades have done so in the recognition that international economic competitiveness has shaped the need to have a well-educated innovative workforce at all occupational levels (Arguelles *et.al.*, 2000: 10).

## **1.3.6** Characteristics of the Competency- Based Approach

The fact that society has changed its world views, values and norms urges educational institutions to search and establish the most suitable way to educate young people in a way that enables them to take responsibility for managing their own lives and acting autonomously. The CBA is considered as the panacea of educational issues because it is characterized by the following features which enable citizens to interact effectively in the modern life:

- The CBA is action-oriented in that it gears learning to the acquisition of know how embedded in functions and skills. These will allow the learner to become an effective competent user in real- life situations outside the classroom.
- It is a problem-solving approach in that it places learners in situations that test/ check their capacity to overcome obstacles and problems, make learners think and they learn by doing.

- It is social constructivist in that it regards learning as occurring through social interaction with other people. In other words, learning is not concerned with the transmission of pre-determined knowledge and know-how to be reproduced in vitro, but as a creative use of a newly constructive knowledge through the process of social interaction with other people.
- Finally and most importantly, the CBA is a cognitive approach. It is indebted to Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom *et al.*, 1964). They have claimed that all the educational objectives can be classified as cognitive (to do with information) and affective (to do with attitudes, values and emotions) or psychomotor (to do with bodily movements ...). According to them, cognitive objectives form a hierarchy by which the learner must achieve lower order objectives before he/she can achieve higher ones (Ameziane *et.al.*, 2005: 12-13).

One of the most distinctive features of the CBA is its integration of the project work as part of the learning strategy. Over all, if CBA expands on the communicative approach, it is in the sense that it seeks to make the attainment visible; i.e, concrete through the realization of projects. It also makes cooperative learning a concrete reality and opens new avenues for action, interaction and the construction of new knowledge. In short, it is only through carrying project work that we and our learners can live the basic principles of the CBA. In addition, the use of portfolio in assessing learners' development is widely used in teaching English under this approach.

After having presented the characteristics of the CBA in order to be acquainted with such an approach, we find it essential to examine the most important concepts seen above such as 'constructivism', 'Bloom's taxonomy', 'project', 'cooperative learning' and 'portfolio'.

# 1.3.6.1 Constructivism

"Constructivism is basically a theory of learning that attempts to show that knowledge can and can only be generated from experience" (Steffe and Thompson, 2000: 6). It advocates that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. It is claimed by Piaget and Garcia (1989: 252) that "What has not been acquired through experience and personal reflection can be superficially assimilated and does not modify any way of thinking". These constructivist views of learning inform us that there is a shift from knowledge transmission to knowledge construction by learners themselves. Kanselaar *et.al.*, 2000) support this by saying that:

Constructivism implies that learners are encouraged to construct their own knowledge instead of copying it from authority, be it a book or a teacher, in realistic situations instead of decontextualised, formal situations such as propagated in traditional textbooks and together with others instead of their own.

This means that learners should be encouraged to be autonomous. When they encounter something new, they have to reconcile it with their previous ideas and experience, may be changing what they believe in or may be discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, they are active creators of their own knowledge in context while interacting with others and receiving feedback from the teacher, their peers in the classroom or from other people.

Constructivist learning has emerged as a prominent approach to learning. It stems from the work of Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky among others in cognitive psychology (cited in Danielson, 1996: 23). According to Dewey (1916: 188)), "No thought, no idea can possibly be conveyed as an idea from one person to another. Learners interpret new ideas in the context of their present interest and understanding if they are to have thoughts at all". So, constructivism is a view of learning based on the belief that it is not a thing that can be simply given by the teacher at the front of the room to students. Rather, knowledge is constructed by learners through active mental processes of development; learners are the builders and creators of meaning and knowledge. Jonassen (1994: 95) proposed eight characteristics of the constructivist learning environment:

- 1- They provide multiple representations of reality.
- 2- Multiple representations avoid oversimplification and represent the complexity of the real world.
- 3- They emphasize knowledge construction instead of knowledge reproduction.
- 4- They emphasize authentic tasks in a meaningful context rather than an abstract instruction out of context.
- 5- They provide learning environments such as real-world settings or case-based learning instead of predetermined sequences of instruction.
- 6- They encourage thoughtful reflection on experience.
- 7- They enable context and content- dependent knowledge construction.
- 8- They support collaborative construction of knowledge through social negociation, not competition among learners for recognition.

According to the characteristics stated above, constructivism represents a paradigm shift from education based on behaviourism, relying on knowledge transmission to education based on cognitive theory, relying on knowledge construction by the learners themselves. Dewey (ibid: 46) asserts that "Education is not an affair of telling and being told, but an active and constructive process". Other authors confirm this such as Innes (2004: 1) who says that "Constructivist views of learning include a range of theories that share the general perspective that knowledge is constructed by learners rather than transmitted to them". According to Von Glasserfeld (1989: 12) "children are not repositories for adult's knowledge, but organisms, which like all of us, are constantly trying to make sense and to understand their experience". This shows that there is a tendency to shift from knowledge transmitted by the teacher to students though drilling and repetitions to construction of knowledge by the children themselves through problem solving and experience. Two main approaches to constructivism are well-known in the field of education: cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. The former is associated with the work of Piaget and the latter with that of Vygotsky. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive as both admit that learners construct their own knowledge. However, the main emphasis in the two approaches is different as it will be shown below.

### **1.3.6.1.1 Cognitive Constructivism**

Piaget is considered as the pioneer and parent of the constructivist thought. "The beginning of the constructivist approach is considered to be the work of Piaget which led to the expansion of understanding of child development and learning as a process of construction" (Pritchard & Woolard, 2010: 5). His theory of cognitive development is based on the idea that children's active development with their environment leads them to the construction of meaning and to learning (Jordan *et. al.*, 2008: 57). According to Piaget (1965: 28), "the development of human intellect proceeds through adaptation and organization. He expressed this by saying that "knowledge does not attempt to produce a copy of reality but, instead, serves the purpose of adaptation". Piaget used the terms accommodation and assimilation to describe the interplay of mind and environment in the learning process (*ibid.*). Adaptation is a process of assimilation and accommodation, where, on the one hand, external events are assimilated into thoughts and, on the other hand, new and unusual mental structures are accommodated into the mental environment. In other words, learners use their cognitive structures to interpret the

environment; and as a result, they assimilate new information only to the extent allowed by the existing one (Harris *et. al.*, 1995).

This asserts that learning occurs by an active construction of meaning rather than by transmission. This gave rise to statements such as "It's obvious after all, the children don't simply swallow all adult's knowledge, they have to construct it" (LaRochelle *et.al.*, 1998: 4). Piaget (1970; cited in *Jordan et. al.*, 2008: 57) says that:

> Children must go through the process of reconfiguration of their own mental schemes for themselves. Teachers must not interfere with this process by imposing their ready-made solutions because children will accept authority without making the knowledge themselves.

However, he adds that when learners encounter an experience or a situation that conflicts with their current way of thinking, a state of equilibrium is created (*ibid.*). To do this, they make sense of the new information by associating what they already know, that is attempting to assimilate it into their existing knowledge. When they are unable to do this, they accommodate the new information to their old way of thinking by restructuring their present knowledge to a higher level of thinking. This evolution depends precisely on this progressive equilibrium of assimilation and accommodation (Piaget, 1971: 108). Piaget's cognitive theory contributed to the reformulation of educational perspectives based on learners' individual construction of knowledge.

# 1.3.6.1.2 Socio-Constructivism

Vygotsky (1978) shared many of Piaget's assumptions about how children learn, but he placed more emphasis on the social context of learning. According to him, learning is greatly enhanced by the collaborative social interaction and communication; in other words, discussion, feedback and sharing ideas are powerful influences on learning. Vygotsy's view (*ibid.*) has been termed social constructivism to differentiate it from Piaget's view that is often called cognitive constructivism and is less concerned with language and social interaction. "Like Piaget, Vygotsky claimed that infants are born with the basic materials/abilities for intellectual development. Eventually, through interaction within the socio-cultural environment, these are developed into more sophisticated and effective mental processes/strategies which he refers to as Higher Mental Functions" (Pritchard & Woolard, 2010: 6). This informs us that cognitive constructivism is most concerned with the mechanism of intellectual development and the acquisition of knowledge and underestimates the effects of social factors on cognitive development. The table below shows the difference between cognitive constructivism and social constructivism:

	Cognitive Development Theory	Social Constructivism
	( Piaget)	(Vygotsky)
Knowledge	Knowledge of cognitive structures are actively constructed by learners themselves based on existing structures	Knowledge is socially constructed
Learning	Active assimilation and accommodation of new information to existing cognitive structures. Discovery by learners	Integration of students into knowledge community, collaborative assimilation and accommodation of new information
Motivation	Intrinsic: learners set their own goals, motivate themselves to learn	Intrinsic and extrinsic: learning goals and motives are determined by learners and extrinsic rewards provided by the knowledge society

Table1.4: Comparison of Cognitive Constructivism and Social Constructivism

(adapted from Larochelle et. al., 1998)

Social constructivism considers knowledge as a human creation which is constructed by social and cultural means, whereas cognitive constructivism views knowledge construction as something individual. Thus, according to Vygotsky (1978), learning is a social process resulting from collaborative assimilation and accommodation of new information; it is neither simply an individual process, nor a passive process. Pritchard and Woolard (*op.cit:* 7) support this by saying that "Effective and lasting learning takes place for the individual when engaged in social activity with a range of others".

Considering the effect of social interaction in shaping cognitive development, it is worth mentioning the 'Zone of Proximal Development'- ZPD- a concept created by vygotsky (1978) and defined as " the level of development above a person's present level" (Slavin, 2003: 44). As learners work in groups, members have different levels of ability so more advanced peers can help less advanced ones. This operation is called 'scaffolding', another concept coined by Bruner *et. al.* (1976); i.e., "a knowledgeable

participant can create supportive conditions in which a novice can participate and extend his knowledge to higher levels of competence" (Donato, 1994: 5). Students can also be assisted by the teacher who designs activities that enable them to achieve higher cognitive abilities. Writing, which is the focus of this research, is both a cognitive process that involves comprehension of ideas, expressive language and mechanical skills (Dorn & Stoffos, 2001: XI). It is also a social process during which students learn how to become writers through meaningful interactions with more knowledgeable people. Therefore, it is the teacher's duty to design structured tasks to make interaction beneficial. It is supported by Dorn and Stoffos who say that "the writing environment is structured to allow for the transfer of knowledge, skills and strategies from assisted to unassisted learning zones" (*ibid.*).

According to social constructivism, ideal learning involves negotiating understanding through dialogue or discourse shared by two or more students. In school settings, the social construction of understanding occurs in whole class or group discussions or in dialogue between pairs (Brophy, 2002: IX). This is what differentiates this approach to learning if compared to traditional ones (see appendix 1). Taking a social constructivist stance can enable teachers to create classrooms in which students can become intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to learn. Social constructivist teachers take into account the role of classroom culture in supporting students' intrinsic motivation. Such teachers deliberately create classroom environments that are responsive to the needs, ideas, dreams and beliefs of their students. They also take into consideration students' learning styles by providing them with a variety of tasks which facilitate social interaction and self expression. This can, eventually, foster their extrinsic motivation.

### **1.3.6.1.3 Importance of Constructivism**

Many educators have agreed that constructivist pedagogies that are advocated in the reform vision of learning represent a synthesis of cognitive and social perspectives, where knowledge is seen personally constructed and socially mediated (Tobbin & Tippins 1993; Driver *et.al.*, 1994; Shephard 2000; cited in Le Cornu & Peters 2005). One component of the current redevelopment of all subject area curricula is the change of instruction from the transmission curriculum to the transactional curriculum. In a traditional classroom, a teacher transmits information to students who passively listen and acquire facts. In a transactional classroom, students are actively involved in their learning to reach new understanding. Constructivism teaching fosters critical thinking and creates active and motivated learners. (Zemelman *et.al.*, 1993) tell us that learning in all subject areas involves inventing and constructing new ideas. They suggest that the constructivist theory be incorporated into the curriculum and advocate that teachers create environments in which children can construct their own understanding. The constructivist approach is efficient in that it creates learners who are autonomous, inquisitive thinkers who question, investigate and reason. The act of teaching, according to Windschitl (2002: 135), is being reframed as "co-constructing knowledge with students, acting as conceptual change agent, monitoring apprenticeship through the zone of proximal development and supporting a community of learners".

# 1.3.6.2 Bloom's Taxonomy

The CBA is a cognitive approach indebted to Bloom's taxonomy (Ameziane *et al.*, 2005: 12). Let us now examine this taxonomy to know how it is used in teaching/learning English. "Taxonomy" simply means "classification". Bloom's taxonomy refers to a classification of the different objectives that educators set for students. So, the well-known taxonomy of educational learning objectives is an attempt to classify forms and levels of learning. Bloom *et.al.* (1956) divided educational objectives into three domains - "cognitive", "affective and "psychomotor". Valett (1974: 12-16) offered a summary of each of theses domains:

- **Cognitive** conceptual and language skill- symbolic development (thinking, verbal expression), conscious awareness. During this stage, students learn to manipulate symbols to control the environment: reality comes to be represented through pictures, words and numbers.
- Affective- social and personal skills- Emotive development (personal transcendence, selfidentification and expression, feeling and intuiting). This stage is characterized by the awareness of feelings and emotions and their expressions in ever-refined interests, attitudes, beliefs and value orientation.
- **Psycho-motor**-perceptual, Sensory and Cross-Motor Skills- Motor development (concrete relations, sensory exploration, unconscious stimulation), characterized by the struggle to develop body movement and control of one's body in a given environment.

Bloom's taxonomy can be helpful to teachers in devising a lesson taking into consideration the different phases learners can pass through to reach construction of knowledge leading to the ability to solve problems in new situations and to creativity. Six levels have been identified within the cognitive domain, from the lowest level to the highest level, starting from knowledge to evaluation as they are listed below:

- **Knowledge** represents the lowest level of learning and is the fact of remembering the Previously learned material.
- **Comprehension** is defined as the ability to grasp the meaning of material by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas.
- **Application** refers to the ability of using new knowledge in new and concrete situations; or in other words, to solve problems by applying acquired knowledge.
- Analysis refers to the ability to examine and break down material into parts so that its organizational structure may be understood.
- **Synthesis** refers to put parts together to form a new whole. It may be explained as the phase of production.
- Evaluation refers to the ability to make judgments about information (Bloom *et. al.*, 1956: 186-193).

Bloom's taxonomy hierarchical model of cognitive thinking is illustrated in the importance that the CBA accords to the mobilisation of knowledge and skills, their gradual integration at higher levels (from level 1to level 6), their application to new situations of learning or use, the integration of new knowledge and skills and finally the evaluation of the process and product of thinking (Ameziane *et. al.*, 2005: 13). This means that acquiring a certain competency requires from the learner to pass through different cognitive stages in order to be able to do well in a certain area.

The affective domain (Krathwohl *et.al.*, 1973) includes the manner which we deal with things emotionally, such as feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasm, motivation and attitudes. This domain is very important as it describes the way people react emotionally. This concerns the awareness and growth in attitudes, emotions and feelings. Five levels have been identified in this domain from the simplest behaviour to the most complex:

- **Receiving**: students pay attention
- Responding: they actively participate in the learning process
- Valuing: they attach value to what they are learning
- **Organizing**: they can put together different values, information and ideas and accomodate them within his/her schema, relating and elaborating on what they have been learned
- **Characterizing**: they hold a particular value or belief that now exert influence on his/her behaviour so that it becomes a characteristics (*ibid*: 27).

The five levels above indicate that learning takes place gradually in that learners start by paying attention to their teacher while giving them instructions or presenting a certain activity. Then, being aware of the importance of what they are learning, they take part in the learning process trying to accommodate the new information with the existing one. In order for learning to occur, other components of the affective domain are essential in the learning process. This domain is characterized in terms of motivation as it affects the direction and intensity of behaviour. Gagne and Driscoll (1988a: 25) state "It is a truism that in order for change to occur, one must have a motivated individual. Therefore, this domain should be taken into consideration in any kind of learning because motivation as stressed by (Ringness, 1975) intiates, maintains and controls the direction of behaviour. In addition, Bandura (1997) and Schunk (1991) provide evidence that self-efficacy and self-regulation deserve attention as important variables related to success. The former is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to do something" and is related to academic achievement, while the latter means "to adapt and occasionally invent tactics for making progress" (Pagares, 1996: 25). To sum up, being motivated, believing in one's success and one's skills in directing it are essential factors for meeting one's goals in learning and for meeting our goals in the rapidly changing context in which we live.

The psychomotor domain is the third one in Bloom's educational objectives. This domain (Sympson, 1972) includes physical movements, coordination and use of motor-skills areas. Development of these skills requires practice. The mastery of a certain skills is realized through steps as it shown in table 1.5:

Level	Behaviours
Perception	Sensory cues guide motor activity
Set	Mental, physical and emotional dispositions that make one respond in a certain way to a situation
Guided response	First attempts at a physical skill. Trial and error coupled with practice lead to better performance
Mechanism	The intermediate stage I learning a physical skill. Responses are habitual with a medium level of assurance and proficiency
Complex overt response	Complex movements are possible with a minimum of wasted effort at a high level of assurance will be successful
Adaptation	Movements can be modified for special movements
Origination	New movements can be created for special situations

Table 1.5: Stages ir	h the Psychomotor	<b>Domain according</b>	to Sympson (1972)

Another combination of three taxonomies proposed by (Dave, 1970, Harrow, 1972 and Sympson, 1972) includes the following steps: observing, imitating, practising and adapting, based on Bloom and Krathwohl's psychomotor domain. This shows how the mastery of any skill is reached. Bloom's taxonomy has been used to guide curriculum planning. Knowing about the cognitive domain, behaviours and the process leads to skill mastery and helps teachers to prepare lessons and to devise learning activities without neglecting the affective side.

## 1.3.6.3 The project

Interest in project work and its integration into ELT instruction is growing around the world. This approach lends itself to focus on language at the discourse rather than the sentence level, authentic language use and learner- centeredness. The project work is an important activity in the CBA. It is creative and allows the pupils to face the unknown (Roumadi, 2004: 6).

A project in the Algerian educational syllabus is defined as "a carefully planned long term undertaking. It is a creative way for learners to apply what they have learnt in class" (Ameziane, 2005: 14). During the realization of a project, learners show their capacities when demonstrating that they have mastered the objectives assigned. A project is a divided and complementary task where students learn how to work in groups, how to cooperate and how to feel that they can do something. If we consider the syllabus of any educational level in Algeria, we find a project at the end of every unit. A learning project is realized through a process including a number of stages:

## 1. The preparation Stage:

- Define clearly the project (nature, aim)
- Adjust it to the competencies aimed for
- Consider the theme, duration, the teacher's role, the grouping of the pupils and the assessment procedure

#### 2. The realization Stage:

- The teacher becomes an advisor, a facilitator, a resource person
- Assist pupils in collecting ideas, planning actions

### 3. The Presentation Stage

Pupils write the final draft

- Present their product in front of a large audience
- Ask pupils to review their previous actions and discuss them among themselves (pupils' feedback)
- Discuss honestly the pupils' performance (teacher's feedback) (*ibid:* 6-7)

While working on a project, the teacher has to remind the learners about the project right at the beginning of the unit by focussing on classroom planning, both students and teachers discuss the content and scope of the project as well as its requirements. Besides, he should provide them with the necessary strategies and materials required to accomplish the project. Moreover, he should make the students aware that when they will be equipped in terms of skills provided in the different courses, they have to realize the project and then present it to their classmates. This is why we can say that through projects and students' performance in the final phase or the presentation, which can take different forms, the competencies they have developed become to a certain extent observable and measurable. In other words, a project work makes learning more meaningful. It also makes cooperative learning a concrete reality and opens up entirely new avenues for action, interaction and the construction of new knowledge. It is also worth presenting the concept of 'portfolio' and stressing its importance in learning as it can be used either as leaning or assessment tools.

## 1.3.6.4 The Portfolio

There has been a growing body of research which documents the importance of portfolios which can be used as learning or assessment tools. Paulson, Paulson and Meyer (1991: 6) gave an extensive definition of portfolio as 'a purposeful collection of students' work not only exhibiting students' effort, progress and achievement but also demonstrating students' participation in selecting contents and selecting the criteria for assessment and evidence of students' self-reflection". Another definition suggested by (Jones and Shelton, 2006: 18) states that "Portfolios are purposeful organized documents which represent connections between actions and beliefs, thinking and doing, and evidence through which the builder (student) constructs meaning". In other words, the portfolio is "a purposeful collection of students' work that demonstrates to students and others their efforts, progress and achievement in given areas" (Genessee & Upshur, 1996: 99). For some teachers, the portfolio is part of an alternative assessment, for others, it documents the students' learning process; still others use it as a means of promoting learners' reflection.

The Portfolio has several benefits. For example, it promotes students' involvement in assessment, responsibility for assessment, interaction with teachers and students about learning, collaborative and sharing classrooms, students' ownership of their own work, students' ability to think critically and excitement about learning (*ibid.*). Thus, the teacher's role is to guide students in developing portfolios because "a well –developed portfolio emphasizes what students can do to participate in an ongoing modified instruction in which assessment takes place all the time (Valentia, 1990: 76). By planning and organizing learning, monitoring, observing and reflecting on their own learning, students become motivated and more autonomous individuals.

Portfolios have become a desired tool because they provide authentic evidence of what students know, believe and are able to achieve. There is a strong link between portfolios and constructivism as a teaching/ learning orientation and human development (Jones & Shelton, 2006: 13) because the core of constructivism is also authentic learning. It gives us awareness of what we know and how we happen to know it, what it is to know something and how developmental stages in our capacity to learn change from one to another. By fostering the necessary conditions that encourage an active stance toward learning, constructivism represents a means of observing the learning itself. From an educational angle, looking at development is embedded in constructivism which asks for the students' exact, conscious, purposeful engagement with the world surrounding them (Fosnot, 1996: 16).

In order to develop a portfolio, students need to follow certain procedures before reaching the final phase. This process includes the following stages:

- Collection: save artefacts that represent the day-to day results of learning.
- Selection: review and evaluate the artefact saved and identify those that demonstrate achievement of specific standards or goals.
- **Reflection**: reflect on the significance of the artefacts chosen for the portfolio in relationship to specific learning goals.
- **Projection**: compare the reflection to the standards, goals and performance indicators and set learning goals for the future. (Danielson & Abrutyn, 1997: 17)

One advantage of portfolio assessment is that it leaves students a chance to reflect upon their development growth and progress over time. It also offers teachers a chance to think about their students' problems thoroughly (Nolet, 1992: 14). It is a good opportunity to give students feedback and advice after having identified their strengths

and weaknesses. The overall purpose of portfolios is to enable students to demonstrate to others learning and progress. Their greatest value is that, in building them, students become active participants in the learning process and assessment. Thus, portfolios promote leaner-centred learning and make the learning process more visible as they give a more significant picture of the students' growth.

# **1.3.6.5** Cooperative Learning

Traditionally, the classroom is predominated by teacher talk and relies heavily on textbooks. Information is directly aligned with the information offered by them, providing students with only one view of complex issues. However, "education must invite students to experience the world's richness, empowering them to ask their own questions and seek their own answers, and challenge them to understand the world's complexities" (Brooks and Brooks, 1999: 5). This can occur through cooperative learning advocated by social constructivism and largely used in teaching in ESL and EFL. This strategy used in teaching requires students to work together in small groups to support each other to improve their own learning and that of others to accomplish shared goals (Jolliffe 2007: 3). Cooperative learning does not encourage competition between learners; nevertheless, it may be contrasted with competitive learning in which students work against each other to achieve an academic goal (Johnson et.al., 1994; in Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 195). Vygotsky (1997: 188) argues that "what a child can do in cooperation today will enable him to do it alone tomorrow". This shows the positive effects of cooperative learning in developing learners' autonomy. According to Jolliffe (op.cit: 6) "Cooperative learning has three advantages: achievement, interpersonal relationships, psychological health and social competence.

Through cooperation, learners develop higher-order thinking enabling them to be achievers due to the opportunity offered by social interaction with peers and the teacher. In addition, this type of learning establishes friendships between peers and promotes a greater sense of belonging. This leads to improvement in learners' psychological health and social competence as they develop not only self- confidence and self-esteem, but also a sense of sharing responsibility in problem-solving. Cooperative learning and collaborative learning are often used interchangeably. However, there are differences between them. Cooperative learning is considered to be the most structured approach to learning in groups while collaborative learning is less structured (Paritz, 1997). In cooperative learning, the structure is imposed by the teacher, whereas collaborative learning represents a different philosophy of interaction whereby students are given more power over their learning (Abrami *et.al.*, 1995). We can also add that in cooperative learning each student works on a part of the task to accomplish the shared goal while in collaborative learning all the students work together to do the task. These two kinds of learning are useful in teaching in that they develop learners' psychological health and promote learning through interaction.

## 1.3.7 Teacher's Role in the Competency- Based Approach

The CBA is built upon the philosophy that almost all learners can learn equally well if they receive the kind of instruction they need (Ameziane, 2005: 12). So, it is the teachers' responsibility to analyze their students' needs seeking a kind of improvement appropriate to the changing world as it is stated in (Farid, 2005: 49):

This requires from the teacher to acquire competences in addition to the traditional aptitude in search of scientific, educational and cultural information. These aptitudes include the ability to discuss, to consult others and not to impose his /her opinion and to be able to evaluate and criticize him/ herself.

Since the CBA is learner-centred, it does not require teachers' subservience. As it is action-oriented, it requires teachers' in action, teachers who draw on their professional skills in subject matter, methodology, decision-making and social skill to enable learners to be achievers. This also requires a style based on reflection on what, why and how to teach fixing objectives and adjusting teaching strategies to learning strategies.

The teachers' role is to facilitate the process of language acquisition through the development of appropriate learning like hypothesis making or hypothesis testing. We can also say that the teacher in a classroom is a researcher. An important aspect of his job is watching, listening and asking questions in order to learn more about how students learn so that he may be more helpful to them. Students also teach teachers because they show them how they learn. Thus, they have to carefully watch them and

listen to them. This kind of watching and listening may contribute to teachers' ability to use what the classroom experience provides them to create contextualized and meaningful lessons. The ability to observe and listen to students and their experiences in the classroom contribute to their ability to use a constructivist approach.

Another fundamental concept in social constructivism is the idea of 'scaffolding' which refers to the support provided to students by others –parents, peers, teachers or other reference sources. Hammond and Gibbons (2001: 14) interpret scaffolding as "high challenge, high support enabling students to achieve beyond their abilities". In other words, teachers need to set up tasks which challenge students to perform beyond their current capacity because if the tasks are not challenging enough, students will get bored and become de-motivated. This scaffolding enables students to achieve great improvement in language learning.

The concept of scaffolding is also linked with what Vygotsky (1978) calls the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This refers to the tasks and activities which may be beyond the students' current abilities. This requires from teachers great skills in assessing and then exploiting their students' ZPD. Teachers know that "Learning is no longer primarily about reaching specific learning objectives, but about the ability to flexibly apply what has been learned" (Merienboer & Stoyanoo, 2008: 70); therefore, they have to focus on complex skills and competencies, which imply the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in such a way that transfer of learning is enhanced (*ibid.*).

# 1.3.8 Student's Role in the Competency-Based Approach

The CBA has a considerable impact on the role of students who must become self- motivated playing an active role in their own education. They have to demonstrate satisfactory performance and competency in order to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum, they cannot be regarded simply as receiver of information (Forest & Kinser, 2002: 127). As the CBA is based on socio-constructivism, the learner should go through a process of personal appropriation, questioning his own convictions. This leads him to revise his prior knowledge and its scope to compare his own representations with those of his classmates, to search for information and validate it through consulting various sources of documentation and people in possession of information. In doing so, the learner will appeal to cognitive, affective and motivational strategies in order to set a balance between his previous knowledge and his newly acquired knowledge. The reflection of the learner will operate on his own learning processes, assure the quality of his acquisition and facilitate his retention.

It is essential to note that negotiation is an important aspect of a constructivist classroom. It unites teachers and students in a common purpose. Another quality of a constructivist classroom is its interactive nature in that students interact either with their peers or with the teacher through dialogue in order to construct knowledge. Social interaction in learning facilitates and encourages the use of new skills to create meaning and build understanding through communication (Ashton & Pillay, 2010: 343). Interaction with the teacher and peers helps students' develop self reflection and positive attitude towards criticism. In addition, "the collaboration and dialogic action with others is a key to developing awareness, experience and opportunities for reflection" (*ibid.*).

# **1.3.9** The Rationale for Implementing the Competency-Based Approach in the Algerian Educational System

The transformational processes observed nowadays in social life concern all the fields of social activity and existence, in particular the field of education as a basic component of the formation of a person's world outcome. Over the last decades, the requirements placed upon education systems have been influenced by rapid progression often unpredictable processes of public transformations, disintegration of states, changes in the geopolitical map of the world, scientific discoveries and their implementations.

Modern society is characterized by rapid changes in all spheres of life –a feature characteristic of societies in transition –changes take place quickly due to the factors which stimulate the economy and industrial development and which affect the development of international relations, global processes of migration and the field of education. Therefore, the re-formulation of educational goals in both developed and developing countries becomes a necessity because the world which is being formed due to a collision of new values and technologies, new geopolitical relation, new life styles and communication requires brand new ideas. It is why education at present is subject to

great changes taking place in modern society. The development of education was influenced by such features of social development as globalization, democratization, disintegration of the union of the nuclear power blocs and the formation of a unified information space.

In this respect, first, students need to be able to use a wide range of tools for interacting effectively with the environment: both physical ones such as information technology, and socio-cultural ones such as the use of language. Second, in an increasingly interdependent world, students need to be able to engage with others, and since they will encounter people from a range of backgrounds, it is important that they are able to interact in heterogeneous groups. Third, students need to be able to take responsibility for managing their own lives, situate their lives in much broader social contexts and act autonomously.

Similarly, according to the general objectives assigned to the teaching of English in the Algerian Educational system, a socio-constructivist and efficient cognitive design has been set with the purpose to install competencies in the learner. This is due to the failure of the Communicative Approach to enable learners to reach an acceptable level performance which allows them to communicate whenever it is needed, especially in the era of globalization and job requirement.

Educational experience in many countries shows that one way of updating the content of education is the orientation of the training programmes towards the CBA. Scientists in European countries consider that knowledge, skills, working habits acquired by young people if transformed into competencies would enable intellectual development of an individual and the formation of the ability to quickly respond to the demands of the time. Thus, in order to integrate in the globalized world, Algeria opted for such a reform to enable young people to reach an international level in terms of required competencies.

# Conclusion

Educational reform in many parts of the world is expressed in terms of competencies to develop in learners. Competencies are attained after various activities to reach excellence in doing specific skills enabling young people to adapt to the changing world. One of the approaches seen appropriate to the educational content is the Competency-Based Approach - an outcome based approach- which focuses on measurable and useable skills and abilities. It claims that learners should mobilize their values, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in a personal way to address the challenges successfully. This alternative approach applied in the Algerian educational system allows learners to attain a level that makes them rely on themselves and compete with other people around the world either in the field of work or in other situations. However, we should note on the one hand that it is considered by many advocates as the panacea for all the ills of education and training and the solution to various problems faced by education for many decades. On the other hand many antagonists have denounced the approach as overly product-oriented, narrowly mechanic and too fragmenting. Thus, what is required is more reflection and discussion about its efficacy and appropriateness, contexts and issues, planning and implementation.

# Chapter Two

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# **Chapter Two**

# Writing under the Competency-Based Approach

It is through writing that the individual comes to be fully effective in an intellectual organisation, not only in the management of every day affairs but also in the expression of ideas and arguments.

(Tribble, 1996: 13)

# Introduction

The ability to write effectively is becoming more and more important, and writing instruction is assuming an increasing role in both second and foreign language instruction. According to the CBA, writing is one of the competencies essential for students to communicate in the globalized world and to attain academic success. This chapter intends to present the current approaches which have been used in teaching composition because theory supports and informs practice, and mainly to stress those that can be used under the CBA, being the focus of our study. But before doing that we find it necessary to define the writing skill and to show its relationship with reading and speaking.

# 2.1 Writing

Writing has been with us for several thousands of years, and nowadays it is more important than ever. The immensity of written work record and the knowledge conserved in libraries, data banks and multilayered information networks make it difficult to imagine an aspect of modern life unaffected by writing. 'Access', the catchword of the knowledge society, means access to written intelligence (Coulmas, 2003: 1). Writing not only offers ways of reclaiming the past, but is a critical skill for shaping the future. The ability of computers to operate in the written mode to retrieve, process and organize written language in many ways surpasses unaided human faculties; therefore, mastering the written word in its electronic guise has become essential. Providing a clear definition of what writing is not an easy task because of the multiple meanings of English words due to the long history of writing and its great importance. At least six meanings of writing can be distinguished (Coulmas,2003: 1):

- 1. A system of recording language by means of visible or tactile marks.
- 2. The activity of putting such a system to use.
- 3. The result of such an activity, a text.
- 4. The particular form of such a result, a script style such as block letter writing
- 5. artistic composition
- 6. a professional occupation

Writing has taken on different definitions for different groups of people in order to suit their different needs and purposes for writing through history. It is the ability to put pen and paper to express ideas through symbols. In this way, representations on the paper will have meaning and content that could be communicated to other people by the writer. Campbell, in her book '*Teaching Second Language writing: Interacting with Text*' (1998: 37), says "One of life's greatest releases is to express oneself in writing". It is a basic skill because it enables people to communicate in an appropriate manner to achieve communication.

Hedge (1988) states that this aspect of language learning, writing, has been a neglected area. She further explains that it is only recently that research into writing has produced results that offer insights as to what good writers do. Grabe and Kaplan (1996), in their book '*Theory and Practice of Writing*' explore the meaning of writing in terms of the rhetorical triangle in writing. Such a triangle consists of the reader, the recipient of the final product, the writer, the originator of the message; the subject matter and the text itself. Raimes (1983: 6) categorizes the components of writing as content, the writer's process, audience, purpose, word choice, mechanics, grammar and context. Hence, using this skill effectively requires from the writer linguistic, cognitive and social knowledge. This leads us to say that writing is not an easy task and that the writing teacher has to design activities that shift students' perspectives between those of speakers and listeners, writers and readers. All of this informs us that writing is not an isolated skill.

# 2.4 Writing and Reading Relationships

Writing and reading are usually designed separately under the belief that these two skills are totally different; however, they are interdependent processes that are essential to each other and mutually beneficial. The relationship between reading and writing is based on communication because both processes should develop as a natural extension of the child's need to communicate. In other words, if reading and writing are to be communicative, then the reader needs to read with the sense of the writer and the writer needs to write with the sense of the reader. Reading and writing are similar processes of meaning construction involving the use of cognitive strategies. This is because both processes involve the individual in constructing meaning through the application of complex cognitive and linguistic abilities that draw on problem solving skills and the activation of existing knowledge of both structure and meaning (Carson & Leki, 1993; Grabe, 2001). Nelson (1998: 279) also noted that "In reading, meaning is built from texts and in composing meaning is built for texts". Therefore, reading is the construction of meaning through relationships of parts from the text, while writing is relating our prior knowledge and experience to the text by putting meaning on the page. Reading may yield for students' new knowledge within a subject area, but more importantly it provides them with the rhetoric and structural knowledge they need to develop, modify, and activate schemata which are valuable when writing (Hyland, 2004: 17). He added explaining that extensive reading can furnish a great deal of tacit knowledge of conventional features of written texts, including grammar, vocabulary, organizational patterns, interactional devices and so on (*ibid.*). Therefore, what students read – particularly specific genres to which they are exposed - are important elements.

We share the same view that reading and writing are complementary skills in that they are processes in which students interact with texts meaningfully because growth in one skill inevitably leads to growth in the other; that is, students become better readers by strengthening their writing skill and vice versa. Hence, second language teachers need to utilize strategic methods; the concepts: reading to write and writing to read can be two facilitative strategies for instruction. Reading to write is based on the notion that reading supports and shapes second or foreign learners' writing through acquisition of language input when students are performing reading tasks. Through reading, students acquire knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures or rhetoric features of texts. On the other hand, writing to read encourages the student to interact meaningfully with texts addressed to various types of audience.

Reading is an integral part of writing. One of the techniques of writing successfully in an academic environment is to be able to integrate the important points of what you have read into your own writing. To do this, it is necessary to have a clear picture of what we have read and this entails active and focused writing. As reading is an integral part of writing, it is worth developing strategies which help students make the best use of their reading. As an effective reader not only of other authors' work, but also of his work, any of the techniques used in approaching written texts can be used to edit and work his/ her own writing. This will enable him/her to make sure that what he/she writes will make sense to the person who will read it.

Reading and writing are usually described as parallel processes (Trosky and Wood, 1982; Tierney and Pearson, 1983) where the activities of readers are congruent to or mirror images of writers. Indeed, there is a connectedness between what readers and writers do as they prepare to read or write, as they create meaning through text and as they reflect on the text. After preparing to read or write, readers and writers move into active stages of the parallel and complementary processes as they tackle the task of creating meaning through text. Readers ask questions, predict and verify content and writers provide answers and verifications by writing coherently during these active reading and composing stages. Both construct images and meaning, think logically and react to the ideas being presented. During this stage, writers 'talk' to the reader as they compose and readers carry on a mental conversation with the text as they interact with what the writer has created (*ibid:* 66).

Reading and writing researchers (Trosky & Wood, 1982; Tierney, Soter, O'Flahavand, McGinley, 1989) have acknowledged the importance of the connection between reading and writing processes. Integrated reading writing instruction is based on the understanding of how reading and writing processes are interrelated. Students' participation in activities that simultaneously promote the development of both reading and writing skills provides effective instruction and enhances learning. This is also supported by Krashen's (1984: 20) who argues that 'it is reading that gives the writer the 'feel' for the look and texture. He claims that reading which builds the knowledge of

written texts, helps L2 learners acquire necessary language constructs such as grammatical structures and discourse rules of writing and facilitates the process of language acquisition. Therefore, we find the idea of connecting reading and writing as suggested by researchers in the field beneficial as no courses of reading are programmed in our university curriculum. This will motivate students and make them more interested in reading. Thus, designing reading tasks in writing classrooms would be helpful for them.

# 2.5. Writing and Speaking Relationships

Both speaking and writing may be categorized as language output. Yet, they have been considered separately for a long time. Hughes (2001) summarized the differences between speaking and writing in two perspectives: aspects of production (how the two forms are generated) and social aspects (tendencies in attitudes to the two forms) as shown below:

Different aspects	Spoken discourse	Written discourse
	Dynamic	Static
	Oral	Visual
Aspect of production	Transcient	Non-transcient
	Unplanned	Planned
	Context dependent	decontextualized
Social aspects	Primary	Secondary
	Rhetoric	Logical
	Stigmatized	Prestigious
	Informal	Formal
	interpersonal	Contractual
		conservative

Table 2.6: Difference between Speaking and Writing

Sheerer (1996) argues that there is a fundamental cognitive dichotomy between speech and writing in that they present two modes of cognitive functioning. However, Weissberg (2006) provides a compelling argument for rethinking and reclaiming the speaking- writing connections. He reminds L2 writing specialists how social interaction on inner speech plays an integral role in writing. In his book '*Connecting Speaking and* 

*Writing in Second Language Instruction*', he provides both theoretical perspectives on the importance of L2 learners' development of written language as well as practical strategies for incorporating social instruction into the writing classroom. He also shows how encouraging concurrent oral-writing proficiencies affect L2 learners and how dialogue and writing relationships are developed through writing tasks, group activities, conferencing, dialogue journals and teacher- written feedback. In addition, he gave arguments and specific techniques for incorporating spoken interaction into L2 writing classes because he finds that second language writing is best acquired through a dialogic classroom model. A key assumption, he says is that "social interaction provides an ideal context for making complex cognitive skills like writing" (*ibid:* 3). Of particular interest is Vygotsky's thesis that writing like all higher cognitive functions emerges from inner speech that children acquire through social interaction. Vygotsky's ideas have prompted writing teachers to focus on collaborative learning as one way to promote the speaking writing connection for students (1978: 6).

Writing and speaking are interactional and thus influence each other. Traditionally, the Communicative Approach has seen speech production as an end in itself, recent work suggests that combining spoken and written forms in specific ways can be beneficial in improving speaking writing ability. Jonassen *et.al.*, (1996) investigated the role of speech in terms of how far it can provide direct evidence of cognitive processes underlying writing via 'thinking aloud' data concluding that it is helpful in that it enhances students productions in terms of length and complexity.

Weissberg (2006: 14) presents 'Instructional Conversations 'Ics' in considerable detail believing that teacher-student dialogue is a main tool for embedding instruction within social interaction in the L2 classroom and that teacher talk can offer various verbal assistance in the classroom in addition to peers dialogue. The basis for promoting Ics is threefold:

- 1. Speech is developmentally related to writing, so L2 writers draw on the linguistic resources of their conversational talk.
- 2. Students who talk about their writing tend to write with greater coherence.
- 3. When writing is taught conversationally, it becomes a meaningful, reality-linked social activity (*ibid.*).

Writing has also an important impact on speech as some words used in spoken language (dialect) disappear because as writing is recorded and more permanent, it influences the way people speak. We conclude saying that in order to help students develop their writing skills, they should be trained in the different aspects of language as is stated by (Krashen, 1993: 28) "Researchers suggest that second language skills cannot be acquired by practice in writing alone, but also need to be supported with extensive learning".

### 2.6 Current Approaches to Writing

Evolution from the structuralist teaching approaches to cognitive then to sociocognitive ones sidelines the change in teaching writing. It why we can notice a shift from the Product Approach to the Process Approach and ultimately to the Genre Approach. In the present time, teachers tend to be eclectic in teaching either language or writing. This is based on what Kynland (2004: 1) says:

What we do in the classroom, the methods and materials we adopt, the teaching styles we assume, the tasks we assign, are guided by both practical and theoretical knowledge and our decisions can be more effective if that knowledge is explicit.

In fact, teachers' knowledge about theory and their awareness about students' needs enable them to make the right decisions in choosing what is appropriate in order to help students develop their writing proficiency.

## 2. 6.1 Product Approaches

Product-based writing is called the controlled to Free Approach, the Text-Based Approach and the guided composition. Basically, writing in Product-Based Approaches has served to reinforce L2 writing in terms of grammatical and syntactical forms. There are varieties of activities which can raise students' awareness in second /foreign language writing from the lower level of proficiency like the use of model paragraph, sentence combining and rhetorical pattern of exercises.

## **2.6.1.1 The Controlled-to Free Approach**

In the 1950s and early 1960s, the Audio-lingual Approach dominated second language learning which emphasized speech and writing through mastering grammatical and syntactic forms (Raimes, 1983,) 'undergirding controlled composition are the

notions that language is speech (from structural linguistics) and that learning is habit formation (from behaviourist psychology). Given these basic notions, it is not surprising that from this perspective writing was considered as a secondary concern. This approach stresses the importance of grammar, syntax and mechanics. Generally taught sequentially, teaching writing involves sentence exercises and then paragraph manipulations. Most of writing is strictly controlled by having students change words or clause or combine sentences. When students achieve mastery of these kinds of exercises, typically at an advanced level of proficiency, they are allowed to engage in autonomous writing. In this approach, students are given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically. These controlled compositions are then followed by correction of errors and later to free composition. Overall, this approach focuses on accuracy rather than fluency. A model of the product approach is outlined below:

**Stage 1:** Model texts are read then features of the genre are highlighted. For example, if studying a formal letter, students' attention may be drawn on the importance of paragraphing and the language used to make formal requests. If studying a story, the focus may be on the techniques used to make the story interesting, and students focus on where and how the writer enjoys these techniques.

**Stage 2:** This consists of controlled practice of the highlighted features, usually in isolation. So, if students are studying a formal letters, they may be asked to practice the language used to make formal requests, practising the' I would be grateful if you...' structure.

**Stage 3:** In this stage ideas are organized. Those who favour this approach believe that the organization of ideas is more important than the ideas themselves as important as the control of language.

**Stage 4:** It is the final stage, students use the skills, structures and vocabulary they have been taught to produce a text individually to show what they can do as fluent and competent users of the language (Steel, 2009:9).

# 2.6.1.2 The Free Approach

This approach stresses writing quantity over quality and does minimal correction.

It focuses on fluency rather than accuracy. It is based on the idea that once ideas are there organization follows. It was believed that written exercises should take the form of free composition that is the writer-originated discourse- to extend the language control to the student and to promote fluency in writing. Thus students are encouraged to be concerned about fluency and content and give cursory attention to form. Proponents of this approach consider that grammatical accuracy will develop over time. But this view of writing was quickly rejected. Crooks and Chaudron (1991: 52) show the differences between controlled and free techniques in the practical stages of a lesson as follows:

Controlled	Free	
teacher-centred	student-centred	
manipulated	communicative	
structured	open-ended	
predicted-student response	unpredicted responses	
pre-planned objectives	negotiated meaning	
set curriculum	cooperative curriculum	

 Table 2.7: Controlled and Free Techniques

Writing in the Product-Based Approach is viewed as a simple linear model of the writing process which proceeds systematically from prewriting to composing and to correcting (Tribble, 1996). Besides, instructors and learners believe that the planning stage in text-based approaches begins and finishes in the primary period of composition. However, Raimes (1985: 229) found that product-based writing can in no way be described as linear or as neat as it is generally believed:

Contrary to what many textbooks advise writers do not follow a neat sequence of planning, organizing, writing and then revising. For while a writer's product-the finished essay, story or novel- is presented in lines, the process that produces it not linear at all. It is recursive.

In spite of the acceptance of this approach among writing teachers because, on the one hand it makes the learner learn to write in English composition using the patternproduct techniques and on the other one, they learn how to use vocabulary, sentences and grammatical structures used in each type of rhetorical pattern appropriately. This approach has been criticized because it gives little attention to audience and the writing purpose and overemphasis is given to the importance of grammar, syntax and mechanics, in addition to the lack of motivation on the part of learners.

### 2.6.2 The Current-Traditional Approach

The mid-sixties brought an increase awareness of ESL students' needs with regard to producing extended written discourse (Silva, 1990: 14). This is due to the shortcomings of controlled composition which stresses the importance of grammar, syntax and mechanics. In an attempt to meet second and foreign language learners' demands, the Current-Traditional Approach, called the 'paragraph-pattern approach' by Raimes (1983), was introduced in second and foreign language learning.

The concern of this approach was to determine the proper structure of writing. The paragraph holds a prominent place because attention was given to its elements: topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentences and transition, but also various options for its development (illustration, exemplification, comparison, contrast, classification, definition, causal analysis and so on) (Silva, *op. cit.*). The other important focus was essay development which is based on paragraph principles. This involves large entities (introduction, body and conclusion) and organizational patterns (narration, description, exposition and argumentation.

In short, the Current-Traditional Approach is basically concerned with organization or fitting sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns. In other words, classroom procedures with this view of writing focus students' attention on form and organization. Badger and White (2000: 157), for example, state that writing involves linguistic knowledge of texts that learners can learn partly through imitation. Generally the focus of writing in the product approach is on the written product rather than on how students should approach the process of writing.

The Product Approach has survived and is still widely used in writing instruction. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, it has been vigorously attacked by educators such as Zamel (1982) and Raimes (1987). Prodromou (1995: 21) also argues that it devalues the learners' potential, both linguistic and personal. Another criticism is that this approach requires constant error correction, and that this affects students' motivation and selfesteem. In spite of retaining a certain kind of credibility since at some point there will be a final draft that requires attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation. Growing dissatisfaction with the product approach led to a paradigm shift to the process movement.

#### **2.6.2.1 The Process- Based Approach**

"The introduction of the process approach to writing in the mid-seventies seems to have been motivated by dissatisfaction with the product approach and the currenttraditional approach" (Kroll, 2001: 15). The Process Approach to writing, an innovation in a product-oriented culture, has been seen as an improvement over the traditional methods of writing instruction in recent years (Cheung, 1999). Many teachers and researchers felt that neither approach adequately fostered writing, finding that controlled composition was largely irrelevant and the linearity and prescriptivism of the Current-Traditional Approach discouraged thinking and writing.

The Process Approach places more emphasis on the stages of the writing process than on the final product. It is an interpretational, learner-centred approach and not specifically related to examinations. According to Zamel (1983: 147), "writing is a process through which students can explore their thoughts". The composing process was seen as a "non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (*ibid:* 165). He also believes that composing means thinking.

Early studies of the composing process were strongly influenced by cognitive psychology and particularly by ideas of Bruner, Piaget and Vygotsky who asserted that one way for understanding an observable behaviour such as writing, one must understand the mental structures that influence writing (cited in Clark, 2008: 10). This means that the notion of the development of writing ability correlates with human linguistic and intellectual development. This is supported by Flower and Hayes (1981: 56) who set up a cognitive theory based on four points:

- 1. The process of writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes that writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing.
- 2. These processes have a hierarchical highly embedded organization in which any process can be embedded within any other.
- 3. The act of composing itself is a goal-directed thinking process grinded on the writer's own growing network of goals.
- 4. Writers create their own goals into two key ways: by generating both high level goals and supporting sub-goals that embody the writer's developing sense of purpose and then at times by changing major goals or even establishing new ones based on what has been learned in the act of writing.

Responding to the need for innovative instruction and pedagogy, the last two decades saw an emergence of new practices that moved beyond rote repetition and technical instruction. Instead, writing was taught as a vehicle for creative and critical thought. Rather focus shifted from grammar, spelling and other writing conventions to the process of writing. While instruction focuses primarily on writing to create meaning, form is addressed both implicitly and explicitly. Advocates of this approach argue that increasing accuracy evolves through drafting, revision and editing; in addition teachers often incorporate mini-lessons about relevant linguistic points. The Process Approach concentrates on writing as a recursive process in which writers have the opportunity to plan, edit, and revise their work (Murray, 1982; Hillocks, 1987). Grammatical changes and conventional editing occur during the revision or editing stage (Flower and Hayes, 1981; Ballator *et al.*, 1999). However, researchers and educators have identified several logical steps that most writers go through, displayed in the figure below illustrating the recursive and unpredictable process of writing:



Figure 2.3: Dynamic and Unpredictable Model of Process Writing

English language learners need to move through the writing process as it is done by proficient writers who gather their ideas from different sources then they organize them. They ask what others think and revise making changes to clarify their meaning. After that, they edit for capitalization, punctuation, grammar and spelling. Finally, they publish their work. The different stages are presented as follows: Selection of topic: by the teacher and/or students
Prewriting: brainstorming, collecting data, note-taking, outlining, etc.
Composing: getting ideas down on paper
Response to draft: teacher/peers respond to ideas, organization and style
Revising: reorganizing, style, adjusting to readers, refining ideas
Response to revisions: teacher/peers respond to ideas, reorganization and style
Proof reading and editing: checking and correcting form, layout, evidence, etc.
Evaluation: teacher evaluates progress over the process
Publishing: by class circulation or presentation, notice-boards, website, etc.
Follow- up tasks: to address weaknesses (Hyland, 2003:11).
As seen above, process approaches to writing tend to focus more on classroom

activities which promote the development of language use: brain storming, group discussion and re-writing. Such an approach can have any number of stages, though a

typical sequence of activities could proceed as follows (Steel, 2009: 18):

**Stage 1**: Generating ideas by brainstorming. Students could be discussing qualities needed who do a certain job, or giving reasons why people take drugs or gamble. Such an approach can have any number of stages, though a typical sequence of activities could proceed as follows:

**Stage 2**: Students extend ideas into note form, and judge the quality and usefulness of ideas. **Stage 3**: Students organize ideas into a mind map, spidergram, or linear form. This stage helps

to make the hierarchical relationship of ideas more immediately obvious, which helps students with the structure of their texts.

Stage 4: Students write the first draft. This is done in class and frequently in pairs or groups.

**Stage 5**: Drafts are exchanged so that students become the readers of each other's work. By responding as readers, students develop an awareness of the fact that a writer is producing something to read by someone else, and thus can improve their own drafts.

Stage 6: Drafts are returned and improvements are made based upon peer feedback.

Stage 7: A final draft is written.

**Stage 8**: Students once again exchanged and read each other's work and perhaps even write a response or a reply.

We also want to stress that peer revision is one of the advantages of this approach as it is supported by Hughes (1991: 6) "Peer revision not only benefits the author; rather, both students will gain from collaboration on the process of revision as they work to discover what makes writing better". Garth Sundem (2006: 32) also stated that 'it is through the process of discovery that students learn the tips and tricks they will use when drafting their next assignment. However, in peer revision, students need to learn both the language and the tact of constructive criticism, as well as behavioural expectations for independent conferencing. According to Silva (1990: 15):

> Translated into classroom context, this approach calls for providing a positive, encouraging and collaborative workshop environment within which students with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing process. The teacher's role is to help students develop viable strategies for getting started (finding topics, generating ideas and information, focusing and planning structure and procedure), for drafting (encouraging multiple drafts), for revising, (adding, deleting, modifying, and rearranging ideas), and

editing (attending to vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar and mechanics).

From the way writing is processed, it is evident that such an approach emphasizes learner-centred tasks in which students assume greater control over what they write, how they write it and the evaluation of their own writing. Students are encouraged to write multiple drafts, communicate with audience, share feedback with peers and edit their writing and then publish it.

In this case, the Process Approach brings meaningfulness to learners and allows them to understand the steps involved in writing. Accuracy is no longer a central concern, and writing is a writer-oriented self-discovery. This is supported by Hyland (2003:89) who asserts that:

- Writing is problem-solving: writers use invention strategies and extensive planning to resolve the rhetorical problems that each writing task presents.
- Writing is generative: writers explore and discover ideas as they write.
- Writing is recursive: writers constantly review and modify their texts as they write and often produce several drafts to achieve a finished product.
- Writing is collaborative: writers benefit from focused feedback from a variety of sources.
- Writing is developmental: writers should not be evaluated only on their final products but on their improvement.

### 2.6.2.1.1 Process Models to Writing

A number of models to writing have been provided by researchers in the field. Among these models, we can mention Flower and Hayes model (1981), Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), Hayes (1996) and Kellog (1996).

### 2.6.2.1.1.1 Flower and Hayes Model

Researchers have attempted to provide models of the writing process since the 1980's. The first and probably the most well-known model is Flower and Hayes model (1981) as shown in the figure below:



Figure 2.4: Cognitive Model of the Cognitive Process according to Flower and Hayes, 1981

Flower and Hayes proposed a shift from the traditional linear sequence models by placing cognitive actions in a hierarchical format that reflected the recursive nature of writing, they initiated a new and highly productive approach to composition research. This model contains three components: The task environment, the writer's long-term memory and the writing process. They provided some information on the task environment and long term memory components and how they are related to the writing process. The focus is on the writing process component of the model, containing three main cognitive components: planning, translating and reviewing and a monitor component (Flower & Hayes 1980: 12). The planning and reviewing components each
contain sub-processes, some of which, such as generating and organizing. Finally, the monitor component is responsible for the orchestration of the execution of all these three different activities (*ibid:* 39). Flower and Hayes hoped that this basic cognitive model would lead to a clearer understanding of the key steps and thought patterns that occur throughout the writing process. Their main goal was to discover how to help novice writers develop into proficient writers by improving their cognitive processes and mainly planning and revision strategies.

## 2.6.2.1.1.2 Bereiter and Scardamalia Model

Other models have been presented or revised over the years. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), for example, proposed a model that focused on writing development from knowledge telling to knowledge transforming.



Fig 2.5: Knowledge Transforming Model of Writing

According to this model, the development of ideas during writing depends on the extent to which the retrieval of content is strategically controlled in order to satisfy rhetorical goals (Galbraith, 2009: 9). This is what makes the difference between novice writers and expert ones in that the former use lower level thinking in writing as they directly retrieve content from the long term memory and just organize it, whereas the latter use higher level thinking involved in composition as they do not tell knowledge, but use other strategies reflected by their expertise in order to develop a final product that suits the needs of the reader.

These two researchers also attempted to better represent the recursive nature of revision. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) theorized that when revising, writers first compare their mental text with what they have written. If we consider the case of novice writers, they are usually unable to improve the first draft because they lack linguistic, syntactical and organizational skills whereas experienced writers improve their writing easily because they refer to different skills stored in the long memory. Therefore, students should be encouraged to learn the different skills that may enhance writing in addition to writing strategies.

## 2.6.2.1.1.3 Hayes and Kellog's Models

Subsequently, two other models were presented introducing working memory as a component in the writing process (Hayes, 1996; Kellog, 1996) as shown in figure 2.6:



Fig 2.6: Framework for Understanding Cognition and Affect in Writing (Hayes, 1996)

Hayes (1996) presented a revised version of 1980, which included two main components instead of three: the individual and the task environment. In this model, the writing long term memory, and the writing process which were originally two separate components were combined to form a larger category: the individual, which also included a motivation components and the working memory. This model makes less clear distinction between the different components of the writing process. It pays more attention to translation which includes revision, in response to feedback obtained from readers: peers or teachers. Feedback is seen as essential, functioning as an input that prompts the revision of texts. What pushes the writer through the writing process onto the eventual end-product is reader feedback on the previous drafts. Among the major kinds of feedback leading to revision are: peer-feedback; feedback from conferences and teachers comments as feedback.

Hayes (*ibid*: 28) suggested three elements in becoming a competent or skilled writer:

- 1. developing the cognitive or strategic processes involved in planning, drafting (including shaping ideas and words into sentences and paragraphs), evaluating, and revising text 2),
- 2. attaining a sense of competence and positive disposition towards writing.
- 3. acquiring relevant knowledge about different aspects and types of writing, the need for the reader and topics addressed by the writer.

In Kelog's model (fig.2.7), the focus was less on the writer as an individual, but more on the way in which the activities that occur during writing are related to specific sub-components of working memory: the central executive, the visuo-spatial sketchpad and the phonological loop (Kellog 1996). As a result, it provided valuable basis for world experimental research and determining how working memory facilitate or impede the execution of the writing process (see Kellog, Piolat & Olive, 2007).



Figure 2.7: Kellog's Model of Writing Processes: A Model of Working Memory in Writing (1996)

Both Kellog (1996) and Hayes (1996) have given a central role to working memory in the writing process. Understanding the ways different writing processes draw on the same limited memory resources could explain why some writing processes are more difficult than others and how these processes may interfere with each other. This understanding of interference among writing processes may cast light on writing development. For example, children with smaller working memory capacities require different writing strategies and different teaching methods than those with larger capacities.

Another step emphasized by researchers in the writing process is the importance of revision considering that expert writers devote much time and attention to revising their work (Bereiter and Scarmadalia, 1987; Flower and Hayes, 1980). Research has shown that school children do not revise frequently and even when they are encouraged to revise, their changes do not always improve the communication quality of their work (Bereiter and Scardamalia, *ibid:* 28). However, children and later on students do not receive instruction in specific strategies for assessing the comprehensibility of their work (Graves, 1983). Differences between these four models not withstanding, complement each other as they all include a number of cognitive components related to the three main cognitive activities: planning, formulating and revising. In addition they all contain a control mechanism, which orchestrate the overall execution of the process, and finally all stress the potentially inhibiting role of the working memory.

## 2. 6.2.1.2 Criticism of the Process-Based Approach

While the usefulness and power of the process writing in teaching have been widely accepted like in other instructional reforms, the Process Approach does not provide solutions to all the issues involved in learning to write. Questions, for instance, have been raised about its adequacy as a single approach in preparing students for such a complex task as writing.

Besides, it is a complex task for teachers to help students develop their cognitive processes because reaching their minds is something not really objective. This requires teachers to be researchers, and this also needs too much time, not just two or three sessions per week as it is the case in our classes. Moreover, social constructivist scholars declared that the process model is dead because viewing writing as a social and cultural practice implies that writing is not simply a matter of manipulating some cognitive practice such as prewriting, drafting, revising and editing but above all a means of connecting people with each other in ways that carry particular meanings (Hyland, 2003: 27). As such, it is more than a set of cognitive activities, not only one's own writing process, but also the purpose and content of writing which are required. However, teachers and researchers came to the point that programmes that focus on personal experience and the cognitive process of writing hardly prepare students adequately for the types of writing tasks expected from them in the real life. This is supported by Johns (1995: 49) who strongly expresses her view against the Process Approach:

This movement's emphasis on developing students as authors when they are not yet ready to be second language writers, in developing student voice while ignoring issues of register and careful argumentation, and in promoting the author's purposes while minimizing the understanding of role, audience and community have put our diverse students at a distinct disadvantage. Furthermore, studies of academic writing at university settings in the 1980s, for instance, revealed that students were rarely allowed free choice of topics, instead they had to write according to the course requirements which are set up by teachers and which often define the content, the aim, the form and even the strategies of the writing product, not the students' process that was evaluated. Therefore, another approach to meet their needs was required.

## 26.2.2 The Genre-Based Approach

Research on teaching writing in a second language was initiated in the 1960s, and most early efforts were centred on teaching writing. These efforts led to the Process Approach. But this approach came under attack, as a result of its shortcomings mentioned above, the Genre-Based Approach has been advanced as a solution due to the fact that more attention was paid to the nature of writing in various situations. This approach to teaching writing has been precisely advocated by writing teachers and researchers (Cope & Calantzi, 1993; Martin, 1993; Coe, 1994; Hyland, 2003) and applied in classroom with reported success (Martin, 2006). The Genre Approach focuses on models and key features of texts written for a particular purpose; it is seen as the way to language and literacy education that combines an understanding of genre and genre teaching together in the writing class and has been called differently such as 'English for Academic Purposes Approach' or 'English for Specific Purposes'. Martin (1992: 19) defines it as 'a goal oriented, staged social process. By setting out the stages, or moves of valued genres, teachers can provide students with explicit grammar of linguistic choices, both within and beyond the students, to produce texts that seem wellformed and appropriate to readers. All texts can therefore be described in terms of both form and function.

The world of genre studies has continued to grow rapidly since the Vancouver conference on genre (2002) because "People of all nations need to be able to communicate in specialized professional realms to prosper and reap the benefits of new levels of knowledge-based professional and organizational practice" (cited in Bazerman *et. al.*, 2009: X). But, what is a genre?

Swales (1990) identified a genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes". This means that all genres control a set of communicative purposes within certain social situations and that each genre has its own structural quality according to those communicative purposes. Therefore, both the communicative purposes and the structural features should be identified when teaching writing according to the genre approach. This approach, popular in England and Australia proposes dominant genres analyzing them from a linguistic point of view, and reproducing them (Hassan & Williams, 1996).

Through overt instructions students learn to identify specific text types (narrative, factual, procedural and persuasive), analyzing their structural and linguistic features, and generating their own texts that conform to the conventions of each genre. Thus, learning specific genre construction can be considered as a way to help students come up with appropriate actual writing in their real life outside the classroom. It also increases students' awareness of such writing conventions as organization, form and genre. Through the composing process, genre-based writing reflects a particular purpose of a social situation and allows students to acquire writing skills consciously by imitation and analysis of each writing genre (Badger & White, 2000). This is supported by Devitt (2004: 31):

I propose, then, that the genre approach be seen not as a response to a recurring situation but as a nexus between an individual's action and a socially defined context. Genre is a reciprocal dynamic within which individuals' construct and are constructed by recurring context of situation, context of culture, and context of genres.

In addition to the view of the Genre Approach being an extension of the productbased approach in that it is based on modelling, if we consider Devitt's suggestion, we can also add that it is based on social constructivism as the students interact with social situations, and thus construct knowledge. In this case, the knowledge constructed consists of the way students become able to choose suitable language and organize it according to the situation encountered in every day life either orally or in writing. It is what we deduced as the focus of our study is writing under the CBA, one of the approaches rooted in social constructivism. Since the publication of the 'Rhetoric and Ideology of Genre' in 2002, the world of genre studies and genre approaches to literacy instruction continued to grow rapidly, gaining variety and complexity as the concept of genre has been examined through a widening variety of intellectual traditions has been creatively applied in many different educational setting internationally (Bazeman *et. al.*, 2009: IX). As a teacher, we can say that what is important for us is to seek how theory can be translated into practice; hence, the genre approach can be put in practice in the following way.

### **2.6.2.2.1 Classroom Practices according to the Genre-Approach**

According to Cope and Kalantzis (1993), to apply the Genre-Based Approach to writing consists of three phases:

**Modelling**: in this stage, the teacher uses a selected text to guide the students to recognize the purpose of the text and the intended audience, the stages of the text as narrative, orientation, complication, resolution and the language features.

**Joint construction**: In this stage, the teacher and students engage in the joint construction of a new text explicitly about: the purpose of the text and the embedded audience, their language choices – the development in the text and if the purpose is effectively achieved. To do this the teacher and students draw on previous knowledge about texts gained from reading and writing and from knowledge gained from the joint deconstruction of the model text.

**Individual construction**: students use their knowledge stages in the text, language features and the purpose of the text and intended audience to write their own.

This approach acknowledges that learning can take place in a social situation and reflects a particular purpose, and that learning can happen consciously through imitation and analysis, which facilitates explicit instruction (Badger & White 2000). Proponents of this approach believe that it is successful in allowing students understanding that different texts require different structures and that the introduction of authentic texts enhances students' involvement and brings relevance to the writing process.

To become competent writers, students need to acquire discourse knowledge about the different purposes and forms of writing as well as knowledge about the topics. An evidence-based practice for acquiring knowledge about specific types of writing is to provide students with examples or models of specific writing. These examples are analyzed and students are encouraged to emulate the models when they write their own text (Graham & Perin, 2007).

## 2.6.2.2.2 Criticism of the Genre Approach

In spite the fact that the Genre Approach has dominated language teaching recently, it has also its limitations. One of the negative sides of this approach is that students may not have enough knowledge of appropriate language or vocabulary to express what they intend to communicate to a specific audience. Another weakness, as Badger &White (2000) point out, is that the genre approach undervalues the writing skills which learners need to produce a written product and ignore the writing abilities learners have in other areas.

In addition to this, it makes learners passive during the process of modelling a text. By attempting explicit teaching of a particular genre, teachers are in actual fact not helping learners. The approach may not require students to express their own ideas or may be too dependent on the teacher finding suitable materials as models. It could thus become counter-productive. As we are interested in the two last approaches, we find it useful to provide the comparison provided by Hyland (2004: 24) in table 2.8:

Attribute	Process	Genre	
Main idea Writing is a thinking process		Writing is a social activity concerned with	
	concerned with the act of writing	the final product	
Teaching	Emphasis on creative writer	Emphasis on reader expectations and	
focus		product	
		How to express social purposes effectively	
Advantages	How to produce and link ideas	makes textual conventions	
_	makes processes of writing	transparent	
	transparent		
		Requires rhetorical understanding of texts	
	Assumes L1and L2 writing	can result in prescriptive teaching of texts	
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Similar		
	Overlooks L2 language	Can lead to over attention to written	
	Difficulties	products	
	Insufficient attention to product		
	Assumes all writing uses same	Undervalue skills needed to produce texts	
	process		

Table 2.8: Comparison of the Process and Genre Approaches

As noticed above, all the approaches have been criticized, and no single approach fits all kinds of learners. However, in the post-method era, there is a tendency to combine more than one approach seeking better results in language learning and also in writing. For instance, Hyland (*ibid.*, XI) asserts that "writers need realistic strategies for drafting and revising, but they also must have a clear understanding of genre to structure their writing experiences according to the demands and constraints of a particular context". So, this calls for a combination of both the Process Approach and the Genre Approach for a more effective teaching of writing.

# 2.6.2.3 The Process-Genre Approach

Today, many writing teachers recognize that the use of one approach to teaching is not really beneficial as each one has its advantages and disadvantages. Thus, drawing from more than one approach, or making a kind of combination between approaches proved more efficient. One way of doing that is to combine the Process Approach and the Genre Approach to teaching writing. These different perspectives are complementary since the former helps the student develop his cognitive abilities as a writer while the latter enables him to use the conventions suitable for each genre to ensure effective communication. After giving more details about such an integrated approach, we will also present arguments of how this approach can suit the CBA, the focus of this research work. The model of the Process-Genre Approach is described in terms of a view of writing and a view of developing writing. In this approach, writing is viewed as involving knowledge about language (as in the Genre Approach and the Product Approach), knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the purpose of writing (as in the Genre Approach) and skills in using language (as in the Process Approach). The model also describes that writing development happens by drawing out the learners' potential (Badger & White, 2000).Through the implementation of the Process-Genre Approach, students have the opportunity not only to enjoy the creativity of writing, but they also understand the linguistic features of each genre and emphasize the discourse value of the structures they are using. This can help them develop into independent writers.

# 2.6.2.3.1 Characteristics of the Process-Genre Approach

The Process-Genre Approach is a combination of the Process Approach and the Genre Approach to writing. Hyland (2003: 24) presents it as follows:

In practice this means a synthesis to ensure that learners have an adequate understanding of the processes of text creation; the purposes of writing and how to express these in effective ways through formal and rhetorical text choice; and the contexts within which texts are exposed and read and which give them meaning.

Yang (2010:31)) suggested a framework to teaching writing according to this approach:

**Step 1**: **Sampling and modelling**: during this stage, the teacher designs a situation which students may meet in real life. For example, to write an application letter for a job and to let students in groups discuss freely the context, purpose and potential readers of such a writing task. Subsequently, the teacher provides a sample and places it in a particular genre.

**Step 2**: **Analyzing and brainstorming**: in this phase, the teacher and student go through the sample in details and afterwards let students analyze and find out rhetorical principles and lexico-grammatical patterns. The teacher needs to offer more samples to broaden students' horizon for such a genre.

**Step 3**: **Joint Constructioning**: the teacher and students work together to finish a piece of writing with students' contribution of ideas. The teacher plays a role of facilitator and stenographer who may offer polishing and error correction at times. The result of joint constructing functions as a model the students can refer to later.

**Step 4**: **First independent drafting**: Due to time constraint in class, students could be asked to finish their own draft independently after class and bring it to next writing class.

**Step 5**: **Conferencing with focus on macro-aspects of the draft**: during this phase, students work in pairs to review each other's drafts and give feedback to the macro-aspects of the draft, such as the development of main ideas and discourse structure, so that the draft accords with the corresponding context and readers in certain culture or society. The teacher may circle and answer questions of students.

**Step 6**: **Second independent drafting**: students given the feedback in class revise the first draft after class.

**Step 7**: **Conferencing with focus on micro-aspects of the draft**: having brought their drafts to class, students in pairs correct the grammar and spelling mistakes, and also weigh the words and expressions in each other's drafts. The teacher may circle and answer students' questions

Step 8: Last independent drafting: Students finish their final drafts on their own.

**Step 9**: **Sharing and teacher feedback**: In class students are encouraged to share their final drafts with the class. The teacher gives feed back concerning both the macro-aspects and the micro-aspects of students' writing.

Gao (2007: 21), another Chinese researcher proposed nearly the same procedure for applying the process-based approach in the Chinese context. It consists of seven stages through which the student writer passes in order to produce a written composition as illustrated in figure 2.8 below:

# 1. Preparation

In this stage, the teacher provides a situation in order to prepare the students for the writing task such as a descriptive or an argumentative paragraph. This activates the students' schemata and get them involved in the chosen task. In this phase, the teacher can prepare activities related to the genre as building vocabulary lists or practising a grammatical structure.

## 2. Modelling and reinforcing

In this stage, a model is presented to the students whose role is to find out the purpose of the text and the audience it is intended for. Then, they try to identify the different parts of that text and how it is structured taking into consideration the language and vocabulary used for that genre. This is called deconstruction of the text. According to Hyland (2003: 139) "The model offers both teachers and students clear pathways in learning to write. It gives clear goals and a sense of how language, content, genre and process are connected and relate to their work in the writing class". During the modelling and deconstruction stage, the teacher's role is directive as he or she presents examples, identifies the stages of the text and introduces activities to practice salient language features (*ibid:* 138).

## 3. Planning

In this stage, the teacher provides the students with activities about the topic. This can be done through discussion, reading other texts of the same genre, brainstorming, clustering, or other helpful activities.

# 4. Joint construction

In this stage, the teacher and students engage in the joint construction of a new text of the same genre. They work with the teacher and their peers following the process of writing which includes brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing. This composition provides a model for the students to rely on in the next step.

# 5. Independent construction

In this stage, students write a paragraph on their own on a topic either given by the teacher or suggested by them. This should be done in the classroom so that they will have the opportunity to receive feedback from their peers or the teacher who acts as a monitor, advisor and assistant. It is in this stage that the teacher has the ability to assess students' learning (formative assessment as seen in the third chapter)

# 6. Revision

In this stage, after having received feedback from either the teacher or their peers, students revise their drafts in terms of clarity, content, organization.

**7. Editing:** In this final phase, the composition is polished taking into consideration the correction of any errors in spelling, grammar or mechanics in order to be shared with classmates and the teacher for evaluation.



FIGURE 1: APPLICATION OF THE PROCESS GENRE APPROACH

Figure 2.8: Application of the Process-Genre Approach According to Gao, (2007: 21)

Because writing is such a complex task, it requires from the teacher to be an assistant and guide and to work closely with students encouraging them and offering them helpful feedback and suggestions. This can activate students' motivation, a necessary factor for developing students' writing competence. Besides, by training students in applying writing strategies and by including different skills: reading, listening and speaking in the process of writing will reduce students' anxiety and enhance their writing in different contexts.

After having given the reader an overview of the different approaches used in teaching writing, our main goal is to show which of them can be applied under the CBA; in other words, we will try to show which one serves the CBA principles and fits not only the change formulated in the Algerian educational reform but the possibility of its continuity in tertiary level as well. As a synthesis of what we know about the Process-Genre Approach, we deduce that the principles of this approach can be summarized in the following points:

- Balancing form and function
- Scaffolding language and learning
- Providing meaningful response and formative assessment

## 2.6.3 Writing under the Competency-Based Approach

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the CBA is a cognitive approach indebted to Bloom's taxonomy according to which the learner achieves lower-order objectives before he/she can achieve higher-order objectives. Besides, it is a problem solving approach because it places the learner in situations to test/check his/her capacity to overcome obstacles and problems. Moreover, the CBA is social constructivist in that it regards learning as occurring through social interaction and it encourages the learner to be creative by using newly constructive knowledge through the process of social interaction. The following quotation from Richards & Rodgers (2001: 143) highlights the characteristics of the CBA:

CBLT is an approach based on a functional and interactional perspective on the nature of language. It seeks to teach language in relation to the social contexts in which it is used. Language always occurs as a medium of interaction and communication between people for the achievement of specific goals and purposes... It also shares with behaviorist views of learning the notion that language can be inferred from language function; that is, certain life encounters call for certain kinds of language... Thus CBLT takes a mosaic approach to language learning in that the "whole" (communicative competence) is constructed from smaller components correctly assembled.

The CBA is based on the development of competencies; writing is considered as one of these competencies. Being a means of communication, its development occurs through different stages; in other words, in order to be a competent writer, the learner should develop not only the linguistic competence as in traditional approaches, but also the social and strategic competences to be really effective.

The purpose of coming back to the characteristics and principles of the CBA, as well as the components of communicative competence seen in the previous chapter is to prove that the most appropriate approach to teach writing in the CBA in Algeria is the process-genre approach for the simple reason that these two approaches to writing: the Process Approach and the Genre Approach share the same principles with the CBA. As it is stated by Hyland (2004), 'writing is a socio-cognitive activity which involves skills in planning, drafting as well as knowledge of language, contexts and audiences.

For decades, teaching writing in Algeria has focused more on the finished product or the product approach which relies on grammatical accuracy neglecting students' creativity and language skills and evaluating their writing performance by their test scores rather than their writing development. Due to the limitations of the Product Approach, the Process Approach has been considered as more appropriate since it develops students' writing strategies through stages starting with pre-writing which includes brainstorming and planning, then drafting and finally revising and editing. During these stages, they receive constructive feedback from their teacher and also from their peers. This allows students not only to interact in a cooperative atmosphere similar to a real life situation, but to develop a positive attitude towards writing as well. However, this approach also came under attack because it does not give much emphasis to the writing purpose and the social context, and it considers the writing process as the same for all writers and ignores both the writer and what is being written (Badger & White, 2000).

Once more due to the limitations of this approach, the Genre Approach was used as a complementary approach to the Process Approach allowing students to write different types of texts that serve various communicative purposes. This approach takes into consideration both form and function in that students learn how to use different types with different structures for a real purpose. However, the Genre Approach has also being criticized due to the ignorance of the process required to produce texts; thus a combination of the Process Approach and Genre Approach was suggested in the post process area. This can help students' develop their writing competence through the whole writing process and make them aware of the purposes and the context of writing.

"Past research showed that competent, effective and successful teachers must have the ability to evaluate their own institutional effectiveness and be professionally responsible for acquiring new skills and knowledge" (Bowden and Master, 1993: 16). This means that teachers have to enhance their competence in the subject knowledge which enables them to apply the right methodology in teaching various skills. Accordingly, the CBA is socio-constructivist in nature. We will try to investigate its effects on writing using the appropriate writing approach because most Algerian teachers are still using the product approach either in the middle and secondary education or in the tertiary level in spite of the adoption of the CBA and the LMD system respectively. After having consulted different sources dealing with socioconstructivism, the CBA and writing approaches, we deduced that the Process-Genre Approach, being social cognitive in nature is the most appropriate in teaching writing under the CBA either at the university or in previous education. This approach allows students to develop their writing competence by exercising their creativity within the conventions of the genre. This is supported by Martin (1993: 25) who states that:

> a social-cognitive process to teaching writing is 'a visible pedagogy' that makes the writing process visible on two fronts: the way of thinking that contributes to the construction of context appropriate texts, and the verbal social-interaction behaviours that meet the expectations of the discourse community represented by the target reader.

The integration of the social and cognitive dimensions of the writing process is generally achieved through describing or modelling the thinking operations leading to the production of the desired features of a genre. This can be shown as follows: first the Process-Genre Approach allows students to progress in their improvement of cognitive skills as they are involved in higher-order skills as analysis, synthesis and evaluation of their pieces of writing and those of their peers. These skills are seen as vital for problem solving and decision making. Second it facilitates experiential learning emphasizing personal involvement, self-initiation and evaluation by the learner. The writing process provides learners with the opportunity to reflect, discuss, analyze and evaluate their experiences individually, in pairs or with the teacher. Third, the Process-Genre Approach promotes active learning in the classroom; a strategy that involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing. Some of the learning strategies used are group brainstorming, pair and group work and so on. Fourth, because teaching strategies used in writing promote experiential and active learning, students develop a deep rather than a superficial approach to learning writing which encourages learners' autonomy, thinking skills, reflection and analysis.

The Process-Genre Approach is embedded in the social constructivist approach to leaning which propounds that through communication with peers and through authentic and realistic assignments students are able to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. This is corroborated by Entwistle and Enwistle (1991: 19) who view learning as "a social activity either in an intellectual or professional context and suggest that a deep approach can be fostered when students are given the opportunity to discuss their work with other students in their small 'intellectual community". This social-cognitive approach promotes learners' intellectual abilities leading them to autonomy which is advocated by the CBA.

Thus, the most appropriate approach to writing to be used in this research work is the Process-Genre Approach to test the effects of the CBA on learners' achievement in writing in order to find out whether it is more efficient than the Product-Based Approach which is the main one used in teaching writing in our university. There are a number of studies (Cheng, 2008: 3) that show how this social-cognitive approach to teaching writing can be translated into classroom activities with beneficial results. In fact, there is a growing body of literature on the need to use the Process-Genre Approach to teaching writing to ESL and EFL students and its effectiveness in this skill.

Among the researchers who advocate the use this approach, Badger and White (2000) call for the use of the Process-Genre Approach in teaching writing. They analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the Product Approach, the Process Approach and the Genre Approach and argue that the three approaches are complementary and identified an integrated approach which consists of the combination of the three approaches. Lee *et. al.* (2009) also suggest the Process-Genre Approach to teaching writing. They aim to help students cope with writing in an academic setting through the

use of this approach. According to them, students will learn how to plan, organize, research and produce different genres through a variety of relevant and challenging tasks. They also provided exercises of self-evaluation checklists and peer review checklists to help students be more autonomous in their learning.

Kim and Kim (2005) provided four guidelines that can be applied to Korean university level writing classes. The four principles consist of balancing form and function, scaffolding language and learning, extending the writing curriculum and providing formative assessment. In other words, they suggest the application of the characteristics of the Process-Genre Approach in teaching writing to Korean university students. They believe that these four principles demonstrate how much writing teachers can apply them to class effectively. Gao (2007), a Chinese researcher also suggests an eclectic approach to writing to Chinese university students. It attempts to address the major problems of English writing: a heavy emphasis on linguistic accuracy, overlooking students' ability, over emphasis on the final product; a lack of input of genre knowledge and a lack of variety of assessment. Based on the discussion of current approaches to teaching writing, three implications are introduced to improve Chinese college English writing instruction as well as to enhance effective learning: implementing diverse types of feedback; extending genre variety; using writing processes and balancing form and language use. Badger and White (2000), Kim and Kim (2005 and Gao (2007) Lee et. al(2009) suggested the Process-Genre Approach to teaching writing to students based on their belief that it develops students' cognitive abilities as well as their linguistic competence in using different genres.

Other researchers in the field of writing implemented the Process-Genre Approach. Among them, Voon Foo (2007) conducted a doctorate research to show the effects of such an approach on the expository essays of ESL students in a Malaysian secondary school. Two groups of 30 students each were used in the study: a control group that received product-centred writing instruction and an experimental group that received process-genre instruction. The analysis of the subjects' essays scores revealed that the experimental group students were able to communicate their ideas in writing more effectively to the reader and developed more relevant ideas to support the purpose of their writing, compared to the control group students. This researcher suggested that the Process-Genre Approach be incorporated into the Malaysian University syllabus. Another researcher, Nihayah (2009) implemented this approach to a group of 42 university students. The research findings indicate that this approach can improve students' writing ability. The progress was indicated by the increase of the final test from 12.29 to 3.15 on content, 1.62 to 3.01 on organization and from 1.55 to 2.98 on language use. This researcher also suggests the implementation of this approach to writing and the integration of reading and writing in different classes, different texts and different levels.

These studies combine instruction in cognitive strategies for decision-making in writing with explicit teaching of genre knowledge or with socialization type activities to raise awareness of key discourse practices in a genre. Are the results of our study going to be similar to those experiments done by other researchers in the same field? It is what we are going to discover later on after the implementation of this writing approach believing that the CBA takes a mosaic approach to learning which means that it is eclectic in nature. Therefore, the Process-Genre Approach is the most suitable one.

## Conclusion

Writing plays a vital role not only in conveying information but also in transforming information to create new knowledge in such a demanding life. It is thus of central importance for students in academic, second and foreign language learning. Therefore, selecting the most appropriate approach to teach this skill is something primordial. In this chapter, we tried to give an overview of the available approaches to writing starting from classical to current ones; in other words, from the Product Approach to the Process-Genre Approach which is the most recent one, with the intention to find out the approach which suits the CBA. After a deep examination of the evolution of the approaches used in teaching writing, we came to the conclusion that the Process Genre Approach is the one which complies with the principles of the CBA because on the one hand this approach is cognitive, problem solving and social constructivist in that it encourages the students to construct new knowledge through social interaction. On the other hand, the process genre approach, a combination of two approaches: the process approach and the genre approach, encourages students to improve their cognitive skills as they are involved in such higher skills as analysis, synthesis and evaluation of their pieces of writing or those of their peers in the process of writing. These skills are vital for problem solving and decision making. In addition to

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communication with the teacher and their peers, students deepen their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and also of the different genres of writing needed in everyday life. All of this will help them evolve as independent writers able to express themselves either formally or informally and situate their position in the global community.

# **Chapter Three**

# Writing Assessment

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# **Chapter Three**

# Writing Assessment

# Introduction

The ability to write effectively is becoming increasingly important in our global community, and instruction in writing is thus assuming an increasing role in both second and foreign language learning. As we saw in the previous chapter, for over a half century writing has been a central topic in applied linguistics and remains an area of lively intellectual research and debate; interest in the writing skill and its improvement led to successive approaches to teaching writing. This is strongly linked to the different approaches to teaching English as a second or foreign language which were on their parts influenced by psychological trends such as behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism. As the role of writing increases in language learning, classroom assessment practices of writing also become increasingly important. Consequently, the question of how to assess or evaluate students' written productions motivated researchers and educators to research in this area in order to suggest, each time, approaches for assessing writing also related to language teaching theories and writing instruction. Before presenting the main approaches to assessing writing, we are going to define some confusing terms used in this field and mainly the concepts: assessment and evaluation.

# **3.1 Definition of Assessment**

"Postsecondary writing instruction and writing assessment orbits are at the centre of a very large galaxy" (Kasner & O'Neil, 2010: 13). This shows the importance of the writing skill and how to assess it. "Assessment involves much more than measurement. That is, in addition to systematically collecting and analyzing information (i.e., measurement of it) it also involves understanding and acting on information about learners' understanding and on performance in relation to educational goals (Greenstein, 2010: 6). In other words, assessment of learning involves making judgements about students' summative assessment for purposes of selection and certification. On the contrary assessment for leaning is formative and diagnostic. It provides information about the achievements which allows teaching and learning activities to be changed in response to learners' needs and recognizes the huge benefits that feedback can have on learning (Black & William 1998: 5).

From these selected definitions, we can say that assessment places the needs of students at the centre of teaching and that it is an important and integral part of the learning and teaching process. It involves attention to clear teaching and learning, aims, motivation, previous experience and present abilities, effective tasks and flexible teaching methods. In other words, assessment serves several purposes and provides information about the knowledge, skills and attitudes students have acquired. In fact, assessing helps to determine the level of competence the students have acquired and whether they can apply that knowledge, and it can help in providing high-quality instruction for students. Hence, assessment is student focused as stated by Greenstein (*ibid: 15*) "Assessment is student focused, it is instructionally informative and outcome based".

# 3.2 Difference between Assessment and Evaluation

In the last two decades, much has been written about assessment and evaluation, but these terms are usually used interchangeably by many teachers. In the literature review, assessment has been used to indicate that at least some hint of improvement is expected in the assessment process (Paloma & Banta, 1999; Bordon & Owens, 2001)). Angelo and Cross (1993) defined assessment as an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It provides both teachers and students with knowledge, skills, attitudes and work products for elevating future performances and learning outcomes. It is an interactive process between the teacher and the student, whereas evaluation judges measures of competences against a defined benchmark (Straka, 2000). This means that it determines the level of quality of a performance or outcome based on the level of quality demonstrated.

According to Brownson *et. al.* (1996: 15), "assessment is primarily concerned with guidance and feedback to learners". In the assessment process, the report includes information about why the performance was as strong or weak as it was, and describes what to be done to improve future performances. The teacher does no use a language

indicating the actual quality of the performance such as excellent, very good, fair; only how to make the next performance stronger. Conversely, in the evaluative report, only information regarding the actual quality of the performance is given. This might be in the form of a grade or a score or an evaluative comment. Evaluation refers to the interpretations of the data to determine how well the student has grown towards the goals and instructional objectives- how well he has performed (Cooper & Odell, 1977: 37). It is summative in that it determines the student's final level giving him a score or a grade while assessment is formative and identifies areas of improvement (Angelo & Cross, 1993). For more precision, differences between assessment and evaluation are displayed in the table below:

Dimension of Difference	Assessment	Evaluation
Content: Timing,	Formative: ongoing,	Summative: final;
Primary purpose	to improve learning	to gauge quality
Orientation: Focus of	Process-oriented:	Product-oriented: what's
measurement	How learning is	been learned
	going	
Findings: uses thereof	Diagnostic: identify	Judgemental: arrive at an
	Areas of improvement	overall grade/score

 Table 3.9: Difference between Assessment and Evaluation According to Angelo and Cross (1993)

According to some teachers, evaluation is also the same as testing, it is common that evaluation means the same as testing and that while students are being tested, evaluation is taking place. However, testing is only one component in the process of evaluation (Brown, 2001: 17). He adds saying that evaluation is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning. It is important for the teacher because it can provide a wealth of information to use for the future direction of a classroom practice, for the planning of courses and for the management of learning tasks. Evaluation has a different overall focus and several different purposes from students' assessment. While evaluation may be seen as analytic, it is intended to serve the learning process, students' assessment has much more limited perspective with a focus on the 'ends' in terms of what the learner has achieved at particular points.

## **3.3 Types of Assessment**

There are various types of assessment varying from product assessment to process or project assessment. Each one of them is based on a writing approach which in turn is fitting a teaching or a learning approach.

# **3.3.1 Product Assessment**

Traditionally, the student's final written product is the one which is assessed without taking into consideration the phases in the writing process. According to Isaacon (1984), any product that shows the following variables is a good one. A balanced assessment should look at all the five aspects of a student's writing:

- 1. **Fluency**: the first writing skill a teacher might assess with a beginning writer is fluency: being able to translate one's thought into written words. The student should be proficient in writing long meaningful sentences.
- 2. **Content**: it is the second factor to consider in the writing product. Content features include the composition's organization, coherence, accuracy (in expository writing and originally in creative writing).
- 3. **Conventions**: in order to fulfil the communicative function of writing, the product must be readable, writers are expected to follow the standard conventions of written English: correct spelling, punctuation, grammar...
- 4. Syntax: all beginning writers move from single word to word groups and sentences. They often repeat very simple patterns such as subject-verb, or subject-verb-object. Powers and Wilgris (1983) examined three parameters of syntactic 'maturity': a- Variations in the use of sentence pattern. b- First expansions (six basic sentence patterns formed by the addition of adverbs, infinitives, and object complements, and the formation of simple compound sentences). C- Transformations that result in relative and subordinate clauses.
- 5. **Vocabulary**: the words used in a student's composition can be evaluated according to the uniqueness or maturity of the words used in the composition. Both quantitative and qualitative methods can be used to evaluate vocabulary. Quantitative methods include calculating the use of unrepeated words to the total number of words. A simple classroombased method is to look at the number of words repeated as well as new and mature words the students use.

The traditional method used in assessment, or the product assessment method, consists of assigning a set of writing topics, with students writing and handing a text without revising it during a regulated time period. Conventionally, teachers use direct correction and grade the text before returning it. Thus, product assessment is often equated with a grade, yet this type of assessment attends only to the students' cognitive domain. Teachers, raised and educated in the old tradition, do not easily let the belief that they must correct and grade each piece of writing. The traditional way according to Hedge (2000: 313) "attends to give the student the impression that it is the teacher who is responsible for improving the written text". This obsession with correction, often focused on mechanics, actually undermines the more

fundamental aspect of composing -content and clarity. Intensively marked papers give too many details, overwhelming and demoralizing students in addition to overloading teachers.

# **3.3.2 Process Assessment**

Writing assessment can take many forms. When only one product was considered, the writing process must not be neglected. In product assessment, the teacher evaluate students' finished compositions, while in process assessment he watches students as they engage in writing in order to determine strengths, abilities and needs. The teacher observes in order to learn about students' attitudes and interests in writing, the writing strategies they use and how they interact with their classmates during writing. While observing, the teacher may ask students questions. This type of informal assessment enables him/her to make instructional decisions and demonstrate to students that the teacher is supportive of the writing process.

Constructive, encouraging and frequent feedback as well as responses that emphasize content and process rather than just conventions, lead to improved competency and positive attitudes to writing. Praising what students do well improves their writing more than mere correction on what they do badly. Intensive correction does more damage than moderate correction. Focusing on students' attention or on one or two areas for concentration or improvement is more helpful than when students use the intensive correction.

# 3.3.3 Performance Assessment

Performance assessment is a form of testing that requires students to perform and demonstrate tasks rather write or select an answer. The disadvantage of this is that the teacher sometimes has to make subjective judgment about the students' work. This is why it is better to use rubrics prior to giving a grade in order to be objective to a certain extent. There are several ways to give performance assessments. One of them is the portfolio in which students collect their best work and save it waiting to sit with the teacher who will provide them with helpful feedback. The portfolio is a good way which illustrates improvement over time. Journals also fall in this category. The literature on performance is rife beginning as early as 1984 and continuing today (e.g., Barley, 1985; Shohamy, 1995; McNamara, 1996; Fulcher, 1996; Bindley, 1999;

Skehan & Foster, 2001). Performance assessment can have positive washback effects (Brown, 2002: 17) by:

- 1. Providing diagnostic information in functional or task-based curriculums
- 2. Supplying achievement information in functional or task-based curriculums, documenting critical thought, creativity and self-reflection.
- 3. Aligning classroom assessment and instructional activities with authentic, real life activities
- 4. Showing students' strengths and weaknesses in detailed and real world terms.

Skehan (1996) proposes a framework of task-based instruction, which implies that the following three factors are important to the grading and sequencing of tasks:

- a- Accuracy
- b- Complexity
- c- Fluency

Based on those three components of Skehan's (*ibid.*) framework for implementing taskbased instruction, Norris *et. al.*, (1998: 58-59) defined the components from a task performance perspective:

- a- Accuracy would involve the minimum level of precision in code usage, necessary for successful communication
- b- Complexity would involve the minimum range of grammatical/ structural code required for successful completion of a given communication task
- c- Fluency would involve the minimum on-line flow required by a given task for successful, acceptable communication.

These three components will be seen later on because they represent the variables to be tested in our research, to show if there is development in these areas after the implementation of the competency-based approach in teaching the writing skill.

# **3.3.4 Project Assessment**

As already mentioned in the first chapter, interest in project work and its integration into ELT instruction is growing around the world. This approach lends itself to focus on language at the discourse rather than the sentence level, authentic language use and learner- centeredness. Project work makes learning more meaningful. It also makes cooperative learning a concrete reality and opens up entirely new avenues for action, interaction and the construction of new knowledge. During the realization of a project learners show their capacities when demonstrating that they have mastered the objectives assigned. Assessing an assigned project includes the assessment of the process the students followed as brainstorming, collecting data, writing, editing and

finally publishing it in addition to the final product. This kind of work shows students' various capabilities and prepares them to be autonomous, responsible of making research either in groups or individually and at the same time mastering the language structures and enriching their vocabulary.

# 3.4 Informal assessment

Classroom assessment is one of the most important tools that teachers use daily. If it is used adequately, it can be of great help to the teacher and the student in having a great understanding of what is being learnt and what is expected to be learnt. There are many ways in which teachers can evaluate their students' progress. Most of the day- to day transactions are informal –a smile, a correct spelling or pronunciation, a praise, a reprimand, a question asked. In most classrooms, assessment tends to be regular and informal, rather than irregular and formal. This is because teaching often consists of frequent switches in who speaks and who listens and teachers make many of their decisions within one second (Wragg, 1999: 17). That is why so much informal assessment is often barely perceptible as the flow of the lesson continues since it is nearly interrelated with normal looking instructions and activities. What is common is that once students are working on an assignment, let us take an example of a writing assignment as it is the case of our study, teachers usually walk around, monitoring what students are doing, sometimes this kind of informal assessment reveal that some students are reluctant to put up their hands and ask for help, in fact struggling with the work and do need assistance, therefore, the teacher intervenes. The most used informal methods of assessment are questionnaires, interviews, assessment of prior knowledge and understanding, practical tests, feedback, observation and monitoring and providing students with equal opportunities in the classroom.

# **3.5 Diagnostic Assessment**

Although, some authors delineate diagnostic assessment as a component of formative assessment, most consider it a distinct form of measurement (Kellough & Kellough, 1999). In practice, the purpose of diagnostic assessment is to ascertain, prior to instruction, each student's strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and skills. Establishing these permits the teacher to remediate what is to remediate and adjust the programme to meet the students' needs.

#### **3.6 Formal Assessment**

Formal assessment is usually more structured. It is considered to be more 'standardized', where the tests are all given the same procedures for how they are administered, the amount of the time allowed and who and how it can be graded. Formal assessment may allow comparisons with others to measure improvement as a systematic way and also considered as a rigorous instrument of assessment, however, it may give an incomplete picture of the students, or may make them feel less confident. The two primary forms of formal assessment include: norm-referenced Assessments (NRA) and Criterion-Referenced Assessments (CRA). Norm-Referenced Assessment tests are usually administered when comparisons are needed between a large group of students and an individual student in order, for example, to make a selection for a scholarship or another kind of award. Criterion-Referenced Assessment means the comparison of an individual's work with pre-defined criteria as it the case of writing assessment (McAlpine, 2002: 13). It can be used in both formative and summative purposes highlighting areas of weaknesses and determining whether students have achieved an acceptable level in the areas they are expected to know about. It must be clear to assessors that the criteria for success is performance against learning objectives rather than performance against students. Another kind of assessment is called 'Ipsotive Referencing' which tends to compare an individual against him/herself. "Although, generally unsuitable for selective purposes, ipsotive referencing can be extremely useful for diagnostic or formative purposes" (ibid: 14).

## 3.7 Formative versus Summative Assessment

Basically, there are two types of assessment, assessment for learning and assessment of learning. These two are further divided into significant purposes: formative, diagnostic and summative and evaluation.

## **3.7.1 Formative Assessment**

The word 'Formative' has been typically used to describe an improvement process, while the word 'summative has been used to describe a decision-making process (Brownson *et.* al., 1996). Formative assessment is the assessment that takes place during a course or programme of study as an integral part of the learning process and as such it is up to the teacher to design and implement for improving teaching or learning. Similarly, formative assessment refers to frequent interactive assessments of

student progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately. It is informal: that is to say, it is carried out by teachers while teaching and training. It is sometimes defined as assessment for learning. It provides feedback to both teachers and learners about how the course is going and if the learners are doing what they need to do. Otherwise, the teaching and learning strategies chosen are in need of modification. It is supported by Cizek (2010: 7) who noted that:

Formative assessment refers to the collaborative process engaged in by educators and students for the purpose of understanding the students learning and conceptual organization, identification of strengths, diagnosis of weaknesses, areas of improvement and as a source of information that teachers can use in instructional planning and students can use in deepening their understanding and improving their achievement

Kolb' (1984) experiential learning is one of the best known learning cycles (fig.3.9) According to it, formative assessment can be seen as an example of concrete experience, just like many other strategy or experience that you may plan and design for your learners. The process of feedback and evaluation can be seen as observation and reflection and forming abstract concepts - the learner will have to consider the feedback that he or she receives and with the help of the teacher or trainer, decide what to do next. That final stage is one of testing in new situations, where the learner tries out what he or she has learnt. This kind of assessment can be done through various information-gathering activities, such as traditional tests, but also from observations, questioning, class discussion, projects, portfolios, homework, performance assessments, group work with peer feedback and students self-assessment.



Figure 3.9: Kolb's learning cycle (Formative and summative assessment 3)

Formative assessment is an assessment for learning. Therefore, it is found in all the steps of a lesson, an activity or a task. Cizek (2010: 8) summarized the characteristics of formative assessment in the following points:

- 1. Requires students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- 2. Communicates clear specific learning goals
- 3. Focuses on goals that represent valuable educational outcomes with applicability beyond the learning context
- 4. Identifies the students' current knowledge, skills and the necessary steps for reaching the desired goals
- 5. Required development of plans for attaining the desired goals
- 6. Encourages students to self-monitor progress toward the learning goals
- 7. Provides examples of learning goals including, when relevant, the specific grading criteria or rubrics that will be used to evaluate the students' work
- 8. Provides frequent assessment including peer and student self-assessment embedded within learning activities
- 9. Includes feedback that is non evaluative, specific, timely related to the learning goals, and provides opportunities for students to revise and improve work products and deepen understanding
- 10. Promotes meta-cognition and reflection by students of their work.

In addition to the characteristics noted by Cizek (*ibid.*), close examination of the research literature review helps identify the features of formative assessment that make it worth to improve learning. For example, we know from cognitive research that having students become self aware in monitoring their own learning also referred to as meta-cognition improves achievement. Similarly in the formative assessment literature, by

teaching students to self assess themselves, they can internalize and use criteria as they carry out their work. This increases both the quality of students' projects and conceptual understanding (White and Frederikson, 2000).

Feedback is the most obvious feature of formative assessment and the one with the strongest research base. Motivation research on self-efficacy also teaches us valuable lessons about how day-to day uses of feedback and praise can shape students' confidence about their abilities. Another feature is that generally students lack motivation because they believe that intelligence is fixed. In studies over the course of three decades (*ibid*:11) has found that students who believe that intelligence is an unchangeable characteristics they were born with, what she calls an ' entity' theory of self are flummoxed by difficult problems and tend to avoid challenges. In contrast, students who have been taught that ability can be increased by effort are more likely to seek academic challenges and to persist when faced with different problems. Feedback that focuses on a student's level of effort, evidence of an alternative reasoning, strategies used and the specifics of work products fosters incremental beliefs about ability and results in more constructive behaviour in the face of learning obstacles (Cizek, 2010: 11).

We approve this because we, as teachers, do not just teach what is programmed, but we have to inquire about how students learn and what factors inhibit or enhance learning. We should also take into account the socio-cultural side in learning because according to the socio- cultural theory, children develop cognitive ability through social interaction that let them try out language and practice their reasoning. Instead of being born with a fixed intelligence, children become smart through what Rogoff (1990) calls an 'apprenticeship' in thinking. So, it is up to us to help students develop their skills not only being occupied by completing a certain programme because this process of providing support to help the learners attempt and master increasingly complex skills, such as writing effectively on their own is called scaffolding. Cizek (*op.cit.*) adds that "socio-cultural theory folds together an understanding of how children learn and at the same time develop identities as capable learners". Thus, we should note that formative assessment practises further cognitive goals and at the same time draws students into participation in learning for their own sake regardless of score. If we try to make a relation of all of this and the teaching of writing, we can say that the process approach to writing, if applied adequately, will lead students to develop their intellectual abilities, to be self confident and therefore to be motivated thanks to the teacher's feedback. Besides, the genre approach will enable them to develop their writing abilities to be used in different real-life situations.

### **3.7.1.1 Major Categories Used in Formative Assessment**

A variety of formative assessment types may be used during the learning process. The most common ones are teacher dialogues and discussion with the students which are the most basic and essential elements of informal assessment. Generally, such conversations emphasize relatively quick checks for knowledge and comprehension. Discussion can be used orally or it can take the form of a written check for understanding. For example, students may be asked to write for five minutes to explain what they have learnt about a particular topic or issue, what was the most important thing they have learnt and what unanswered question do they have about the course.

What you already know, what you want to know and what you have learnt (KWL) format also provides useful formative assessment information, such students indicate what they know, then note what they want to learn and what they have learnt. The information gathered helps the teacher to focus on how students are either learning or not learning a certain material. Another type of written work is initiating projects that have been scaffolded before. These assignments require the individual or groups of students to receive a teacher's check or initials before moving to the next stage. As the teacher moves from one student or group of students to the next, he can gauge the students' efforts, talk to them if they needed about how they are doing, and then indicate if the students should move to the next part of the project.

We can also mention that one of the types used in formative assessment is the use of pre-tests or sometimes called placement tests that can also provide information before moving, for instance, to another step or to another unit. In addition to this questioning and interviews with individuals or groups of students also allow the teacher to assess students' dispositions in the affective domain. This type of discussion is useful
not only in developing students' beliefs, but also useful in providing teachers with important information not only about their students' attitudes, but also about their linguistic knowledge.

Formative assessment can be practised through a variety of other written exercises such as journals which are also useful for asking students to reflect on their beliefs, values and attitudes. When used informally, they may provide more honest remarks. Another way to use students' written work is by evaluating drafts with qualitative assessments of their development, as it may be in the case of the Process-Based Approach during the various stages in writing a composition. Instead of assigning grades or scores based on mechanical and grammatical proficiency, the teacher can develop rubrics that provide written feedback about development, organization, coherence, cohesion, content and fluency. Teachers can also use portfolios usually used for both summative and formative assessment to assess students' progress.

We should also note that, as stated above, in formative assessment, the teacher fosters students' self- assessment that encourages them to take responsibility and to be reflective on their leaning. Involving their peers in assessment emphasizes cooperative and collaborative learning and makes the students aware of the importance of the reader. We have put much emphasis on this kind of assessment because it is going to be used in teaching writing during the experiment.

### 3.7.2 Summative Assessment

We described previously formative assessment as assessment for learning. In contrast, summative assessment is considered as assessment of learning; it is the process that concerns final evaluation to ask if the project or programme met its goal. Typically, summative assessment concentrates on learner outcomes rather than only on the programme of instruction. The goal of summative assessment is to measure the level of success or proficiency that has been obtained at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. In simple terms summative assessment is the final test of how well a student has learnt a block of work. Summative assessment is generally a formal process used to see if the students have acquired the skills, knowledge, behaviour, or understanding of the course. It gives an overall picture of performance. According to Kellough & Kellough (1999: 418-419) summative purposes are summarized as follows:

- 1. To assist student learning
- 2. To identify students' strengths and weaknesses
- 3. To assess and improve the effectiveness of curriculum progress
- 4. To assess and improve teaching effectiveness
- 5. To provide data that assist in decision-making
- 6. To communicate with and involve parents

Summative assessment invariably leads to the award of qualifications: grades, diplomas and certificates. In other situations, qualification will lead to progress, to a higher level of education, or will lead employees to promotion at work. Key terms and purposes of assessment are summarized below:

Types of Assessment	Purpose
Formative	Assessment, that promotes learning by using evidence about where students have reached in relation to the goals of their learning, to plan the next steps in their learning and know how to take them. It includes diagnostic assessment-to assess the progress and development to knowledge and skills during the process of learning.
Diagnostic/Remedial	To locate particular difficulties in the acquisition or application of knowledge and skills. The range of methods stretches from informal analysis to standardized methods using specific tools designed to pinpoint the source of difficulty.
Summative	Summative assessment (assessment of learning) provides a summary of achievements at a particular point-provides information to those with an interest in students' achievement: mainly parents, other teachers, employers, further and higher education institutions and the students themselves. Assessment serves as an evaluative purpose as predictors of future performance.

 Table 3.10: Assessment Key Terms and Purposes (Kordurck, 2009: 89)

After having presented some types of assessment worth known in the field of education including writing, let us now see how writing can be assessed.

### 3.8 Forms of Writing Assessment

Assessment forms were influenced by the change in teaching languages. As a result, there was a shift from traditional forms of assessment to recent ones such as the use of the portfolio, conferencing, peer and self-assessment.

### **3.8.1 Traditional Forms of Writing Assessment**

Traditionally, teaching has been thought of as transmission of knowledge. The role of the teacher is to tell, to be in control of the pace and content of lessons and to be the purveyor of truth. Traditional approaches to the teaching of writing focus on the final product, in other words, the production of neat, grammatically correct pieces of writing focuses on one-shot correct writing for the purpose of language practice (Cheung, 1999). Writing was viewed primarily as a tool for the practice and reinforcement of specific grammatical and lexical patterns, accuracy being all important whereas content and self-expression given little if any priority. The emphasis was on grammatical correctness and adherence to given models or guidelines (White, 1988). However, imitating models inhibits writers; there is little or no opportunity for the students to add any thought or ideas by their own (Raimes, 1983). The inevitable consequence is that little attention is paid to the ideas and meaning of student writing, what is communicated to the reader, the purpose and audience (*ibid:* 75). This over emphasis on accuracy and form can lead to serious 'writing blocks' (Halsted, 1975: 82) and 'sterile' and unimaginative pieces of work (Mahon, 1992: 75).

Thus, the only form of assessment in the past relied on the teacher's correction of the first /final draft. This Product Approach is often a poor way to approach writing assignment. Applying this Product Approach, students often used weak writing strategies as they wrote. According to Flower (1985: 87), this approach commonly includes the following weak strategies:

**Trial-Error Strategy:** Students who write using this strategy are trying to different combinations of words and phrases with the hope that one combination will result in an acceptable one. Using this trial and error method, students work slowly and produce products that contain minimal ideas and content.

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**Perfect Draft Strategy**: Using this strategy, students write from start to finish in one laborious process. Using this weak strategy, students strive to perfect each sentence before moving to the next one. Students usually use this strategy with introductory sentences or paragraphs. As you can guess, this may lead to writer's block during the beginning.

Words looking for ideas: Usually students may use certain words as they hope will trigger ideas as transition words (first, next...). However, using such words to trigger ideas is an unreliable procedure.

**Waiting for inspiration Strategy**: Some students may simply wait until the writing mood strikes them to begin writing. Although effective for some students, it may be a risky procedure. For many students, the deadline itself is the inspiration or the motivation to begin the writing process, however, it may also increase stress levels and actually lead to writer's block (Boyle & Scanlon, 2009: 224). It is the reason why the product approach based just on accuracy and viewed as demotivating for students was rejected and replaced by the process approach , as shown in the previous chapter, therefore, recent methods and procedures have been used to assess writing.

### 3.8.2 Non-Traditional Forms of Writing Assessment

The failure of traditional forms of assessment gave rise to recent ones such as portfolio assessment, protocol analysis, learning logs, journal entries and dialogue journals as explained below.

# 3.8.2.1 Portfolio Assessment

As seen previously, portfolios represent one form of assessment which is practically used in the CBA. It is defined by Applebee and Langer (1992: 30) as "a cumulative collection of work students have done". In the context of writing and assessment, a portfolio is 'a collection of texts the writer has produced over a defined period of time (Hamp-Lyons, 1991: 262) and the collection may consist of "selected but not necessarily polished or finished pieces" (Privette, 1993: 60). According to Applebee and Langer (*ibid.*), some of the most popular forms are the following:

- 1. a traditional ' writing folder' in which students keep their work
- 2. a bound note-book with separate sections kept for work, progress and final drafts
- 3. a loose-leaf notebook in which students keep their drafts and revisions
- 4. a combination folder and brown envelope where students' writing- exercises, tests, compositions, drafts, and so on- are kept
- 5. a notebook divided into two sections: one for drafts and the other for final copies (traditionally called original and rewritten compositions back in the late 1950s and 1960s).

So, the writing portfolio contains the student's total writing output to represent his overall performance, or it may contain only a selection of works which the student has chosen to be evaluated. In other words, the portfolio shows the student's work from the beginning of the term or semester to the end, giving the opportunity to the teacher and the student a chance to assess how much the latter's writing has progressed. But, in order to be effective tools of assessment, the use of portfolios should be made clear right at the beginning in order to meet the goals of literacy assessment, they must be developed as follows (Farr and Lowee, 1991: 5):

- 1. Teachers and students both add materials to the portfolio.
- 2. Students are viewed as the owners of the portfolios.
- 3. Conferencing between students and the teacher is an inherent activity in portfolioassessment.
- 4. Conference notes and reflections of both the teacher and the student are kept in the portfolio.
- 5. Portfolios need to reflect a wide range of student work and not only that which the teacher or student decides is the best.
- 6. Samples of the student's reading and writing activities are collected in the portfolios, including unfinished products.

According to Gallehr (1993: 29), no system of assessment is as perfect as portfolio assessment because students are required to write, but within this requirement, they can choose the topic, audience, responders in the class, revision strategies, and so on. They are also free to select from their work pieces they want to include in their portfolios. Many teachers find the portfolio the ideal assessment tool because it allows them to act as coaches providing feedback that students can use to revise their papers. Besides, it combines process and product together and ties assessment to instruction (Clark, 2008: 214). In addition, Weigle (2002: 139) finds that portfolios are of "great interest as they are seen to integrate classroom instruction with performance assessment, representing an overall model of organizing writing processes and products for ongoing reflection, dialogue and evaluation". This shows that portfolios may be used as a holistic process for evaluating course work and promoting autonomy. They provide a sound basis on which to document student progress because they incorporate a range of assessment strategies over an extended period of time. However, the good use the portfolio requires careful planning (*ibid.*) as it should be:

- **Integrative**: combines curriculum and assessment which means evaluation is developmental, continuous, comprehensive and fairer, representing programme goals and reflecting writing progress over time, genres and different conditions.
- Valid: closely related to what is taught and what students can do.
- Meaningful: students often see their portfolio as a good record of work and progress.
- **Motivating**: students have a range of challenging writing experiences in a range of genres and can see similarities and differences between these.
- Process-oriented: focuses learners on multi-drafting, feedback, collaboration, revision, etc.
- Coherent: assignments build on each other rather than being an unconnected set of writings.
- **Flexible**: teachers can adopt different selection criteria, evaluation methods and response practices over time, targeting their responses to different features of writing.

- **Reflexive**: students can evaluate their improvement and critically consider their weaknesses, so encouraging greater responsibility and independence in writing.
- **Formative**: grading is often delayed until the end of the course, allowing teachers to produce constructive feedback without the need for early, potentially discouraging, evaluation.

The use the portfolio in teaching writing is a heavy workload for teachers especially in large classes as it requires not only a good and careful planning, but also a complete involvement in order to guide students and make them progress in writing. However, it remains one of the best assessment tools because it enables students to understand different writing processes and provides them with an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in different genres.

### **Protocol Analysis**

"Protocol analysis is one of the few methods in cognitive psychology that gathers data with sufficient temporal density to test models on-line and second by second behaviour" (Ransdell, 1995: 89). This form of assessment, although seen as a bit complicated is considered as a writing procedure which promotes the writing process; in other words, this forms assesses the process not the product, it shows how the student is proceeding and the different strategies he is using in writing. Pressly and Afflerbach (1995: 2) notes that "spoken language is the data used in protocol analysis and the richness and variability of language are the greatest assets and liabilities of the verbal reporting methodology". This is also referred to as 'talk aloud' or 'think aloud'. When using this form, the students are asked to record every thought that comes to their mind during the writing process. The transcripts are, then analysed for the purpose of assessing student's writing. "Assessment of students' writing can be done using this strategy, for through protocol analysis, a teacher can tell how students write, the strategies they use to generate ideas, how often they revise and edit their work, and whether their written work has improved" (Penaflorida, 2002: 347).

The think aloud method can be used to investigate differences in problemsolving abilities between people, differences in difficulty between tasks, effects of instruction and other factors that have an effect on problem-solving (Van Someren 1994, *et. al.*, 9). This method has been used in educational research; for instance, Ericson and Simon (1984) based their work on verbal protocol analysis on the construct of short-term and long-term memory from information processing theory. They hypothesized that all human cognition is information processing and stated that a cognitive process can be seen as a sequence of internal states successfully transformed by a series of information processing (*ibid*: 11).

Flower and Hayes (1983) used it to observe the act of composing. They concluded that the writers' behaviour combined with access to the concurrent reporting of their thought processes revealed that when composing they all proceeded through three cognitive processes: planning, translating and reviewing (see figure 2.4: 8). The function of planning is to take information from the task environment and from long-term memory and to use it to set up goals and to establish a writing plan to guide the production of a text that is used to meet goals. The function of translating is to transform the meaning generated by the planning process into written language. The function of reviewing is to improve the quality of the text produced.

### 3.8.2.3 Learning Logs

Harris and Hodges (1995: 137) define a learning log as "an ongoing record of learning kept by students to help them evaluate their progress, think about learning and plan further learning". A learning log is an educational tool which is designed to enhance the learning experience for students. It facilitates exchanges between students and teachers. In a learning log, students write on the knowledge they have gained from studying in their writing classes, and from their own thinking. A teacher needs not grade, but can assess how much a student has gained or benefited from the writing class (Penaflorida, 349). A typical learning log takes the form of a notebook which belongs to the student and can be used in a variety of ways. For example, students may be allowed to take up five minutes at the end of the class to write about what they have learnt. This provides an opportunity for students to organize their thought and to generate questions which they might have about the day's lesson. Learning logs can be used for responding to reading or writing. They help teachers see what their students are learning, particularly in the writing class and in language as a whole. In addition, they allow students to reflect on their learning and thus develop meta-cognitive awareness about their strengths and weaknesses.

### **3.8.2.4 Journal Entries**

A journal entry is a notebook or a dairy in which the student keeps his personal understanding of the course and may include comments and feelings. At the beginning or at the end of each period, students may write in their journals but are not obliged to share their writing with the teacher or their peers as it is suggested by Garth Sundem (2006: 32) "let them know that writing journals are for their eyes only". Both learning logs and journal entries may be used for formative assessment. Like portfolios, journal entries may be used as a source for conferencing. Keeping a journal entry makes students practise writing and develop their writing skill gradually by expressing their thoughts. Writing journal entries is a good habit that will enhance students' writing, help them achieve autonomy and improve their reflective thinking.

# **3.82.5 Dialogue Journals**

A dialogue journal is a notebook kept by two people, usually a student and a teacher or a kind of written conversations. Each one writes entries as messages to the other. The journal is then exchanged after each entry (Penaflorida, 2002: 349). This kind of journal can help students develop skills and also gives the teacher an opportunity to interact with students as the latter can answer questions asked by students and in his turn ask them other questions that can clarify learners' thinking or stimulate ideas to know more about the students and their progress in the field. The value of a dialogue journal in assessing students' writing is that it makes them independent and eventually able to read and respond to the teacher's entries (Penyton & Staton, 1991). In addition, in terms of reflective awareness Carroll and Mchawata (2001) showed that ESL students' awareness of academic writing conventions as well as an understanding of others and their views was effectively facilitated through dialogue writing. Journal entries and journal dialogue journals seem to be similar; therefore, we present differences between them in table 3.11.

Dialogue Journals	Journal Entries
Teacher and student write to each other, taking	Teacher comments on student's work, but there
equal turns in writing and responding.	is no equal turn taking in responding.
Teacher and student share ideas and information.	Student is not obliged to share her writing with
	anybody.
Teacher and student act as equal partners in the	There is a hierarchical relationship between
interaction between them.	teacher and student.
Dialogue journal writing is applicable to some	Journal keeping is usually practised in language
content area courses such as literature, social	course only.
studies, or science.	
In dialogue journals, teachers give students	In journal entries, teachers assist students on the
assistance beyond what they already know how	language used or on the content.
to do it.	

# Table 3.11: Difference between Dialogue Journals and Journal Entries According to Penaflorida (2002: 350)

This table shows that journal entries are the ones used more in language teaching to assist the student during the process of writing. It is a kind of formative assessment the teacher can use to improve students' achievement. However, through dialogue journals, teachers are able to help their students with self-understanding, communication skills, negotiation of classroom relationship and problem solving (Staton, 1987). Dialogue journals are interactive and functional in nature in that they provide an authentic two ways written interaction. Other methods used in writing assessment are conferencing, peer assessment and self assessment.

# 3.8.2.6 Conferencing

During the process of writing, as mentioned above, teachers continuously assess students' writing using different ways (formative assessment). Teachers can give feedback on student writing through face-to-face conferencing (Kynland, 2003: 192). This kind of feedback, which is a one-tone conversation between the teacher and student, is an effective means of teacher response to student writing. "The interactive nature of conference gives teachers a chance to respond to the diverse cultural, educational and writing needs of their students, clarifying meaning and resolving activities, while saving the time spent in detailed marking of papers". Conferencing is a form of oral feedback which enables the teacher to find answers to some problems. However, it should be planned carefully so that it can have lasting effects on improving students writing in later assignments. According to Kroll (1990: 259), one advantage of conferencing is that it "allows the teacher to uncover potential misunderstanding that the student might have about prior feedback on issues in writing that have been discussed in class". Hence, all kinds of feedback presented by the teacher are of such an importance to students' progress and are great triggers to students' intrinsic motivation, a necessary element leading to the intellectual development of any learner in any field. However, the teacher should avoid degrading remarks; he should be very careful about the comments he makes to the students in order to make them develop their writing competencies.

### 3.8.2.7 Peer Assessment

In addition to the feedback received from the teacher, students can be assessed by their peers when they exchange their pieces of writing. Evaluating the work of peers is a social activity, especially when the peer assessment is non-anonymous. This kind of behaviour enhances collaboration and activates positively the interaction between students. "Collaborative peer review helps learners engage in a community of equals who respond to each other work and together create authentic social context for interaction and learning" (Mittan: 198). However, as students lack experience in writing, they may provide their peers with vague comments or they may focus on accuracy rather than on organization, coherence and clarity; thus, they should be trained in assessing their peers' products. In order to be effective in doing that, Kroll (1990, *ibid:* 259.) suggests the following questions for peer response:

- What is the main purpose of this paper?
- What have you found particularly effective in the paper?
- Do you think the writer has followed through what the paper set out to do?
- Find at least three places in the essay where you can think of questions that have not been answered by the writer. Write those questions on the margin as areas for the writer to answer in the next draft.

These questions, of course, can be modified depending on the purpose of writing and the areas to be assessed; therefore, it is up to the teacher to provide students with helpful feedback and a clear understanding of what to look for in their peers' work. This can be done though well-elaborated checklists to guide students during the assessment process. For peer assessment to be more effective, the learning environment should be supportive. Students should feel comfortable, trust one another in order to provide constructive feedback and at the same time develop their writing abilities.

### 3.8.2.8 Self-Assessment

Moreover, during the writing process students learn to assess themselves. This kind of assessment refers to the involvement of learners in making judgements about their own learning, particularly about their achievements and the outcomes of their learning (Boud & Falchikov, 1989). Self assessment is not a new technique, but a way of increasing the role of students as active participants in their own learning (Boud, 1995) and is mostly used for formative assessment in order to foster reflection on one's own learning process and results (Sluijmans *et. al.*, 1998) the fact which develops in them a kind of autonomy and helps them to rely on themselves.

Strengths in using self and peer assessment (Sambell & MacDowel, 1998: 39) are that:

- 1. it can foster students' feeling of ownership for their own learning,
- 2. can motivate students and encourage their active involvement in learning,
- 3. makes assessment a shared activity rather than alone (i.e. more objective),
- 4. promotes a genuine interchange of ideas,
- 5. leads to more directed and effective learning,
- 6. encourages students to become more autonomous in learning;
- 7. signals to students that their experiences are valued and their judgments are respected,
- 8. develops transferable personal skills,
- 9. produces a community of learning in which students feel that they have influence and involvement,
- 10. reduces the teacher's workload,
- 11. and makes students think more deeply, see how others tackle problems, pick up points and learn to criticise constructively.

From this list of strengths, we conclude that this kind of assessment as a tool for learning has considerable impact on students' learning and development into reflective and independent learners and what is most important is that it encourages critical thinking as it is supported by Sambell and Mac Dowel (*ibid.*) "encouraging students to assess each other's contribution to discussion and discourse is further exposing them to the skills of critical reflection and analysis". However, weaknesses of such an assessment lie in the occurrence of possible cheating, stress and time constraints. Thus, goal setting is essential because students can evaluate their progress more clearly when they have targets against which to measure their performance. Their motivation increases when they have relevant learning goals. They also need to be taught strategies related to self-assessment of their written products. The techniques which may be used include the use of rubrics and checklists to guide them in assessing themselves.

### **3.9 Scoring Rubrics**

In order to evaluate students' texts, teachers can develop some guidelines to be able to grade them. These may be called scoring rubrics that are defined as descriptive scoring schemes that are developed by teachers or other evaluators to guide the analysis of the products or processes of students' efforts (Brookhart, 1999). A scoring rubric represents a set of guidelines that describe the characteristics of the different levels of performance used in scoring or judging a performance. One common use of scoring rubrics is to guide the evaluation of writing samples. Judgement concerning the quality of a given writing sample may vary depending upon the criteria established by the individual evaluator. By developing a pre-defined scheme for the evaluation process, the subjectivity involved in evaluating a paragraph or an essay becomes more objective. Rubrics can be used for grading a large variety of assignments and tasks: research papers, book critiques, discussion participation, laboratory reports, portfolios, group work, presentation and more. Stevens and Levi (2005: 21) stated the benefits of rubrics:

- 1. Rubrics provide timely feedback.
- 2. Rubrics prepare students to use detailed feedback.
- 3. Rubrics encourage critical thinking.
- 4. Rubrics facilitate contact with others.
- 5. Rubrics help us refine our teaching methods.
- 6. Rubrics level the playing field.

The construction of rubrics requires reflection of what to include in them, depending on the nature of the activity or the task and also stages to follow. In order to construct any rubric four basic stages are involved:

- 1. **Stage 1: Reflecting**. In this stage, we take the time to reflect on what we want from the students. Why we create this assignment, what happened the last time we gave it, and what our expectations are.
- 2. **Stage 2: Listing**. In this stage, we focus the particular details of the assignment and what specific learning objectives we hope to see in the completed assignment.
- 3. **Stage 3: Grouping and labelling**. In this stage, we organize the results of our reflections in stage 1 and 2 grouping similar expectations together in what will probably become the rubric dimensions.
- 4. **Stage 4: Application**. In this stage, we only apply the dimensions and description from stage 3 to the final form of the rubric using the grid shown in the appendix (*ibid:* 42)

Students may be involved in rubric construction in order to increase their awareness as assessors or other teacher and colleague can also be involved. In addition of using rubrics for formative assessment, they can also be used for grading, this will assure equity and fairness in assessing the students' work.

### **3.10.** Approaches to Scoring Compositions

Generally, there are four approaches to scoring compositions. The error-count method, the primary trait scoring, the holistic or impressionistic method, and the analytic method, but the two most prominent approaches of assessing writing are holistic and analytical scoring. This is why, we are going to present the first ones briefly, but more stress will be put on the holistic and analytical scoring.

**3.10.1 The Error-count Scoring** as its name implies is a method in which a point or more is deducted for every mistake a student makes; for example, a mistake of grammar may cause the deduction of two points whereas a mistake in spelling may lead to only one point. This method is still applied by some colleagues to score students' compositions.

**3.10.2 The Primary Trait Scoring** consists of scoring just one feature in the written text such as grammar or content holistically. This approach is used, for example, when a researcher in interested in investigating one feature and scoring it (Weigle, 2002: 110).

**3.10.3 Holistic scoring** developed by writing experts is a kind of scoring which may be useful for large numbers of essays in that it does not take much time to grade them. According to this approach, the written work is read as a whole in order to decide of its grade, but the teacher or teachers have to grade the compositions based on chosen models in order to be objective. The essay is read quickly to determine whether it is stronger or weaker if compared to the models. (Adapted from Brown, 2001: 242-243).

The advantage of the holistic scoring (Moskal, 2000: 2) is that "it takes much less time than other scoring methods. Each reader of a holistically scored essay reads the essay through quickly, matching its quality to that one of the model essays". However, readers may choose to focus on different aspects of the written products; consequently, the grades will vary from one reader to another. Holistic grading is ideal for large enrolment courses in which two or more teachers are responsible for the grading like in official exams.

### **3.10.4 Analytical Scoring**

Analytical scoring is the traditional approach to grading writing. In the initial phase of developing a scoring rubric, the evaluator needs to determine what will be the evaluation criteria. "Depending on the purpose of the assessment, scripts might be rated on such features as content, organization, cohesion, register, vocabulary, grammar, or mechanics" (Weigle, 2002: 114). An analytic scoring, much like the checklist, allows for the separate evaluation of each of these factors. Each criterion is scored on a different descriptive scale (Brookhart, 1999). According to this approach, the written work is analyzed for several features, each one is given a certain score and the total score given is the sum of the sores of the various features. Among the most agreed upon features are: grammar, mechanics, content, fluency and relevance and they compose what is known as analytic scheme. The weight given to each feature should vary depending on the students' level of proficiency in the foreign language. Many instructors choose to use analytic scoring because of it strengths, some of which are as follows (Moskal, 2000: 121):

- It helps instructors keep the full range of writing features in mind as they score.
- It allows students to see areas in their own essays that need work when accompanied by written comments and a breakdown of the final score. Its diagnostic nature provides students with a road map for improvement.

Some weaknesses of analytical scoring are:

- It is time consuming. Teachers who score analytically usually are required to makes as many as 11 separate judgements about one piece of writing. Furthermore, not all students actually make their way through the analytic comments so painstaking written on their papers, nor will be able to make profitable use of those comments on succeeding writing assignments.

- Negative feedback can be pedagogically destructive. Teachers who combine analytic scoring with confrontational or unclear comments-especially about issues of grammar- may actually inhibit student growth (*ibid.*)

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#### **3.11 Checklists**

A checklist as its name suggests is another assessment tool in a form of a list used to assess learning or teaching. It determines what the student has learnt in a certain area according to fixed criteria. Checklists are very useful tools in writing courses as they are designed by teachers to guide students in assessing their learning. They are generally very simple scaffolding their meta-cognitive development and enabling them to grow more confident and ultimately leading them to autonomy.

Checklists may be used in self assessment making learners aware of their learning and the strategies they are using. According to Oscarson (2009: 39) "

Aiding students to become aware of their mental learning processes and giving them an opportunity to become more independent and autonomous helps both teachers and students regulate their planning, monitoring and assessing.

This kind of reflection develops their meta-cognitive abilities and can increase their motivation to learn; therefore, they become more proficient language learners. In addition to this checklists can be used in peer assessment guiding students in order to provide beneficial feedback necessary for the improvement of learning.

#### **3.12 Measurement**

Measurement is another term used in assessment and worth presenting because on the one hand it is used in assessment, and on the other it is going to be used in the present research. Measurement is the process of quantifying the characteristics of an object of interest according to explicit rules and procedures (Bachman, 2004: 8). It is one type of assessment that involves quantification, or the assignment of numbers (statistic description) as it is the case in research in languages where the researcher aims to compare, for instance, students performance in a pre-test and in a post test after a certain treatment in order to show if students improved in certain areas like ours in which we intend to find out if the students writing improved or not in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity due to the implementation of the process genre approach. Thus in order to analyze quantitative data appropriately and meaningfully, we need to understand the specific assessment procedures or instruments we have to use to collect the data (*ibid.*). This form of assessment will be used to measures students' written products in the experiment in this research work; thus, details will be presented in that phase. Summing up, the forms used for assessing students' products were influenced by the change in teaching languages. As a result, there was a shift from traditional to recent ones; i.e., the forms of assessment which may be used in the CBA include non-traditional ones and more specifically all types of formative assessment such as dialogues journals, journal entries and conferencing. Self and peer assessment are usually used in writing during which students are guided through checklists provided by the teacher. Another assessment tool commonly used for assessing students' products is the 'portfolio' which informs both the teachers and students about their progress in writing. There is evidence that it has positive effects on students' learning because "when children have a sense of achievement they are more likely to have motivation for further learning" (Moon, 2000 & Cameron, 2001). In addition, we should stress the importance of formative assessment during the writing process because it enables students' to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. However, the teacher should be aware of the assessment principles as presented below.

# 3.13 Principles of Competency-Based Assessment

The basic principles of assessment are that what is to be assessed is to be valid, reliable, flexible and fair, as illustrated by Hagar *et.al.* (1994):

### Validity:

Assessments are valid when they assess what they claim to assess. This is achieved when:

- Assessors are fully aware of what is to be assessed (against some appropriate criterion or defined learning outcome).
- Evidence is collected from tasks that are clearly related to what is to be assessed.
- There is enough sampling of different evidence to demonstrate that the performance criterion has been met.

# **Reliability:**

- Assessments are reliable when they are applied and interpreted consistently from one student to student and from one context to another.

# Flexibility

- Assessment is flexible when it is interpreted successfully and adapted to a range of training modes and the different needs of the learners.

# Fairness

- Assessment is fair when it does not disadvantage particular learners. For example, when all learners understand what is expected of them and what form of assessment will be used (adapted from Hagar *et al., ibid.*).

Under a competency-based assessment system, assessors make judgements based on evidence gathered from a variety of sources, whether an individual meets a standard or a set of criteria. The idea of competency standards is essentially a development of criterion-referenced assessment which evolved in North America. The shift from normreferenced to criterion-referenced assessment has been fairly recent in higher education and seem to offer a higher degree of reliability.

### Conclusion

Because of the increasing role of writing, different approaches have been suggested to teach this skill. In parallel with those approaches, questions of how to assess or evaluate writing gave rise to certain methodologies for assessment. Most people involved in the training and educational process are interested in knowing how effective their teaching has been, whether or not learning has taken place, how the courses can be improved and whether the students are progressing. In this chapter, we started by showing the distinction between assessment and evaluation, two terms generally used interchangeably. The former is an interactional process which provides both the teachers and students with information for the sake of improving learning. It is generally informal and formative. On the contrary, evaluation is not used to suggest improvement, but it determines the level of quality or judges the actual quality of performance by giving the student a score or a grade at the end of a term or a school year.

We also showed the evolution of methods of assessment starting from the product assessment, in which the final product is assessed in terms of accuracy, to process assessment, a kind of informal assessment during which the teacher observes students in order to learn about their attitudes and the way they proceed in writing, and at the same time gives them frequent feedback to help them improve. Performance was also mentioned as a form of testing that requires students to perform and demonstrate tasks and in which rubrics, seen as an objective way of assessment, may be used to give a grade. Accuracy, complexity and fluency are important factors in grading and sequencing tasks.

Two other concepts in assessment have been presented. On the one hand, formative assessment is considered as assessment for learning as it provides feedback to both the teacher and students about their strengths and weaknesses helpful for future efforts. On the other hand, summative assessment is considered as assessment of learning; its goal is to measure the level of success or proficiency that has been attained at the end of an instructional unit. Summative assessment is generally formal and seeks to know if the students have acquired what they are supposed to acquire at the end of a course, a unit, a term or a school year.

Some current forms of writing assessment which are commonly used under the CBA have been stressed such as portfolio assessment and project assessment in order to show their importance. Other methods like protocol analysis, learning logs, journal entries, dialogue journals conferencing and peer and self assessment usually used in the process approach have also been mentioned in order to see the difference between traditional methods and current ones that can be used to help students develop their writing competency. Moreover, measurement that involves quantification or the assignment of numbers in assessing students' products have been presented because of its usefulness in the experiment to be conducted in this research work.

At the end of the chapter the most common types of scoring students' writing have been discussed. These include mainly holistic and analytical scoring. All this kind of terminology seen across the chapter is something required for the teacher in order to be aware not only of what he is using when assessing his students, but also what is appropriate according to the purposes and objectives of each educational setting.

# **Chapter Four**

# **Research Situation Analysis**

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# Chapter four Research Situation Analysis

### Introduction

This research work relies on the collection of data from first year students and teachers of written expression in the department of English at Biskra University through two questionnaires. These informants represent the participants in this research, their importance and role in this study will help us determine:

- The learners' background, their writing proficiency.
- Their learning experience in previous education, their difficulties in writing, and whether they are motivated to improve their proficiency in this skill.
- How they were trained in writing courses and thus if secondary school teachers. implemented the principles of the CBA in their writing courses.
- University teachers' qualifications, experience, their students' writing proficiency and also their knowledge concerning the competency-based approach and whether its implementation at the university level will bring on positive effects.

### **4.1 Pilot Questionnaires**

After the creation of any questionnaire, it is important to test or pilot it on a small target group before its wide circulation as (*ibid.*, 283) argue, "If you don't have the resources to pilot-test your questionnaire, don't do the study" and "Every aspect of a survey has to be tried out before hand to make sure it works as intended" (Oppenheim, 1992: 47). This is important before administering the questionnaire because the pilot-test can highlight things like ambiguous questions and signs that the instructions were not understood. This is also the phase when omissions or additions in the coverage of content may be identified.

The two questionnaires have been initially piloted by two motivated colleagues using two (2) teachers of written expression and a sample of fifteen students (15) similar to the target sample the instrument has been designed for. The questionnaires have been piloted to determine the accessibility of the questions before distributing them. Some questions have been reformulated, mainly those dealing with writing in the secondary school. Before administering the final questionnaires, they were modified based on previous feedback from our two colleagues and some students among the first year population.

# 4.2 Description of the Questionnaires

Cohen et. al. (2005: 24) argues that:

Questionnaires are useful instruments for survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse. Questionnaires allow us to quantify people's observations, interpretations and attitudes.

Both questionnaires used in this research are simple and straight forward to be understood by everybody. The teachers' questionnaire is composed of twenty one items, grouped into nine main categories, while the students' includes twenty seven questions grouped under eight categories. We have avoided long questionnaires because they can be counterproductive. Most researchers agree that anything that is more than 4-6 pages long and requires over half an hour to complete may be considered too much of an option (Dornyei, 2003: 18). The most frequent questions used in these questionnaires are close-ended questions because they are easy to answer and "their coding and tabulation is straight forward and leaves no room for the rater's subjectivity. Accordingly, the questions are sometimes referred to as 'objective' items. They are particularly suited for quantitative, statistical analyses" (ibid). Just few questions are open-ended because they 'take more time, thought, patience and concentration to answer than closed questions (Sudman and Bradburn, 1983: 154) though they are considered as an invaluable tool when the researcher wants to go deeply in a particular topic exploring all its aspects, however, they are generally left unanswered mainly by less proficient students.

# 4.3 Teachers' Perceptions of Writing Questionnaire

One of the aims of this research is first to know about the first year students' level in writing in general and in fluency, accuracy, and complexity in particular because these represent the dependent variables to be tested. The second aim is to know about the teachers attitudes about the CBA and whether its implementation in tertiary level will bring on positive results considering this approach the independent variable in this research. Based on these considerations, the population in this questionnaire consists of teachers of written expression in the department of English.

### 4.3.1 The Sample

Because the number of written expression teachers is relatively small (N=10), we took all the population as it is easy to deal with such a small number. The teachers' experience is between nine and three years. Six of them are full time teachers holding a 'magister' degree (60%) and the rest (40%) are part-time teachers holding a BA (licence). They were given four days to give back the questionnaire according to their requests because of work pressure. All of them participated positively (100%) providing the researcher with useful and appropriate information and willing to find a way to make students improve their writing proficiency.

# 4.3.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

Teachers of written expression (N=10) were issued with questionnaires and were prompted to complete them within a week. All of them showed much interest in participating in this research because according to them, they needed a new conceptualization of teaching writing. All the questionnaires were returned; however, there were some instances when there were requests to have their questionnaires completed on later because of work pressure.

#### 4.3.3 Questionnaire Analysis

As stated previously, this questionnaire contains twenty-nines questions grouped under nine sub-headings eliciting the necessary data for the situation analysis of this research before dealing with the experiment.

# 4.3.3.1 Teachers' Qualifications and Experience

Among the twelve informants, six are permanent teachers. Their experience in teaching written expression varies from three to nine years. All of them hold a 'magister' degree and are preparing a doctorate in applied linguistics, one of them is also working in writing assessment. The other informants hold a BA in English as a foreign language and graduated during the academic year 2007 and 2008. By the time we run this questionnaire, these teachers had an experience of three years in teaching

written expression as it is displayed in table 4.12. This presumes that all the informants can provide us with the necessary data required in this investigation.

Informants	Degree	Experience	Informants	Degree	Experience
1	Magister	9 years	1	BA	3 years
2	Magister	9 years	2	BA	3 years
3	Magister	9 years	3	BA	3 years
4	Magister	4 years	4	BA	3 years
5	Magister	3 years			
6	Magister	3 years			

 Table 4.12: Teachers' Qualifications and Experience

# 4.3.3.2 Importance of Writing in EFL Instruction

In the second item, we wanted to know the reasons why writing proficiency is so important for students. All the informants asserted that graduate students at the university are expected to do some writing as it is the medium they use to do assignments in the different subject areas and also to write essay examination. In addition to this, it is the determinant of students' academic success since it determines to what extent a student masters the language because writing is considered as a highly productive skill involving different areas of the language. Some informants also found that this skill is a means of communication needed in the era of globalization and added that it is also an academic requirement for students willing to go for further studies either in the country or abroad. The table below illustrates the informants' answers.

Reasons	Percentage
It is needed in most of the modules as essay writing is usually used in exams	100%
It determines to what extent a student masters the language	100%
It is the determinant of a students' academic success	100%
It is an academic requirement necessary for further studies	100%
It is a means of communication needed in the era of globalization	80%

 Table 4.13: Importance of Writing in EFL Instruction

The need of the writing skill in different areas shows how important it is in the educational stream of a language student. Question 2 investigated the informant' opinions about whether the way this skill is taught in our department goes along with the rapid changes of the globalized world. Half of the informants answered using 'partly', but the rest (50%) answered negatively believing that rapid changes of the globalized world require changes in the educational programmes including that of writing, seeking improvement.

# 4.3.3.3 Item 3: First Year Students' Level in Writing

When asked about the students' level in writing, all the informants strongly confirmed that the students' level in writing in general is low and that an important number of students may be considered as beginners, unable to write a simple sentence free of errors. They added saying that the large majority of the students have difficulties in expressing themselves using an acceptable language. This means that their writing productions suffer at all levels, including grammar, syntax, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation in addition to sentences difficult to understand. According to them the situation is really worse than before and a revolution in teaching English either in previous education or at the university level is necessary in order to record improvement. When asked to compare the level of first year students of this year with previous ones, teachers gave the following answers:

Level	Percentage
better	00%
The same	60%
worse	40%
Don't know	00%

Table 4.14: Teachers' Opinion about Students' level in Writing

As shown in the table above 60% of the informant said that the level of the students they are teaching now, or this year is the same as those taught previously. Others and precisely 40% found that the students' level is worse. None of them chose the two other answers (better, don't know) because on the one hand they did not notice any kind of improvement in the level of the present students and on the other one all of them are aware of the situation because they have been teaching writing for three to nine years.

The information collected from writing teachers came to confirm that the CBA implemented in middle and secondary school did not bring on any kind of improvement in the writing skill.

# 4.3.3.4 Item 4: Reasons for Students' Weaknesses and Strengths

The informants helped us with their opinions concerning the reasons of students' weaknesses; none of them mentioned any strength because as stated before students' writings did not reach an adequate level of proficiency. Teachers provided us with various reasons concerning this issue (see table 4.15, below). In their opinion, teaching writing should be given more importance at all levels as it is the main skill required in any field, therefore, teachers and researchers should work together in order to find where the problem lie and try to find appropriate remedies. As a researcher, we came to the conclusion that in spite of the innovation or let us say the kind of revolution in teaching English in the Algerian school, this situation analysis revealed a number of deficiencies mainly in writing as it is the focus of this study. This means that no improvement has been attained after seven years of studying English using the CBA as an alternative for the communicative approach. This does not mean that the wrong choice was made, but various factors may be responsible of this failure among them the reasons stated by the informants and displayed on the table below:

Reasons	Percentage
Lack of in-service training	80%
Lack of training of inspectors	40%
Large classes	100%
Lack of audio-visual aids	80%
Lack of reading	90%
Lack of material/ resources	60%
Absence of communication with the external world in	50%
the field of teaching	
Lack of research in the field of teaching	70%
Course density	85%

 Table 4.15: Reasons of Students' Weaknesses

As seen in table 4.15, the informants stated a number of reasons supposed to be responsible for students' weaknesses in writing in English. 80% of them found that the lack of in service training is one of the factors hindering the improvement of English because the teachers are not aware of the different learning theories as well as the theoretical background of the previous approaches used in teaching English and ultimately those of the CBA, normally implemented seeking positive change. Hence, if the teachers who are supposed to bring on that change have not been trained and well informed about the newly adopted approach, the result of such an innovation will not be worth mentioning.

100% of the informants also complained about crowded classes, they added saying that it is not an easy thing to create an atmosphere in which students can work in a collaborative way helping them to be confident and later on autonomous. This requires from the teacher too much effort to facilitate learning in such crowded classes and provide all the students with feedback.

Another point also stressed is that normally before implementing any new approach, we should set the ground for it, this means that in addition to the teachers' training in order to implement that approach, other things such as the provision of materials as well as resources for both teachers and students should accompany the implementation of any kind of innovation; otherwise the success will be relative.

Half of the informants reported that the lack of communication with the external world in the field of teaching makes the development in this field slow. Teachers mainly those of middle and secondary school do not have the opportunity to exchange their experiences with other teachers from other countries. They believe that this would certainly promote teaching and shed light on areas concerning teaching English for our teachers.

In addition to the lack of communication with the external world, another important factor is the lack of research in the field of teaching in Algeria. We agree with the informants that it is through research that we can find solutions to numerous teaching issues. So, researchers in the field of teaching English as well as writing teachers should work closely together in order to reach improvement. Someone may say that the issue of writing does not concern only our students, but also those of so many countries. As a researcher, we will show in the next chapter that the situation of our students is worse, so this requires the contribution of both teachers and researchers to find the appropriate remedy.

Nearly all the informants (90%) found that lack of reading on the part of students hinders their writing development. They stressed the strong relation of reading and writing because it is through reading that learners acquire necessary language constructs such as grammatical structures and discourse rules of writing and facilitates the process of language acquisition as stated in the second chapter, but unfortunately very few students are interested in reading, therefore, reading activities should be incorporated in the writing process and it is the teachers' responsibility to motivate learners to read more and more.

Finally, the majority of the informants (85%) suggested to increase the density of writing courses because two sessions of written expression are not enough at the university level. At least an additional session will give the students the opportunity to revise their pieces of writing and to receive necessary feed back from either the teacher or their peers.

As a researcher aware of the situation in both middle and secondary schools, we stress the need that writing courses should be devised for students of these levels in order to train them right at the beginning as Emig (1988) argues that "writing is the best tool for learning as it involves the whole brain in all the processes: doing, depicting, and symbolizing (wording). Such whole brain should be started early in life, certainly prior to entering a college education".

# 4.3.3.5 Teachers' Opinions about the Effects of Competency-Based Approach

When asked about their opinions about whether the competency-based approach had brought positive effects in writing in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity, all the informants answered negatively relying on the assessment of their students' level in this skill, but some of them added that they were not sure about whether this approach had been applied adequately and the deficiencies may be caused by other reasons as the ones stated before. Their answers are displayed in table 4.16.

Reasons	percentage
Not an adequate approach	00%
Not applied appropriately by secondary school teachers	40%
Secondary school teachers are not well informed about the	80%
competency-based approach	
They are just using new course books, but not really applying	70%
the competency- based approach	

 Table 4.16: Teachers' Opinions about the Competency-Based Approach

As shown in table 4.16, the informants' answers vary based on the assumptions that secondary school teachers did not apply the CBA appropriately because they were not well informed about such an approach and that the only change in middle school and secondary education was confined to the change of course books and variety of suggested activities. All of this needs to be used in research trying to investigate different issues concerning middle and secondary education.

# 4.3.3.6 Item 5: Approaches Used in Teaching Writing

Before implementing the Process-Genre Approach, believing that it is the most appropriate for the CBA, being socio-constructivist, we asked the informants about the approaches used in teaching writing at the university level for two main reasons: first in order to know about the approaches used by these colleagues and second to assure that none of them is using the Process-Genre Approach which is going to be applied as a treatment in this study seeking improvement. The informants' answers are displayed in table 4.17:

Approach	Percentage
Product Approach	2%
Process Approach	00%
Product Process Approach	00%
Genre Approach	00%
Process-Genre Approach	01%
Product Process-Genre Approach	00%
Not using any approach	40%
Don' really know	58%

 Table 4.17: Approaches Used in Teaching Writing

The answers given by the informants revealed that only 03% of the teachers are aware of the approach used by them in teaching writing which is the product approach and one is using the Process-Genre Approach in her research. According to the large majority of teachers, they are not using a certain kind of approach or they do not really know (40% and 58% respectively). When asked about whether a teacher might be using a certain approach without being aware of it, some of them answered positively. Knowing that writing teachers might know about the theoretical side of the available approaches in the field of writing, we asked them about the way they were used to teach writing in order to deduce if they were using one of the approaches stated above. The following questions helped us to find out about the way writing is being taught at the level of our university.

# 4.3.3. 7 Techniques Used in Teaching Writing

The analysis of the informants' answers (table 4.18) leads us as a researcher to confirm that the approach used by most of the teachers is the product approach without being aware of it because most of them rely on the final product taking into consideration how much the piece of writing is accurate. In addition to this, we realized that one of the teachers is using the Process Approach, but not all its principles, and also using portfolios as a means of assessment, therefore, we came to the conclusion that the process genre approach which is intended to be experimented in this research has not been used previously by the teachers in our department, except the one mentioned above.

Use group work	2%
Don't ask students to write directly	2%
Use brainstorming	2%
Ask students to write a first draft	1%
Give them remarks/feedback	2%
Use peer revision	1%
Use self revision	1%
Students edit the written piece	1%
Use portfolios	1%

 Table 4.18: Techniques Used in Teaching Writing

The analysis of the informants' answers leads us as a researcher to confirm that the approach used by most of the teachers is the product approach without being aware of it because most of them rely on the final product taking into consideration how much the piece of writing is accurate. In addition to this, we realized that one of the teachers is using the process approach, but not all its principles, and also using portfolios as a means of assessment, therefore, we came to the conclusion that the process genre approach which is intended to be experimented in this research has not been used previously by the teachers in our department, except the one mentioned above.

# 4.3.3.8 Item 6: Teachers' Opinion about the Implementation of the Competency-Based Approach in Teaching Writing at the University

In this category, we asked the informants about their opinions concerning the implementation of the principles of the competency-based approach in teaching writing. The first question required them to predict if such an approach would bring on improvement in first year students' writing, 80% of the informants believe that this would bring on improvement even if they do not know to what extent because on the one hand teachers in the previous years were not relying on a clear approach in writing, and on the other one it is worth trying to experiment something recent as it has been done in the other countries. According to them, this will accompany the change from the classical system to the LMD system and will motivate writing teachers to look for ways that may help our students increase their writing proficiency. The rest of the

teachers (only 20%) answered with 'I don't know', this category of teachers represent some of those who have been teaching just for three years, but in spite of this they expressed their will to inquire about such an approach which may be used by them in future.

The second question investigates whether the continuity of applying such an approach at the university level will have positive effects on students' writing in terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity, 80% of the informants also found that this would have positive effects, better than in previous education if the university teachers work in collaboration, trying to reach improvement through research and using appropriate resources gaining benefit from researchers from other countries who investigated in this field. However, the informants could not state in which element improvement is going to be recorded.

### 4.3.3.9 Item 7: Teachers' Difficulties in Teaching Writing

In this item the informants were asked about their difficulties in teaching writing. Their answers correlate to a great extent with the reasons of students' weaknesses in the previous section. All of them complained about the large number of students in the same class, this hinders the use of collaborative learning and also makes it difficult to provide all the learners with helpful feedback. Another thing related to this is the lack of time during the writing session which does not allow teachers to assess their learners' productions, showing them their progress and thus helping them to develop their writing proficiency. This leads us to say that three hours per week is too low to contribute to the development of learners' writing proficiency.

Another difficulty mentioned by the most experienced teacher is mother tongue interference which makes most of the students' writings less proficient as they contain a lot of errors due to interlingual as well as intralingual interference, on the one hand students tend to refer to literal translation whenever they find themselves unable to express themselves in the target language and on the other one they make errors because of lack of practice of linguistic structures. Other informants complain of the absence of coordination between teachers of writing and those of grammar, they think that they should work together because their work is complementary as the latter contribute to the development of the writing skill, so identifying learners' difficulties on the part of teachers of both writing and grammar and working in collaboration would facilitate learning and help students improve their writing proficiency.

### 4.3.3.10 Item 8: Teachers' Suggestions about Writing Instruction

Teachers expressed the need to elaborate a new programme for not only first year students, but also for the three levels, it is why they welcome the fact of experimenting a balanced approach in teaching writing and if proves it successful, it will be a good opportunity to prepare a programme based on this approach.

All of them suggested the increase of the writing courses density in order to allow students to practice writing as much as they can and to be able to help them with necessary feed back from either the teacher or their peers. This will create a collaborative atmosphere enhancing the writing skill. As stated in the previous item teachers complained about the absence of coordination between teachers of writing and those of grammar, therefore, they believe that collaboration and cooperation of all the teachers of these subjects will surely bring on positive results.

They also suggested that vocabulary activities should be introduced in writing courses to enrich students' lexical competence because a big number of students cannot express themselves fluently as they cannot find the right words to do that. In addition to vocabulary exercises, the informants find the connection of reading and writing necessary as they are complementary, so teachers should introduce reading sessions. In their opinions, this will motivate students to read, and as a result their writing proficiency will be enhanced because it is agreed that it is through reading that students acquire knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures and rhetorical features of texts. The informants in general believe that growth in one skill inevitably leads to growth in the other. This will also lead the students to have their own style in writing.

### **4.3.4.** Summary

To sum up, relying on the informants' responses to the questionnaire, we can draw the following conclusions added to those derived from the students' questionnaire:

- Teachers' answers concerning their knowledge of the writing approaches revealed that most of them are not aware of them; therefore, they need to be aware of building an appropriate theory of language in teaching writing. We can support this by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) who emphasize that only teachers who understand theory and make a transition from theory to practice, can make the most appropriate decisions for a successful and meaningful writing course. It is therefore, necessary for teachers to build a theory of writing at first and foremost. As suggested by Grabe and Kaplan (*ibid.*), current theories of writing need to represent a theory of motivation or attitude, some combination of the psycholinguistic processing in which writers engage, and a theory of social context that influences writing at any point.
- The positive thing in all of this is the teachers' positive attitudes toward the necessity of finding a facilitative approach that may help students develop their writing proficiency, believing that it is an urgency which does not accept delay because most of the EFL teachers in Algeria find writing a complicated skill to teach, which more or less, affects students' learning outcomes.
- Most of the informants welcome the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach in teaching writing at the university level and find that whereas the application of the CBA failed at middle and secondary schools, it could be a success at university level, trying to prove that if we understand theory better, we can solve our learners' problems. We can add that language teachers in a writing course should be motivated to explore the connections between writing and language theories, psycholinguistics, SLA, formal linguistics, social linguistics and applied linguistics (*ibid.*). Language teachers should also consider the connection between a writing course and the other courses.

- The Process-Genre Approach is the most appropriate writing approach to be used in teaching under the CBA as one of the experienced teachers working in writing assessment approved in addition to the literature review used to support this opinion in chapter two.
- The CBA implemented in middle and secondary education as a kind of reform did not attain its goals as intended as writing teachers assert that the students' level this year is not better than that of the previous years. This has clarified such a situation which really needs a treatment. Our intention as a researcher is, therefore, to confirm our hypothesis that students' writing will be enhanced through the use of the CBA. This is also supported by some of the informants who believe that this approach will bring on positive effects on students' writing if it is used adequately.
- Teachers face difficulties in teaching writing mainly with crowded classes in which they find difficulties in assisting all the students. This also hinders the creation of a facilitative atmosphere for teaching such a complex skill. In addition, teaching this skill should not be done in isolation, but the contribution of grammar teachers, for example, will undoubtedly facilitate the writing teachers' work. Moreover, believing that reading and writing are complementary skills, the introduction of reading activities within the writing courses will be beneficial; however, three hours per week allotted to this skill are not sufficient. This calls for additional sessions and the contribution of all the teachers who dispense different skills, in the elaboration of the programme based on a new approach and the incorporation of reading.

The use of such a questionnaire helped us analyze partly the research situation because it provided us with deeper insights about both teachers and students' difficulties and how writing is taught. It revealed that most of the teachers rely on the Product Approach in teaching writing though a number of them, mainly the part time teachers, are not aware of the approach used because of lack of experience and theory concerning this skill. All of them complained about the students' weak level and find that it is becoming worse. This means that the reform did not bring on improvement as it has been assumed at the beginning of this research.

### 4.4 Students' Perceptions of Writing Questionnaire

Before analyzing the data collected, we find it necessary to present again the population, the sample used and also the way this questionnaire has been administered.

# 4.4.1 The Population

First-year students at the department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University represent the population used in this questionnaire. The choice of this population was motivated by the fact that they were the first students who had received an education based on the CBA previously, we mean in both middle and secondary school. Our interest here as a researcher is not in education in general, but on the effects of such an approach in learning English and more precisely on these learners' writing proficiency in order to investigate whether this newly implemented approach has positive impact on teaching English as a foreign language on these students if compared to the previous ones, and whether it is going to be effective at the university level.

# 4.4.2 The Sample

As it is impossible to deal with the whole population, 180 students 165 girls and only 15 boys, not highly represented in the department, or 16.66% of the total number of samples, participated in this questionnaire. These informants have been selected randomly among the ten existing groups to be used in this survey. Their ages range between 18 and 21, only one of them is 17 years old. These students are from the same area and none of them has ever gone to an English speaking country.

# 4.4.3 Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given in English and run by the researcher and two writing teachers whose role was to assist students just after the teaching course. The participants were prompted to complete the questionnaire within specified time in order minimise the possibilities of not answering and also those of colluded responses. If colluded responses were provided, the elements of control and reliability would be defeated. As a result all questionnaires were promptly returned and only one of them was not answered.
#### 4.4.4 Data Analysis

The questionnaire includes seven categories as presented below:

## 4.4.4 General Information

The 180 students in the questionnaire are aged between eighteen and twenty one, only one of them is seventeen. The majority of these informants are females, they represent 93.34%. This certainly reflects not only the evolution of female status in the academic world, but also their choice for foreign languages and mainly English. These students are from the same area and none of them has ever gone to an English speaking country. In addition to this most of them (95%) have opted for learning English in order to get a job, go for further studies and to be able to communicate with the external world. Their educational background is similar as all of them studied in the middle and secondary cycle for seven years

## 4.4.4.2 Students' Educational Background

As stated before, all the informants' educational background is similar, all of them studied in the middle and secondary school for seven years. Most of them (95%) studied in literary classes. They are the first students concerned by the reform in the Algerian education. According to the new reform, teaching English is conceived in order to develop communication competencies including the linguistic, the cultural and methodological competencies which will allow the learner to face oral and written communication taking into consideration his future needs and those of the society in which he evolves.

#### 4.4.4.3 Writing in the Secondary School

Trevithick (2005:58) reminds us that: "children are not slates which can be wiped clean, but human beings who carry their previous experiences with them. Their behaviour in the present is deeply affected by what has happened in the past". Questions in this section of the questionnaire (a set of 10 questions) investigate on the one hand the way the informants have been trained to develop the writing skill; in other words, the approaches and methods used to teach the writing skill in the secondary school. On the other hand, they try to find out whether the principles of the CBA have been applied in teaching this skill.

Question 1 focuses on the regularity of writing in the secondary school. The informants' answers reveal that 50% of them sometimes wrote paragraphs, generally after each unit, 10% rarely dealt with the writing skill and the rest were never given a paragraph to write. This means that in general they did not really have the opportunity to develop their writing competencies in an adequate way. The thing we need to prove in order to proceed to a kind of instruction in order to help students develop this competency.

The informants were also asked whether the topics they were asked to write about were interesting (question 2), 20% answered with 'yes', but most of them complained about the difficulty of the instructions and also the difficulty of the terms used. We also checked this in 'Prospects', third year course book, to confirm the students' complaints and found that such an activity (p.58) is an ambiguous one for such a level. Its instruction is not clearly set and the diagram used to illustrate it is ambiguous. An activity of this kind should have been adapted to the level of the students or reformulated, or completely changed with another one because the aim of teaching a foreign language or the writing skill is not to be the slave of the book, but the real aim is to make students develop a certain skill by selecting appropriate activities.

A list of questions (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10) was also asked in order to check whether teachers in the secondary school use the process-genre approach in their teaching. If we refer again to 'Prospects', we find that the process genre approach is suggested in the writing activities implicitly, but the answers provided by the informants reveal that teachers do not give any importance to this skill and no method is really used. This can be confirmed by the following.

In question 3, when asked whether the informants were exposed to different types of writing (descriptive, narrative, expository and persuasive), 30% among the totality affirmed that they know about description and narration, but not exposition and persuasion. If we refer again to the secondary school course books, we find these types mentioned in the suggested activities. This means that in these books, texts were selected according to various themes requiring different genres, and at the end of each unit a writing activity is given dealing with the same type, requiring specific grammatical structures and lexis. So, in this phase, we mean the end of the unit, students are supposed to be able to produce a piece of writing according to the genre dealt with in the whole unit. It is generally given as a kind of project to prepare, but in fact it is not the case.

Question 4 also informs us that during the writing task the big majority of the informants, or 70% answered saying that they used to write individually; just 10% had the opportunity to work in groups. This shows that cooperative and collaborative learning were not really practised in previous learning. This also reflects the continuous use of traditional methods instead of relying on pair and group work advocated by contemporary approaches including the competency-based approach. In addition to this the writing tasks were not always carried in the classroom where students could receive feedback from their teacher or their peers, but they were sometimes given as homework just like any other activity (question 5).

Our assumptions can only be confirmed if our informants state the way they have been trained to write in the classroom; questions 8 and 9 revealed that most of them were not trained to generate ideas or prepare a planning before they started writing. Besides they were asked to write just one draft, this leads us to say that teachers rely on one product, they do not follow the different phases used in the process approach in order to make the students know that we cannot produce a good draft from the first time, but it is through revising it more than once, or giving it to their peers or their teacher in order to receive feedback. In this way they can improve their piece of writing.

Another relevant question, in such a situation, is to ask whether the informants' paragraphs were scored just after the first draft, all of them answered with 'yes'. Most of them also answered negatively when asked whether they have used a folder in their writing classes. All of these data confirm that teaching writing in previous education remained as it was years ago, we mean that no change was undertaken to improve students' writing skill and that the emphasis remained on a single product.

When asked about the kind of errors they make in writing (question 12), most of the informants are aware mainly about the big number of errors they make in grammar and in the choice of appropriate words (lexis). They also added that they tend to use simple sentences because they are unable to use complex ones, but in spite of this as they generally translate from Arabic, they produce ambiguous sentences often difficult to understand. They also use a lot of repetitions and conjunctions instead of subordinate clauses. In addition to this the interference of the mother tongue is the cause of other kinds of errors in different areas of grammar.

The informants were also asked whether they were able to write the paragraph given in the baccalaureate exam (question 15). 70% answered negatively, 20% partly and only 10% answered positively. This exam was supposed to test students writing competency after seven years of studying English, however, the result was generally negative. Most of the informants said that they relied mainly on the marks they got from answering the reading comprehension questions, grammar (in which students had only to transform sentences from active to passive or from direct to indirect speech) and vocabulary (in which they had to give synonyms or opposites to given words, or even to extract them from the given text). So, most of them neglect the writing activity or just produce a poor piece of writing as reflected in the pre-test in chapter six.

## 4.4.4 Students' Perceptions of Writing

The informants' perceptions of writing have also to be investigated in this questionnaire. Question 1 focuses on the informants' view concerning writing, as shown in the table below.

Perceptions	Percentage
A gift	2%
A skill that can be developed through	78%
practice	
A gift that can be developed through	20%
practice	

Table 4.19: Students' Perceptions of Writing

Most of the informants consider writing as a skill that could be developed through practice and not a gift. So, they are much aware that it is through practice that they can develop this skill. Some of them even added at the back of the questionnaire that they need help to improve this skill. Most of them replied saying that writing is important as a language skill (question 2) essential in the era of globalization because it is needed in any field, either academic or in order to communicate.

## 4.4.4.5 Students' Opinions about their Level in Writing

When asked to rate their level in writing (question 3), the informants gave the following answers (see the table below).

Level	Percentage
Highly	00%
proficient	
proficient	02%
adequate	30%
weak	68%

Table 4.20: students' Opinion about their Level in Writing

The way the informants rated their level in the writing skill correlates to a great extent with the data they have provided us with in the previous sections in this questionnaire. As most of them, or let us say all of them have not been trained adequately to write previously, it is evident that a large number of students are not satisfied of their level in writing and find it rather poor.

When asked to state the reasons why these informants found their level not acceptable, or weak (question 4), they gave different answers. Some of them complain about the time allotted to English in the secondary school. They do not find it sufficient to develop such a complex skill as writing. Others find the activities they did previously not so interesting and the teacher not varying them and only sticking to the course book and that most of the time, those activities were difficult. They also added that they always find it difficult to express themselves, to organize their ideas and to choose the correct words. This shows that these participants were not motivated enough previously, we mean in the secondary school, in order to make any kind of effort to develop their writing competency. Besides they have not been trained right at the beginning to write through brainstorming, planning, writing, revising, and at the end polishing their draft. They also do not possess a rich vocabulary that allows them to express themselves clearly.

This also shows that the problem does not lie just in the way these students have been trained to write, but in the lack of reading on their parts because we know that reading and writing are complementary skills in that they are processes in which students interact with texts meaningfully because growth in one skill inevitably leads to growth in the other; that is students become better readers by strengthening their writing skill and vice versa. We can add that it is through reading that students acquire knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures or rhetoric features of texts. Therefore, what students read – particularly specific genres to which they are exposed are important elements.

## 4.4.6 Students' Difficulties in Writing

All what we have said above is confirmed in question 6 in which the informants stated their difficulties in writing. Most of the students (95%) find themselves unable to write correctly, in their opinion they make a lot of mistakes in grammar because they do not master the grammatical rules. The same informants repeated 'difficulties in vocabulary' meaning that they cannot find the appropriate words to express themselves because their linguistic background is not rich. As we said before this is the result of a number of factors including the lack of reading and also the lack of practice of such a complex skill. Some of them said that they make a lot of spelling mistakes and cannot build correct sentences. This reveals that the informants are really conscious of their difficulties in writing.

All the informants expressed their will to improve their level in writing except two of them who are not really interested in learning English (question 6). Knowing that the students we are going to use in our experiment are aware of their situation concerning writing and that they are motivated enough, encourages us as a researcher seeking to prove that the implementation of the process genre approach in teaching writing will help students develop this important skill in terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity.

#### 4.4.4.7 Students' Suggestions

The ultimate question asked the informants to add any comments or suggestions they would find appropriate to solve their problems in writing and to help them develop this skill. Most of them suggested additional sessions because they find that three hours per week in the first year are not sufficient to reach a noticeable improvement. In addition to this the vast majority asked for variety in activities used in writing and also an increase in the amount of work either in the class or as homework to oblige the students to work more. Other informants even suggested a change in the methodology used by teachers in the writing courses. This really reveals that they are conscious learners, willing to work and that they wait for their teachers to find a way to reach improvement. Some suggested that teachers should help them correct their mistakes during the writing process because their writing pieces are usually left uncorrected. This can be done through conferencing, peer revision and teacher revision as presented in chapter three. This will provide students with feedback about their writing and will give them the opportunity to improve their drafts by the use of the process approach.

Through the different phases used in this approach, students will learn that no one can produce a perfect piece of writing from the first time, but writing involves a whole process in which students receive feedback from their peers and teacher and try to make better their writing proceeding in the same way as experienced writers do. As the informants also complained about their poor vocabulary knowledge, they proposed that additional vocabulary exercises should be selected within the writing courses and as stated in the third chapter the connection of reading and writing is beneficial as these two skills are complementary and the former does not only enable learners to enrich their vocabulary, but also helps them develop their own styles.

A number of informants also found themselves unable to write in a precise and concise way as it is required in English, but as they said they wrote too much making a lot of errors, therefore, they need the teacher's assistance. However, we have to insist on the phase of brainstorming and planning very useful in the writing process because in this initial phase students provide the ideas to be used in their writing and prepare a plan which helps them to organize them through a selection of the most important ones. As teachers, we know about the mother tongue interference in learning language, including writing in which the effect is very clear.

#### 4.4.5 Summary

We can summarize the results of this section in a number of assumptions about of first year students:

- According to the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data, the wide majority of the informants have difficulties in writing an adequate paragraph, despite the seven years spent in studying English at middle and secondary school under new conditions dictated by the reform that adopted the Competency-Based Approach.

- The results show that the learners' difficulties remain the same as the previous ones as most of them are unable to produce a short paragraph free of grammatical errors and in which the flow of ideas is logical and the choice of words appropriate. This leads us to say that teaching English at middle and secondary school and more precisely teaching writing has not achieved its goals because of the inefficient methodology used in teaching this skill and insufficient practice in this area. In addition to the informants' responses which provided us with useful data, it is very clear from answering the questionnaire that most of them are unable to make simple and correct sentences. So, the present situation reinforces what first year students have already learnt and how. We should add that other factors contribute to the present situation, but they do not represent the concern of this research study.

#### Conclusion

The data gathered from the two questionnaires, the one administered to writing teachers and the other one to first-year students, reveal that students' writing proficiency has not been developed in spite of the adoption of the CBA in previous education. These findings show that students' difficulties are still the same as before and that they come to the university with hopes relying on their modest or weak abilities; however, even the writing courses at this level do not prove efficient enough. Hence, our commitment in this research is to implement an integrated approach fitting the CBA and the LMD and which may be helpful not only for university students the university but also for general education pupils.

# **Chapter Five**

# **Experiment Implementation**

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# Chapter Five Experiment Implementation

# Introduction

This chapter deals with the most important part of this research work which is the implementation of an experiment in writing to one experimental group of first-year students in the Department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University. The experiment is conducted in order to test the efficiency of the CBA, and more precisely the Process-Genre Approach seen as the most appropriate to writing. It provides the methodology and procedures used, the description of the informants' background, sets the objectives of the whole implementation together with guidelines of the content. It explains the principles applied in the implementation of the CBA through the Process-Genre Approach to writing. It also explains the kind of measures to be used in the initial and final test to support or a reject the hypotheses formulated in this research.

#### **5.1 Research Methodology and Procedures**

As the methodology of this research consisted of implementing an experiment, both the researcher, the participants and the teacher who implemented it had been assigned different roles. The researcher's role was that of a course designer, a supervisor, a reminder and a tutor. Her task consisted of planning lessons, supervising them and taking part in the writing process by providing feedback to students before reaching the final piece of writing. As stated in the second chapter, both peer and teacher feedback was used through conferencing which allowed the students to receive automatic feedback. This was done for the purpose of creating a collaborative, a cooperative and a relaxing atmosphere according to the principles of socioconstructivism on which both the CBA and the Process-Genre Approach are based. The students were trained to write paragraphs following different phases used in the Process-Genre Approach (planning, deconstruction, joint construction and individual writing) which enabled them not only to know about the conventions of each genre, but to acquire useful writing strategies (brainstorming, writing, revising and editing) as well. Besides they were asked to classify their drafts in portfolios useful to assess their progress. The role of the writing teacher who accepted to conduct the experiment consisted of putting into practice the lessons prepared by the researcher assisted by her and from time to time contributing to the selection of topics and models to be used in the lessons.

#### 5.2 The Sample

The informants used in this experiment consist of a control group (N=40) and an experimental group (N=40) at the Department of Foreign Languages, section of English at Biskra University. Their ages range between 17 and 21. When the data of this study had been collected, these students have been learning English as a foreign language for seven years. Formally, they began to study English at the middle school for four years and for three years at the secondary school. The most important fact is that these participants have been chosen because they have studied according to the CBA. In other words, they are the first students concerned by the educational reform undergone in Algeria in 2002 at the level of the middle school by the implementation of the CBA in teaching, including English instruction. So, these students were supposed to have received an instruction different from that of the previous ones received by the university. All of them have been taught English using the same approach, the same books and under the same circumstances. None of them went to an English speaking country. Outside the classroom, they had little opportunity to use English either in written or oral forms.

#### 5.3 Students' Educational Background

According to the educational goal set by the Algerian government, teaching English must imperatively be conceived to equip learners with necessary assets to succeed in tomorrow world (presidential discourse during the installation of (CNRSE, cited in the preamble). This helps our learners integrate harmoniously in society and enhances their development in all its dimensions. Besides, it advocates the national values, the openness on the world, the respect of oneself and the others as well as tolerance. Intervening as a foreign language and covering seven years (four in the middle cycle and three in the secondary cycle), teaching English is conceived in order to develop communication competencies including the linguistic and methodological competencies which allow the learner to face oral and written communication taking into consideration his future needs and those of the society in which he/she evolves. Thus, teaching English allows all the learners to communicate, to exchange, to immerse themselves in the culture promoted by this language and to use it as a cultural, scientific and technical tool.

The programmes of teaching English of both middle and secondary education are articulated around four principal objectives which will consolidate the skills acquired through listening, speaking, reading and writing:

## 1. Linguistic Objectives

- They provide the learner with necessary tools so that he can go for further studies (BA in English/ interpreting).
- Favour the development of basic skills to understand and communicate.

## 2. Methodological Objectives

- Foster in the learner autonomous learning strategies to allow him to deepen and widen his knowledge.
- Reinforce in the learner mental and intellectual aptitudes as analysis, synthesis and evaluation through pertinent activities

## 3. Cultural Objetcives

- Encourage the learner to explore different cultural aspects of other linguistic communities to understand and apprehend his own culture.
- Favour positive attitudes towards the others

## 4. Socio-professional objectives

• To make the learner benefit from different documents in English (literacy, scientific and economic and cultural productions) which he may encounter and consult in his professional life or at the university (*in Document d'Accompagnement du Programme de la 2émeAannée Secondaire*, 2002:113).

All the books designed for the implementation of the national curriculum for English issued by the Ministry of Education in December 2002 and 2005 take into account the social and educational background of our learners, as well as the cultural values of Algeria. They are devised in such a way that they become a hand and flexible pedagogic media for use. The same principles of the CBA are found in all of them and the three competencies described in the National Curriculum have been developed at all stages through various tasks and activities (interact orally in English, interpret oral and written messages, produce oral and written messages). This means that new first year university students (in the academic year 2010/2011) have received an adequate instruction and are thus supposed to be able to produce an acceptable piece of writing using different genres already dealt with in previous education. The development of the written competence in previous education will be explained as in table 5.21.

#### **5.3.1 Writing Competence in the Middle Cycle**

Three competencies are articulated in the curriculum: teaching oral interaction, teaching reading skills and teaching writing skills. The three competencies are at the same time complementary and interdependent. They are based on the oral competency which is the key of the training programme. However, the reading and writing competencies are also as important as the former, but at the middle cycle, the passage from oral to written is done progressively through significant situations. The learner is driven progressively to discover the strategies related to the writing process. He/she develops spelling and syntactic knowledge and accedes to writing strategies based on suggested models. Thus emphasis is on oral expression and shifts gradually to the written one according to the linguistic knowledge acquired by the learner. This is clear in the fourth year in which writing is primordial in the process of learning because the pupils have attained a degree of competence allowing them to:

- produce written messages in terms of length and complexity sufficient to express their ideas and opinions, describe, narrate, etc.,
- use correctly punctuation, capital letters, paragraphs,
- use a correct language, free of errors, respecting coherence and cohesion,
- produce a coherent message;
- take notes in reading,
- organize their ideas according to a plan, chronology and logic.
- (in Document d'accompagnement du Programme de 4<sup>ème</sup> Année Moyenne, 2005:77)

In order to lead the learner to a sufficient degree of competence to be able to write correctly, it is necessary to respect the following steps:

- Brainstorming to suggest a discussion theme either in groups or all together, during which many techniques can be used such as clustering.

- the pupil uses the key words included in the ideas to write notes
- he /she writes the sentences using the note agreed on in the group
- he /she compares his/her sentences within the group and proceeds to a peer-assessment leading self-assessment
- individual work to obtain a correct writing
- concentration on different grammatical forms, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc. (*ibid*.).

This shows that learners are trained to develop their cognitive and writing strategies through the use of the process approach dealing with a chosen genre and at the same time develop a sense of evaluation relying on peer and self-assessment. This makes us confirm that the Process-Genre Approach is suggested implicitly in the teacher's guide provided by the Ministry of Education intended to allow teachers to use new techniques in developing learners' competencies as shown in table 5.21:

<b>Competence Components</b>	manifestations
1. the pupil mobilizes his resources to develop his linguistic training in a production of a text	<ul> <li>uses appropriate strategies</li> <li>uses various means</li> <li>takes into consideration the <ul> <li>Context</li> <li>Intention to communicate</li> <li>Audience</li> <li>theme</li> <li>Differences between the oral code and the written code</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. the pupils conceives writing as a learning and communicative tool	<ul> <li>Makes appeal to his knowledge</li> <li>Uses oral and written or oral expression to: <ul> <li>His needs</li> <li>His interests</li> <li>His motivations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. the pupil adapts his text to communicative situations	<ul> <li>chooses</li> <li>The type</li> <li>The form of the text</li> <li>The expressions</li> <li>Appropriate verbal expressions</li> <li>sentence types that correspond to the Communication purposes</li> </ul>
4. the student structures his text	<ul> <li>Elaborates a plan</li> <li>order his ideas: <ul> <li>Logic</li> <li>Chronology</li> <li>Importance</li> <li>Link</li> <li>Pertinence</li> <li>Coherence</li> </ul> </li> <li>order the elements the text: <ul> <li>Title/ sub-title</li> <li>Paragraph</li> <li>Key sentence</li> <li>illustrations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5. the pupil revises his text	<ul> <li>re-reads his text</li> <li>makes his text read</li> <li>verify spelling, syntax, punctuation</li> <li>avoids redundancy</li> <li>avoids contradicts</li> <li>rewrites his text</li> </ul>
6. the student evaluate his work	<ul> <li>rewrites his text</li> <li>recognizes useful strategies</li> <li>improve certain strategies</li> <li>verifies coherence</li> <li>evaluates his work with his peers</li> <li>compares his production with previous ones</li> </ul>

 Table 5.21: Manifestations of the Competence ((in Document d'Accompagnement du Programme de 3<sup>ème</sup> Année Moyenne, 2005: 46)

#### **5.3.2** Writing in the Secondary Cycle

Teaching English in secondary education is organized around the same competencies as in previous education. If we examine, for instance, the three course books used in the three levels, we notice that tasks are organized in such a way to encourage students to use more complex utterances more fluently and more accurately. The emphasis is on oral expression, vocabulary building, grammatical structures, reading and writing skills. All the books used in this cycle, including '*New Prospects*', the book used in the third year progressively develops in students three competencies of interaction, interpretation and production that cover all areas of language (syntactic, morphology, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling). In writing, students have to express their opinions, give reasons and present arguments in real-life tasks, such as writing reports, brief articles, formal and formal letters and the ultimate focus is learning – doing outcome, namely the project which shows students' competencies such as the command of language and strategies acquired throughout the units- using different genres necessary in real-life situations.

After having examined the syllabuses of the seven years, we conclude that writing has been given importance under the CBA since it is required today to be used as one of the most important communicative tools. Therefore, how the syllabuses have been applied is another question to be raised regarding the qualitative results obtained in the situation analysis (chapter four) which revealed deficiencies concerning students' proficiency. We assume that if the principles of such an approach as the CBA have been applied appropriately, they should have undoubtedly led the Algerian learners, after seven years spent in studying English and doing a variety of tasks, to a better level allowing them to interact orally and in a written form; thus, producing not only informal messages but also formal ones to be used in academic situations. This is what we are going to prove in conducting this experiment which tries to show the effectiveness of that approach in teaching writing to first year university students who have just come from the secondary school.

#### **5.4 Research Design**

The informants were selected based on groups or classes in the department of Foreign Languages. The way of selecting the sample of this study refers to the naturally occurring group design or quasi-experimental design. This design requires a pre-test and a post-test. Both tests were given to the control and experimental group students before and after the treatment. During the treatment, the Process-Genre Approach was implemented in order to examine the effects of this manipulation on the dependent variable (writing) and more precisely on fluency, accuracy and complexity.

As a quasi-experimental experience, the intent of this study was to examine the effectiveness of using the Process-Genre Approach. Consistent with the process view of writing and the development of writing ability forwarded by the genre pedagogy by incorporating explicit instruction, it was expected to help students approximate the control of writing paragraphs of different genres more quickly and effectively. Students with a relatively well-developed knowledge of the composing process and textual features of different genres in written discourse should be able to perform different writing tasks. This is undoubtedly what is advocated by the Competency-Based Approach (learning by doing) and socio-constructivism according to which learners construct their own knowledge in a social context through cooperation and negotiation.

#### **5.3 Objectives of the Experiment**

As stated in the introduction, the fact that the writing problems exist even after seven years of English instruction in middle and secondary education under a new implemented approach, the CBA, is definitively a cause of concern because writing tends to be a neglected area in English language teaching in secondary schools in Algeria. It is why we receive students at the university considered as poor writers, contrary to the educational reform objectives. The general goal of this research was to prove, on the one hand that if the principles of the CBA had been applied in teaching writing, students' weaknesses in this skill would not have been so serious, and on the other hand to provide insights into whether an integrated approach to writing instruction instead of the product based approach used by university teachers in Algeria would help in developing students' writing proficiency. This would also assure a kind of continuity to secondary education and may fit the new system adopted in higher education because any change requires reflection on a new teaching methodology to record effective results.

### **5.6 Experimental Procedures**

The experiment was carried out into three phases:

## 5.6.1 The Pre-test

First a pre-test was administered to two intact groups of 40 students each. It consisted of one of the topics given in the 2010 Baccalaureate exam which asked them to write an argumentative paragraph in which they provide their opinion about the negative effects of advertising on individuals and society and to present arguments. This activity was chosen on purpose as it was supposed to assess students' writing competency after seven years studying English. Thus, it could help us as a researcher to find out if the informants who studied under the CBA developed an adequate writing competency. The time allotted to write the composition was one hour during a written expression course. The data collected from this initial test would confirm our assumptions about the students' writing competency before the experiment and would also be used to compare the informants' performance before and after the treatment seeking development in this skill.

The pre-test was measured in terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity (see the next chapter). The quantitative data collected was used to prove that previous writing instruction was not successful though the CBA had been implemented in teaching English for the last seven years. That did not mean that this approach was not appropriate, but teachers lacked theoretical background concerning this approach and also service training in addition to other factors worth investigating in other studies. This is why we attempted to show in this research that if the principles of the CBA were implemented in writing instruction, Students' writing would develop adequately.

### 5.6.2 The Treatment

The same informants used in the pre-test participated in this experiment. They were exposed to the Process-Genre Approach to writing for a total number of 27 hours (3 hours per week for 9 weeks). For this experimental class, the instructional treatment using an integrated Process-Genre Approach was operationalized. This allowed the students to study the relationship between purpose and form for a particular genre as

they used the recursive process of prewriting, drafting, revision and editing. Using these steps developed students' awareness of different text types and the composing process.

Thus, the written activities given in the treatment phase started with providing a situation in order to get the students involved in the topic to be used in the writing course. Then a model was presented to them and then analyzed together finding how paragraph was organized. Taking a perspective that writing is a communicative act, the emphasis was also to draw students' involvement in collaborative writing at different stages of the writing process. Group discussion to brainstorm the topic would likely generate a variety of ideas from which each individual could benefit and learn from their peers' strengths. Therefore, some form of prewriting activity in which the learners worked together in groups to generate ideas about the given topic were used. This included brainstorming, making a list and clustering. It also builds up students' sense of teamwork when each member makes the highest quality contribution to the successful completion of the task.

Drafting was accomplished individually based on the group's selection of content and logical sequence of arguments with the help of the teacher as a facilitator or consultant. Each group member then worked alone to compose a first draft, concentrating on getting ideas on paper without worrying about spelling, grammar and mechanic. The revision stage included whole class feedback given by the teacher on common problems in the first draft, followed by students' giving comments on a peer's first draft and the final revision. They read their draft to each other in pairs or small groups. Students encouraged each other with constructive comments and questions as they seek better understanding of what they tried to write. Peer feedback activities allowed for peer-writer reader interaction and helped students refine their drafts by diagnosing their own mistakes with the help of a peer and a checklist on organization, content and language use prepared by the teacher. The main concern was first on clarity as the writer looks at the organization and sequencing of ideas, the need of additional information or examples, areas of confusion and words or phrases that could make the writing clearer . Learning through exploration and negotiation of meaning in the revision phase would likely lead to students' improvement in writing and establish a sense of taking responsibility of their own learning. Revisions should be shared until the ideas are clear. Then editing could begin, as the focus moved to spelling, grammar,

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punctuation, transition words etc. After polishing, the pieces of writing, students could be encouraged to read each other's work and comment on final products. Finally the best product could be selected to be used in a wall magazine.

The Process-Genre Approach to writing requires a new form of assessment that could address different aspects of writing rather than the traditional marking. Students' works were assessed in terms of portfolios, including their first drafts, the final pieces of work and their reflections on the process of writing. The final products would be assessed according to how much progress the students had made. The portfolios would be assessed on the basis of students' improvement throughout the course. We used this type of assessment which suited the new approach as it is argued by (Paltridge, 2001: 114) "portfolios provide teachers with a wider view of students' progress by focusing on both the process and product of learning and can be seen as evidence of students' self-development and enable them to demonstrate their potential for future development".

#### 5.6.3 The Post-test

The post-test was another writing assignment of the same genre in which the participants had to write another argumentative paragraph in which they agree or disagree about the fact that many people immigrate to the USA believing that it is better than their native country, supporting their choice with argument. This test was also measured in the same way, in terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity as shown in the sixth chapter.

#### **5.7 Content of the Experiment**

The experiment consisted of applying the Process-genre Approach. For this purpose, writing genres were to be used in addition to making students follow the writing process (mentioned in chapter two) which aimed to provide them with strategies used by expert writers. This would increase their knowledge about the writing procedure and develop their cognitive abilities.

A genre is a style of text of written language where each piece has a purpose and an audience (what is the writing for and who is it written for). The key to the concept of genre is the purpose the piece of writing serves. This approach started with the Systemic Functional School of Linguistics inspired by the work of Mack Halliday during the 1960s and 70s who viewed language as a resource for making meaning. They claim that all extended discourse can be categorised into seven discourse types defined as: recount, narrative, information report, explanation and procedure as shown in (appendix 1).

As a summary, the broad writing genres: narration, description, exposition and persuasion are used to express different communicative purposes, therefore students should be trained to be able to express themselves using the right conventions of each genre. However, because the writing skill is time consuming, we planned to teach only two genres, excluding narration and exposition. Let us review the purpose of each genre though already dealt with in chapter two.

The primary purpose of descriptive writing is to describe a person, a place, an object or an event so that the topic can be clearly seen in the reader's mind. The writer must use vivid details that paint a picture for the reader. This type of writing is generally used as a supporting device for and of the other types of writing.

Exposition is a type of oral or written discourse that is used to explain, describe, give information or inform. In such types of writing, the writer exposes information or ideas, by giving explanations. Examples of this kind of writing includes informative writing in which the writer provides information in a clear and concise manner, explaining the steps procedure of something, reporting new information, or conveying technical information in a simple manner and also business writing which consists of communicating with others in the work place. Another form of expository writing is comparison and contrast where the writer shows similarities and differences between two things or subjects. Using expository writing is useful in our daily life. When we pick up a book, magazine, or a newspaper article the writer uses expository writing to inform us. At school, students are required to submit exams and research papers as a means for their teachers to grade their progress. Finally, at work, people are required to produce business reports to inform their superiors about the occurrences that take place at other levels of the company. In addition to this even in oral speeches and academic presentations, exposition is required.

In persuasive writing, the author attempts to convince or persuade the reader of something, often trying to change his/her mind. This is often found in essays, editorials and requires critical thinking. In other words, the primary purpose of persuasive writing is to give an opinion and try to influence the reader's way of thinking with supporting evidence. Examples of persuasive writing is argumentative writing which has a primary purpose of making a statement that the reader disagrees with and then, supporting it with specific details that will convince the reader of the truth of the statement.

We found it useful to give an overview of writing genres which represent a key concept in the experiment because the teaching lessons consisted of making students write paragraphs according to the conventions of each genre. The experiment included twelve lessons, covered in eighteen sessions, a total number of twenty-seven hours, from March (two weeks spent for the preparation for the experiment) to the second week of May (six weeks spent in the implementation of the experiment). This means that the experiment implementation was carried in the second semester. In this way students had the opportunity to write two paragraphs for each genre. This will be shown later on (in the implementation of the experiment).

#### **5.8 Preparation for the Main Study**

With the collaboration of all the teachers of written expression, some courses including some mechanics of writing, such as punctuation, and the presentation of different types were presented to all the groups not only the one concerned by the experiment using the data show in order to make the students acquainted with the principles of writing, to show them that writing can be done for different purposes, and thus intended to different kinds of audience, requiring more than one writing depending on the conventions of each genre. These courses helped us to gain time to be used for writing.

### **5.9 Experiment Implementation**

The experiment stretched from March 2011 to the second week of May 2011, two sessions or three hours per week, a total of approximately 27 hours in addition to some extra courses, realized before the experiment with the collaboration of all the teachers of written expression, in which mechanics of writing and some types of texts were presented to all the groups not only the one concerned by the experiment. This was done with the purpose of reinforcing students' knowledge about the principles of writing and also gaining time to be used for writing in the classroom because we did not want to rely on writing pieces given as homework to avoid any kind of bias.

Drawing from the findings from the pilot study and the literature review, the aims of the study were to implement the Process-Genre Approach. In addition to this, we stressed collaboration and cooperation as well as interaction between the informants and the teacher during the writing sessions, as group and pair work was used. Proponents of collaborative learning claim that working in small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking. "shared learning gives students an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their learning and thus become critical thinkers" (Totten *et.al.*, 1991). The term 'collaborative' refers to an instructional method in which students work together in small groups toward a common goal. It was used mainly in preparing writing as in the phase of brain storming, generating ideas and preparing a plan before writing. It was also used in assessment during which students interacted in order to help each other improve the first draft through peer revision and the provision of feedback.

We took into consideration affective factors such as fear and tried to find ways of increasing leaner's confidence. Besides, voice and ownership were cultivated during the writing courses. One suggestion was to encourage students to write their first draft freely without concern for accuracy, formality and then go back and correct it trying to make it better. This should also help students overcome anxiety (Hyland, 2002). The role of the researcher was that of a designer, a supervisor and a tutor as the experiment was run by the most experienced written expression teacher who welcomed this research and found it interesting to be applied in future if proved beneficial. The experiment consisted of eighteen lessons, including the following aspects as presented in details in the second chapter:

1. Preparation: The teacher prepares the students by providing a situation

Through which he makes them identify the genre to be used. He may design activities to get them involved in the task and to make them aware of the difference between other genres seen previously.

- **2. Modelling and reinforcing**: The teacher exposes the students to a model to be deconstructed enabling them to identify all its features.
- 3. Planning: The students do tasks designed by the teacher about the same topic.
- 4. Joint construction: The students construct a text with the teacher's help.
- 5. Independent construction: Students write their own paragraph
- 6. Revision: Finally, the students revise their paragraphs

This approach acknowledges that learning can take place in a social situation and reflects a particular purpose, and that learning can happen consciously through imitation and analysis, which facilitates explicit instruction (Badger & White 2000). This approach is successful in allowing students understanding that different texts require different structures and that the introduction of authentic texts enhances students' involvement and brings relevance to the writing process (Yang, 2007).

To become competent writers, students need to acquire discourse knowledge about the different purposes and forms of writing as well as knowledge about the topics. An evidence-based practice for acquiring knowledge about specific types of writing is to provide students with examples or models of specific writing. These examples are analyzed and students are encouraged to emulate the models when they write their own text (Graham & Perin, 2007).

#### 5.9.1 Lesson Plans

### **5.9.1.1** The first Course: Description of People

#### **Lesson Focus:**

- The students will work on writing (including the writer's process of writing multiple drafts, word choice and organization). Students will deconstruct the model presented to them so that it can help them to do write their own paragraph.
- The aspects of language focus will be: adjectives used for describing people, the tenses used mainly the present simple.

**Objective**: By the end of the course, students will be able:

- To write a paragraph describing a person of their choice using the language features required in this genre.

**Competencies:** The competencies planned for the learners to achieve in this course are:

- The ability to write a short paragraph describing people from more than one perspective.

- The ability to plan, use and evaluate the effectiveness of several writing strategies related to each step of the writing process.

## **Required materials and / or resources:**

- Reading passages (three)

- Pens/pencils, paper

**Personal goals:** The aspects of teaching we are trying to improve and the competencies they are related to are:

- The introduction of writing in context, with a focus on communicating meaning
- Breaking down functions, genres and skills into smaller components/ skills/parts in order to present realistic 'chunks' of the skill for learners to notice and process.
- Planning lessons that are interconnected and work together as a series to build toward short term and long term competencies.

Time: (this course will be covered in six hours (four sessions)

**1. Step one: Preparation**: In this step, the teacher introduces a situation and in this case, the situation is 'description of people'. This will activate the students' schemata, or the teacher builds the context by establishing the purpose, an understanding of the social activity.

- The teacher asks the students about the purpose of description.

Students expected answer: paint a picture to the reader about a person, a place or an object.

- The teacher tries to elicit information from the students such as:

What can you use when you describe a person?

Possible answers: name, age, physical appearance (make a list), personality, hobbies

It depends on the characteristics the writer wants to show the reader.

- The teacher elicits a list of adjectives that can be used to describe people.

**2. Step two: Modelling and reinforcing**: in this stage students are provided with the following example and asked to deconstruct it with the help of the teacher as follows:

First, the teacher asks the students about the organization of a paragraph:

a- What are the different parts of a paragraph?

Students provide answers:

- -Topic sentence: Students identify the topic sentence
- Body (supporting details): students list the supporting sentences

- Conclusion: students identify the conclusion

#### Activity one:

Aim: students will be trained to deconstruct a paragraph Instruction: Now identify the different parts of this model:

David Beckham became a famous soccer player in the late 1990s, and by 2003 was the most recognizable athlete in the world. He was first a popular player in England for Manchester United and then in Spain for Real Madrid. They are both successful and very rich soccer teams. Beckham is a valuable player because he can take dangerous free kicks and pass the ball long distances. Bekham is not only a talented player but also a fantastic leader. He led his country, England, in the 2002 World Cup where they only lost to Brazil. His fans also respect him because he is a very hard worker on the field and on the training ground. Beckham really deserves fame and respect because of his perseverance and non lasting ambition.

Students expected answers:

- 1. Topic sentence: David .....world
- 2. Supporting details: sentence 2 to 6
- 3. Concluding sentence: Beckham.....ambition

The tense used: generally, the present simple is used in description, but other tenses can be used depending on the information provided like in this model, the past simple is used to talk about Beckham's past activities.

Organization of the paragraph: students discuss the way the paragraph is ordered taking into consideration coherence (flow of ideas) and cohesion.

#### Activity two:

Aim: to make students aware of the importance of cohesive markers

Instruction: Underline cohesive markers in this paragraph

The teacher asks them about something perceivable in the choice in terms of lexis.

The possible answer is the use of **adjective**s while describing

The first adjectives: **famous** and **recognizable** have been developed through supportive details

Other adjectives: popular, successful, valuable, dangerous, long, talented, fantastic **Planning**: In this phase, students may be provided with activities related to the topic, in this lesson, we opt for the presentation of another text of the same type to

be studied by students, the teacher gives them ten minutes to read the text and discuss the way it is presented, stating all the characteristics of this text.

Gregory is my beautiful persian cat. He walks with pride and grace, performing a dance of disdain as he slowly lifts and lowers each paw with the delicacy of a ballet dancer. His pride, however, does not extend to his appearance, for he spends most of his time indoors watching T.V and growing fat. He enjoys TV commercials, especially those of Meow Mix and 9 lives. His familiarity with cat food commercials has led him to reject generic brands of cat food in favour of the most expensive brands. Gregory is such a beautiful, but lazy and spoilt cat.

The students discuss in a collaborative way the characteristics of the descriptive text, showing how it is structured and the language used.

**Joint construction**: in this phase the teacher and students construct a paragraph together.

First, they choose a topic, let us say description of their grandfather or another relative. Second, ideas should be used in a word map, or clustering (students brainstorm providing ideas about the chosen person to describe). Together, they write a topic sentence and then chose from the ideas suggested to be used as supportive details. This model should be written on the board. The different phases of the process approach should be followed. This means that the paragraph written should be revised and improved till the teacher with the help of the students reach the final draft which can be used as a model for the next phase (the independent construction). Here is the final paragraph:

My grandfather is such a **wise** and **sympathetic** person that all the neighbours seek his advice whenever they are in trouble. He always provides them with appropriate solutions to their problems. So, he is considered like the great tribe's leader, who is not only contacted by most of the people living in the neighbourhood, but also by the young ones who show great interest in listening to his stories and all the adventures he had in his youth. In addition to this his eternal smile and the kindness with which he receives all the people added to the compassion he shows for them make of him one of the most sympathetic persons I have ever seen. My grandfather is really an exceptional person who really deserves respect and love. Individual construction: Students will be asked to choose a person to describe.

They will be provided with a word map.

After brainstorming, they will be asked to write sentences, and then they will build the paragraph using connectors.

After having written the first draft, they will receive comments or feedback from the teacher or their peers. They will be provided with this checklist to be used in the revision phase.

# Paragraph checklist

Use this checklist as a reminder of everything that you need to have in a paragraph. Check off the items that are true. If any other items are not checked and you need them, correct your paragraph and then complete the checklist.

# Content

1.	What kind	of paragraph	is it? (	check one	)
т.	Windt Kind	or purugruph	10 10. (	check one	/

a- descriptive	
b- expository	
c- persuasive	
d- narrative	

2. Does the paragraph have unity, with no irrelevant sentences?

## **Organization**

1.	Is	there	a topic	sentence	at the	beginning	of the	paragraph?
							,	r

2. What kind of ordering does the paragraph use? (choose one)

a- chronological order	
------------------------	--

b- spatial order	$\square$
o spanar order	

- c- logical order
- 3. What kind of cohesive devices are used? (choose all that apply)

- c- personal pronouns
- d- demonstrative pronouns

# Mechanics

1. Is the paragraph formatted correctly, including indentation and m	argins?
2. Is the punctuation used correctly?	
3. How many coordinating conjunctions are used?	

4. Is the tense (s) used correctly?.....

5. What about spelling?	
6. What about word choice?	

In this phase, the teacher uses conferencing in order to guide students to improve their paragraphs. This will encourage them to correct errors or make modification (revision phase)

Finally, they will be asked to edit their paragraphs

Students will be asked to classify their drafts in a portfolio and to report their remarks on what they have learnt in this writing course in a journal, training them to be aware of their progress.

## 5.9.1.2 The Second course: Description of Places

## Lesson focus:

- The students will work on writing (including the writer's process of writing multiple drafts, word choice and organization). Students will deconstruct the model presented to them in so that it can help them to do write their own paragraph.
- The aspects of language focus will be: adjectives used for describing places, the tenses used mainly the present simple.

**Objective**: By the end of the course, students will be able:

- To write a paragraph describing a place of their choice using the language features required in this genre.

Competencies: The competencies planned for the learners to achieve in this course are:

- The ability to write a short paragraph describing places from more than one perspective.
- The ability to plan, use and evaluate the effectiveness of several writing strategies related to each step of the writing process.

## **Required materials and / or resources:**

- Reading passages (three)
- Pens/pencils, paper

**Personal goals:** the aspects of teaching I am trying to improve and the competencies they are related to are:

- The introduction of writing in context, with a focus on communicating meaning

- Breaking down functions, genres and skills into smaller components/ skills/parts in order to present realistic 'chunks' of the skill for learners to notice and process.
- Planning lessons that are interconnected and work together as a series to build toward short term and long term competencies

Time: 6 hours

**Objective**: describing a place

**Aim**: by the end of the course students will be able to produce a paragraph describing a place.

**Preparation**: The teacher creates a situation by using a picture:

**Task 1**: Describe this picture. Have you been to the beach before? Tell your classmate what it was like.

Students describe the beach to each other providing sentences such as: the beach is a wonderful place/ the sky is blue/ the water is cool/ the weather is warm/ people are sunbathing...

**Modelling and reinforcing:** In this stage students are provided with the following model followed by the tasks below in order to deconstruct the text.

Where is your favourite summer vacation place? The beach is the perfect place for me. The air is hot, but the water is cool, wet and fresh. First, I enjoy swimming and surfing in the ocean. When I am tired, I come out and lie on the beach. The sand is soft and white. The beach is noisy with seagulls and children laughing, but it's a pleasant noise. I even like the beach smells. The air smells salty from the sea and sweet from everybody's suntan lotion. I feel peaceful and relaxed. When I want to relax in summer, I go to the beach

**Task 1: Aim**: to identify the different parts of the paragraph through deconstruction -Which sentence is the topic sentence? 1, 2 or 10

Justify your choice / Sentence two is the topic sentence because it tells the main idea of the paragraph.

What do sentences 3, 4, 6 and 7 do? They support the topic sentence. Supportive sentences develop the paragraph by adding more information.

Topic sentence	Supporting sentences	
	The air is hot, but the water is cool, wet and fresh	
	I enjoy swimming and surfing in the ocean. When I am tired, I	
The beach is	come out and lie on the beach.	
the perfect	The sand is soft and white.	
place for me	The beach is noisy with seagulls and children laughing, but it's	
	a pleasant noise.	
	I even like the beach smells.	
	The air smells salty from the sea and sweet from everybody's	
	suntan lotion.	

 Table 5.22: Providing Supporting Details for the Topic Sentence (lesson one)

Can you provide other supporting details? Students may suggest other supporting details.

**Planning:** In this phase, the teacher provides the students with the following activities related to the same genre.

## Task 2:

Aim: discussion of paragraph characteristics (more practice)

Instruction: discuss the characteristics of these paragraphs

Students will be provided with two descriptive paragraphs, they have to read them and discuss with their classmates all the characteristics of this paragraph (content, organization, mechanics).

The Taj Mahal is one of the world's most beautiful and beloved structures. Many historians have noted that its architectural beauty has never been surpassed. This monument is considered as the crowning jewel of indo-Islamic architecture and also one of the seven wonders of the world. The Taj is built of white marble surrounded by splendid gardens. Its stunning architectural beauty is beyond adequate description, particularly at dawn and sunset. In addition to this, it seems to glow on the light of the full moon. On a foggy morning, the visitors experience the Taj as suspended when viewed from across the Januna River. This beauty inspires numerous artists from all over the world. It is the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage.

Brazilia, the capital of Brazil, is a good example of a planned city. First of all, the government wanted to establish a capital city in the heart of the country and hired Lucio Costa to design the city. The construction happened quickly because workers came from every part of Brazil to build the city. Costa envisioned the city in the shape of a cross, with wide avenues dividing parts of the city. Indeed, from the sky looking down, Brazilia actually looks like an airplane, or a bird with opened wings. Moreover, Brazilia was intended as a place where the different peoples and cultures of Brazil could come together. It was built in less than four years, and it was officially inaugurated on April 21, 1960. Today, Brazilia is a thriving city, where people from around the country have come to establish their own culture. In short, Brazilians are understandably proud of their capital, Brazilia.

Students work together studying the two texts and discussing all their characteristics

Task 3: -

Aim: to make the students aware of the importance of adjectives in description and to increase their vocabulary

Instruction: underline the adjectives used in the previous paragraph (Taj Mahal) and explain the difficult ones.

Then, put the following adjectives that can describe places in the table below. Some of words can be used in more than one place. Use a dictionary to check the meaning of the words you don't know.

Dark, dry, exciting, fragrant, friendly, green, humid, quiet, relaxed, soft, spicy, sweet, warm.

look	sound	smell	feel

 Table 5.23: Classifying Adjectives

Look again at the previous paragraph, circle the adjectives, and then put them into the chart.

The teacher may also elicit some other adjectives from students.

**Joint construction**: in this phase the teacher and students construct a paragraph together.

First, they choose a topic (a place to describe). Second, ideas should be used in a word map, or clustering (students brainstorm providing ideas about the chosen place to describe). Together, they write a topic sentence and then chose from the ideas suggested to be used as supportive details. This model should be written on the board. The different phases of the process approach should be followed. This means that the paragraph written should be revised and improved till the teacher and students reach the final draft which can be used as a model for the next phase (independent construction).

Individual construction: Students will be asked to choose a place to describe.

They will be provided with a word map to classify their ideas.

After brainstorming, they will be asked to write sentences, and then build the paragraph using connectors.

After having written the first draft, they will receive comments or feedback from the teacher or their peers. They will be provided with this checklist

In this phase, the teacher uses conferencing in order to guide students to improve their paragraphs. This will enhance them to correct errors or make modification (revision phase), the teacher uses the steps used in the checklist above

Finally, they will be asked to edit their paragraphs

Students will be asked to classify their drafts in a portfolio and to report their remarks on what they have learnt in this writing course in a journal, training them to be aware of their progress.

## 5.9.1.3 The Third course: Writing a Persuasive Paragraph

## Lesson focus:

- The students will work on writing (including the writer's process of writing multiple drafts, word choice and organization). Students will deconstruct the model presented to them that it can help them to do write their own paragraph.
- The aspects of language focus will be: conjunctions used to express cause and effect: because, because of since, as, due to, consequently, as a result, therefore, thus, for this reason.

**Objective**: By the end of the course, the students will be able to:

- Write an argumentative and more specifically, a cause/ effect paragraph using the language features required in this genre and following the method: effect + cause 1+ cause 2+ cause 3.

**Competencies:** The competencies planned for the learners to achieve in this course are:

- The ability to write a cause/effect paragraph following the method stated above.
- The ability to plan, use and evaluate the effectiveness of several writing strategies related to each step of the writing process.

#### **Required materials and / or resources:**

- Reading passages (three)
- Pens/pencils, paper

**Personal goals:** the aspects of teaching I am trying to improve and the competencies they are related to are:

- The introduction of writing in context, with a focus on communicating meaning
- Breaking down functions, genres and skills into smaller components/ skills/parts in order to present realistic 'chunks' of the skill for learners to notice and process.
- Planning lessons that are interconnected and work together as a series to build toward short term and long term competencies.

**Phase one: Preparation:** In this phase, the teacher provides the students with a situation:

List some problems affecting life on earth.

Students expected answers: pollution, diseases, drugs, earthquake, flood...

The teacher asks the students to talk about the effects of pollution and then about its causes.

In this way, information is elicited from the students making them involved in the topic that will be presented to them in the following phase.

**Phase two: Modelling and reinforcing:** In this phase, students will be provided with the following paragraph to be deconstructed.

Air pollution is perhaps the most devastating form of pollution since it destroys a resource that every life form we know it needs to sustain itself. The effects of this menace, both immediate and far ranging are easy to summarize: unbreathable air. The causes, however, need some more explanation. Every citizen who drives a car that is not properly serviced and that does not have emission control devices is contributing

noxious gases into the atmosphere. Large industries that do not have filtration mechanisms on their smoke stacks are also contributors. Every government which does not pass legislation is also destroying the atmosphere. One may wonder why these three aspects of society are so cavalier about the air we breathe. Well, there is an underlying cause which motivates all three groups: money. Legislation and enforcement of laws, installation and maintenance of filtration systems cost money. The majority of these three groups seem content to save a bit of money now and to sacrifice an invaluable commodity later.

Task 1: Aim: identification and deconstruction of the paragraph above.

- 1. What type of text is it?
- It is a persuasive paragraph/ argumentative/A cause/ effect paragraph
- 2. Identify the topic sentence.

Air pollution is perhaps the most devastating form of pollution since it destroys a resource that every life form as we know it needs to sustain itself.

- 3. Organization of the paragraph
  - Sentence one: Topic sentence
  - Sentence two: effects of pollution
  - Sentences three, four, five: causes of pollution
  - last sentence: conclusion

Students will be asked to use table 5.24 to deconstruct the paragraph

Effects (Topic sentence)	Causes ( Supporting details)		
Air pollution is perhaps the most devastating type of pollution	It destroys a resource that every life form we know it need to sustain itself		
Air pollution is perhaps the most devastating type of pollution	vastating Every citizen who drives a car that is not properly serviced is contributing noxious gases into the atmosphere.		
Air pollution is perhaps the most devastating type of pollution	Large industries that do not have filtration mechanisms on their smoke are also contributors.		
Air pollution is perhaps the most devastating type of pollution	Every government which does not pass, or passes but does not enforce, strict air pollution legislation is also destroying the atmosphere.		
Air pollution is perhaps the most devastating type of pollution	There is an underlying cause which motivates all three groups: money.		
Air pollution is perhaps the most devastating type of pollution	Legislation and enforcement of laws, installation and maintenance of filtration systems cost money		

 Table 5.24: Paragraph Deconstruction (lesson three)

In this way, the students realize how the paragraph is organized:

Method used: effect + cause 1, cause 2, cause 3

**Phase three: Planning:** In this phase, the teacher provides activities related to the type of writing

## Task 1:

Aim: to make students more aware of the characteristics of an argumentative paragraph (cause/ effect)

Instruction: Read this texts and try to discuss together its content and organization.

My decision to become a nurse was based on several well-thought-out reasons. Some of my reasons had to do with personal goals. Others had to do with my view of society and where I want to fit into society. During my last year in high school; I had several long conversations with my parents about what to do after I graduated. Through these talks, I was able to clarify my career. I wanted a job with good pay and good status. These were not my only goals. I also wanted a job that would help people in a practical way, a job that could make people' lives better. Taking these reasons into consideration, I was able to narrow down my choices to two jobs. The first one was teaching. I have always liked children, and I like teaching people to do things. A teacher also makes a decent living and gets a fair amount of respect if he or she does her job well. I would also be able to help people as a teacher. The second choice was nursing. Nursing met all the criteria for a job. In addition, it is a job I could continue to do periodically or part-time if I decided to have children. Finally, I decided on nursing as a career since it offered me a good-paying, respected position with a lot of flexibility.

	Causes		
Effect (topic sentence)	Personal	social	
My decision to become A nurse	A job with good pay and good status Could continue to do periodically or part-time A lot of flexibility	A job that could help people	
teaching	like children like teaching people to do things makes a decent living and gets a fair amount of respect	Be able ot help people	

 Table 5.25: Paragraph Deconstruction (lesson 3)

The teacher asks again the student about the method followed in this paragraph, the expected answer is: Effect, cause 1, cause 2, cause 3

**Task 2**: Aim: Elicit from students some common conjunctions that can be used to express cause and effect and write them on the board:

Cause and effect: because, because of, since, as, due to, consequently, as a result, therefore, thus, for this reason, so...

Task 3: To make students write sentences expressing cause and effect

1) Write cause and effect of each sentence:

a- John is addicted to drugs, so he lost his job.

Cause: .....

Effect:....

b- His father had a heart attack because he used to smoke a lot.

Cause:....

Effect: .....

c- It was pouring rain; therefore, the football match was cancelled.

Cause:..... Effect:....
d- The blizzard hit the city; consequently, all the schools were closed.

Cause:.... Effect:.... f- I ate a lot of ice cream; as a result, I got a tummy ache. Cause: .... Effect:...

2) Now write four sentences of your own expressing cause and effect and underline each of them.

**Joint construction:** In this step, the teacher and students construct a paragraph together following the process of writing. First they choose a topic of the same genre, let us say for example: cities have grown so large in recent decades that now about 50% of the world's population lives in urban areas. Explain the causes of this phenomenon.

First the topic sentence is written on the board, then the teacher and students brainstorm the ideas to be used in the paragraph on a part of the blackboard in this way:

Effect	causes
(topic sentence)	(supporting sentences)
Cities have grown so large that now about 50% of the earth's population lives in urban areas larger.	Factory jobs attracted people
Cities have grown so large that now about 50% of the earth's population lives in urban areas larger	Better schools attracted families to move to the city
Cities have grown so large that now about 50% of the earth's population lives in urban areas larger	Places of leisure, entertainment made Cities appear more interesting

 Table 5.26: Effect/Cause

After that the teacher writes the paragraph on the board with the help of the students following the different stages of the writing process until the production of the final draft which can be structured as follow:

Cities have grown so large that 50% of the Earth's population lives in urban area. There are several reasons for this occurrence. First, the industrialization resulted in the creation of many factory jobs, which tended to be located in cities. These jobs, with their promise of a better material life, attracted people from many rural areas. Second, there were many schools established to educate the children of the new factory workers. The promise of a better education persuaded families to leave farming communities and move to the cities. Finally, as the cities grew, people established places of leisure, entertainment, and culture, such as sports stadiums, theatres and museums. For many people, these facilities made city life appear more interesting than life on the farm, and therefore drew them away from rural communities.

In this way, the students can use this model and the process followed to write an example of their own.

**Individual construction:** After having dealt with more than one model, students will be asked to choose a topic which will be written on the board and given as a final task in which each student has to produce a paragraph. They will be provided with a word map to organize their ideas.

The teacher role is to provide the students with advice whenever they are in need.

When they finish, the teacher will ask them to exchange their draft and provides them with a checklist to present feedback to their peers for the purpose of increasing collaboration within the group and also training the students in reading critically and also making them aware of the importance of the audience and the necessity of revising their drafts more than once.

#### **5.9.1.4** The Fourth Course: Writing an Effect Paragraph (more practice)

#### Lesson focus:

- The students will work on writing (including the writer's process of writing multiple drafts, word choice and organization). Students will deconstruct the model presented to them that it can help them to do write their own paragraph.
- The aspects of language focus will be on: adjectives, adverbs and prepositions used to add arguments such as: in addition, besides, moreover, furthermore...

**Objective**: By the end of the course, the students will be able to:

Write an argumentative and more specifically, a cause/ effect paragraph using the language features required in this genre and following the method: effect 1+ effect 2.

**Competencies:** The competencies planned for the learners to achieve in this course are:

- The ability to write a cause/effect paragraph following the method stated above.
- They ability to use and evaluate the effectiveness of several writing strategies related to each step of the writing process.

# **Required materials and / or resources:**

- Reading passage (one)
- Pens/pencils, paper

**Personal goals:** the aspects of teaching I am trying to improve and the competencies they are related to are:

- The introduction of writing in context, with a focus on communicating meaning
- Breaking down functions, genres and skills into smaller components/ skills/parts in order to present realistic 'chunks' of the skill for learners to notice and process.
- Planning lessons that are interconnected and work together as a series to build toward short term and long term competencies.

**Phase one: Preparation:** In this phase, the teacher provides the students with a situation: smoking.

The teacher asks the students to talk about the effects of smoking.

Students suggested answers: smoking is dangerous, it damages health, it is expensive, causes lung cancer...

In this way, information is elicited from the students making them involved in the topic that will be presented to them in the following phase.

**Phase two: Modelling and reinforcing:** In this phase, students will be provided with the following paragraph to be deconstructed.

Smoking has serious effects. The most obvious effect is the deterioration of a smoker's health. It increases the risk of lung disease, such as lung cancer. It also increases both blood pressure and the risk of heart attacks. Moreover, it increases respiratory problems and reduces the oxygen to the brain. Another effect of this bad habit is that it frequently results in social isolation as the family members and non-smoker friends are reluctant to stay with smokers. The final effect of smoke is that it depletes the pocketbook. Smoking is a very bad habit with many harmful effects.

# Activity 1:

**Aim:** To consolidate students' knowledge about and a persuasive text (argumentative), showing how effects of smoking.

Instruction: deconstruct the text in terms of organization, content and grammatical features

Students work in pairs and then expose their comments to the whole class discussing the general features of the text.

**Phase three: Planning:** In this phase, activities related to the type of writing may be provided.

Task 1: Encouraging group work in brainstorming about a chosen topic.

Instruction: - Chose a topic, then think of its effects together (make a list)

- Select the most important effects
- Write a topic sentence/ supporting details
- use connectors
- Supply a conclusion
- check coherence, cohesion
- Check the form (punctuation, spelling mistakes, verb form)

During this phase, students are assisted by teacher who provides them with constructive feed back.

**Joint Construction:** In this step, the teacher and students construct a paragraph together following the process of writing. First they choose a topic of the same genre, let us say for example: The effects of drugs

First the topic sentence is written on the board, then the teacher and students brainstorm the ideas to be used in the paragraph on a part of the blackboard, then proceed to a selection. After that students are asked to work in groups of four writing the paragraph. Receiving feedback from the teacher they tried to improve the draft until it becomes acceptable. Finally, it is used as a model.

**Individual Construction:** After having dealt with more than one model, students will be asked to choose a topic which will be written on the board and given as a final task in which each student has to produce a paragraph. They will be provided with a word map to organize their ideas.

The teacher role is to provide the students with advice whenever they are in need.

When they finish, the teacher will ask them to exchange their draft and provides them with a checklist to present feedback to their peers for the purpose of increasing collaboration within the group and also training the students in reading critically and also making them aware of the importance of the audience and the necessity of revising their drafts more than once.

At the end, students will be asked to read their productions encouraging general discussion about the individual outcomes.

Homework: to consolidate students' writing in cause effect paragraph writing.

**Topic**: For many teenagers, there are numerous negative factors that can lead them to give up on their education and drop out of school. In you opinion, what are the most important causes of dropping out of school for many teenagers.

During the next session, students will bring their paragraphs. They will be asked to exchange them to be reviewed to be assessed by their peers, putting emphasis on all the characteristics of an argumentative paragraph. This includes organization content and mechanics.

After that students will be asked to report all what have learnt in the writing courses, reflecting on their learning, thus enabling them to develop meta-cognitive strategies

#### Interpretations

Because of the importance of argumentative paragraphs in real life situations, the students were trained more than once, as planned in courses, in writing supported by models and through the use of joint construction in group work or together with the teacher during which continuous formative assessment was provided to make learning how to write more effectively. In our opinion, it is through a lot of practice that competencies can be achieved. Thus, students need to be involved in order to make the learning experience of lasting value. Encouraging their participation in various activities and at the same time refining and expanding their writing skills is of great importance for the development of writing competencies.

#### **Summary and Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter we attempted to put into practice the Process-Genre Approach to teach writing to the experimental group. But because teaching this skill is time consuming, we dealt only with two types of writing: description and persuasion. During the writing courses, the informants were trained following the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing during which they developed their writing strategies which contributed in enhancing their critical thinking. In addition, they were exposed to descriptive and persuasive models in the phase of joint deconstruction during which they became aware of the textual features of these kinds of paragraphs, or the conventions of each genre. This developed in them awareness about the organization of paragraphs as well as the grammatical and lexical feature required in each one. Moreover, the cooperative atmosphere used in teaching writing helped them to get benefit from their teacher and peers' feedback and at the same time developed in them the tact of constructive criticism, therefore, enabling them to spot areas that need reformulation or improvement either in their paragraphs or in their peers'. However, these learners need more training to be able to provide better constructive feedback. This can be done through the use of checklists prepared by the teacher and his/her constant assistance. Furthermore, the use of portfolios by the learners to classify their drafts gave them the opportunity to witness their progress and to assess themselves. This proved an efficient tool which enabled them to contribute take part in the whole process. This contributes to the development of autonomous learners capable of relying on themselves in communicating in a written form in different real-life situations as it

advocated by the competency-based approach, the LMD system and the process genre approach as well.

The conclusion we came to at the end of this chapter is that these informants lacked training and assistance in that we cannot deny the apparent change which has occurred in their behaviour if compared to the beginning of the study. Due to the effects of the treatment, they became more motivated to learn writing and more cooperative as most of them participated effectively in the writing process providing ideas during the preparation stage and continuous feedback to their peers in addition to their involvement in doing the activities assigned to them. They showed no more shyness to ask for assistance and were pleased to see their pieces of writing improved. Moreover, they became aware that they were writing for an audience, either the teacher or their peers, so they made efforts to do better showing more awareness about paragraph organization and the ideas to include in each genre. However, this does not mean that perfection was reached in teaching writing, but it was a positive step undertaken which should be followed by continuous attempts to improve teaching quality. What we should also note is that in spite of the subjects readiness and motivation to learn, their paragraphs are still not acceptable in terms of accuracy because of the number and kind of errors, of course this reflects the effects of previous education, thus it the teachers' responsibility in our department to find a solution to students' difficulties through cooperation and by designing efficient remedies. This requires not only the contribution of writing and grammar teachers, but all of them to reach better results.

# Chapter Six

# **Evaluation of the Results**

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# Chapter Six Evaluation of the Results

# Introduction

This chapter presents the results for quantitative data of both the pre-test and posttest, dealing with the three aspects that constitute the dependent variables of this study, fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity organized in line with the hypotheses formulated previously. Mean scores and standard deviation are provided to be used to compare the two tests in order to find out whether positive development in the participants' writings occurred due to the experiment implementation. After this, qualitative data obtained from two post interviews are provided to confirm the quantitative results. But before this, a view on the population and the tests is necessary for better understanding in addition to the measures used to show the effects of the competency-based approach on the participants' writing and also the way they had been segmented.

# 6.1 The Population

As stated previously, the population used in this research study consisted of first year students at the Department of Foreign Languages, Section of English at Biskra University in the academic year 2009/2010.

# 6.1.1 The Control Group

An intact group of forty (N= 40) first-year students at the Department of Foreign Languages was used as a control group. All of them have the same educational background as they were issued from the Algerian secondary school. During the experiments these informants have been taught writing according to the product approach, the one usually used either at the secondary school or at the university as confirmed in the questionnaires in chapter four.

#### **6.1.2 The Experimental Group**

An intact class of forty (N= 40) first-year students at the Department of Foreign Languages was used in this experiment in order to implement a writing approach fitting the CBA. All of them have been studying English for seven years under the CBA implemented as a kind of reform in the Algerian school, the other students holding a baccalaureate rather than that of 2010 were excluded from the experiment.

#### 6.2 The Pre-test

The assignment task was a direct type of test where the participants had to write a text on a topic given in the 2010 Baccalaureate exam, asking them to provide their opinion about the negative effects of advertising on individuals and society and to present arguments. As stated previously, this activity was chosen on purpose as it was supposed to assess students' writing competency after seven years studying English. Thus it could help us as a researcher to find out if our informants who studied under the competency-based approach developed an adequate writing competency. The time allotted to write the composition was one hour in a written expression course during which the use of resource materials such as dictionaries or notes were not allowed while writing. The data collected from this initial test would confirm our assumptions about the students' writing competency before the experiment and would also be used to compare the informants' performance before and after the treatment seeking development in this skill.

#### 6.3 The Post-test

The post-test was another writing assignment of the same genre in which the participants had to write another argumentative paragraph in which they agree or disagree about the fact that many people immigrate to the USA believing that it is better than their native country, supporting their choice with arguments. This task had been tested for reliability and validity with the teacher who conducted the experiment before selecting it. According to Weigle (2002: 49):

A useful assessment should be concerned with six qualities: reliability (as a consistency) measure and construct validity (if the test or task is measuring what it intends to measure), practicality, authenticity, impact or wash-back effect, and interactiveness (to what extent a student can show linguistic knowledge, affective schemata, strategic competence etc)". The writing task elicited real-world writing but whose purpose was to show students' language proficiency. The collected texts were finally compared with the pretest performance to test whether the subjects recorded any writing development in the dependent variables of this research.

#### 6.4 Measures Used in this Experiment

In second language acquisition research studies, developmental measures of fluency, accuracy and complexity have been used as dependent measures for examining the effect of a pedagogical treatment on either oral or written language use. In our case, we intend to measure the effects of the CBA on students' writing proficiency using the same dependent variables used in previous studies. We have been inspired by the book of Wolfe Quintero *et al.*, (1998), on second language development in writing and in which they reviewed thirty six developmental studies. These studies have used to measure the effect of programme (Ferris & Politzer, 1981; Carlisle, 1989), feedback (Robb *et.al.*, 1986; Kepner, 1991), task (Foster and Skehan, 1996), planning (Crookes, 1989) and time (Kroll, 1990). It is also worth mentioning that the concepts of fluency, accuracy and complexity can apply to different linguistic levels, including phonology, the lexicon, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse, or pragmatics, however, the lexical, morphological and syntactic aspects of writing have been the most heavily researched within second and foreign language writing.

Wolfe *et.al.* (*op.cit.*, 8) have classified the measures that have been used in second language development as belonging to three categories:

He added saying that the underlying assumption is that these three characteristics of language development progress in tandem and that more proficient second writers are more fluent, accurate and complex in their writing than less proficient writers. According to Lennon (1990: 30), in the traditional sense of these words, fluency refers to 'speaking' with native-like rapidity. He used the term in a more narrow sense to mean only the rate and length of output. In Wolfe's view 'fluency means that more

<sup>1)</sup> Fluency: second language learners write more fluently, or write more in the same amount of time, as they become more proficient.

**<sup>2)</sup>** Accuracy: Second language learners write more accurately, or produce fewer errors in their writing, as they become more proficient.

**<sup>3)</sup>** Complexity: Second language learners write more grammatically and lexically complex sentences as they become more proficient.

words and more structures are accessed in a limited time, whereas a lack of fluency means that only a few words or structures are accessed. Fluency then is not how sophisticated or accurate the words or the structures are, but a measure of the sheer number of words or structural units a writer is able to include in their writing within a particular time. We can also simply say that proficient writers write more easily and they are relaxed, they can produce written language coherently, appropriately and creatively with a focus on the primacy of meaning.

Accuracy is defined as 'freedom from error' which can be measured by an analysis of target-like use, taking into account both the context and uses of the structure in question (Pincas, 1981). Thus accuracy is the ability to be free from errors while using language to communicate in either writing or speech.

The most recent theoretical definition of complexity was originally proposed by skehan (1996) and developed later by Foster and Skehan (1996) and Skehan and Foster (1999). Following Crookes (1989), in considering performance, Skehan (1996: 22) distinguishes complexity as a language aspect which 'concerns the elaboration or ambition of the language which is produced'. Complexity is understood as the capacity to use more advanced language and to encode more complex ideas (Ellis and Yuan 2004). What enables learners to progress and produce more complex language is their willingness and preparedness to take risks and restructure their inter-language by experimenting with language (Skehan and Foster, *op. cit.*). So, learners' development in complexity can be observed in progressively elaborated language and an increasing variety of patterns (Foster and Skehan *op. cit.*).

Syntactic complexity is manifest in second language writing in terms of how varied and sophisticated the production units or grammatical structures are (Foster and Skehan 1996; Wolfe Quintero *et. al,.* 1998 & Ortega, 2003). It has been considered an important construct in second language teaching and research, as development in syntactic complexity is an integral part of a language learner's overall development in the target language. In fact when writers become more proficient, grammar develops as sentences become more complex with more subordination and a wide range of tenses and aspects. Lexis also becomes more complex with a greater variety of vocabulary and the use of less frequent lexical items.

#### 6.5 Segmentation of Written Texts

During the description of any process previous to the data quantification report on 'segmenting' or dividing the data into units of analysis or units of segmentation. The analysis of learner language production requires a principled way of segmenting the data into units (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

Among the units of analysis commonly applied to L2 and foreign language data the T- unit is without doubt the most popular. Since the late 70s it has been widely used in quantitative analysis of written texts produced by learners of different ages, different languages and different proficiency levels (e.g., Ellis and Yuan, 2004; Larsen-Freeman 2006; Ishikawa, 2006; Kurken and Vedder, 2007).

Suggested initially by Hunt (1965), the T-unit stands for 'a minimal terminable unit that consists of an independent clause with all attached subordinate clauses. Later the author developed the definition and provided two more versions:

- 1. A main clause and all subordinate and non-clausal structures attached to or embedded in it.
- 2. The shortest units into which a piece of discourse can be cut without leaving any sentence fragments as a residue (Hunt, 1970: 4).

The most direct measurement of fluency would be to measure the time taken to write a certain amount of text, but this was not possible. Therefore, it is measured by taking the words per T- unit (W/T), and words in error-free T-units (WE/EFT). The T-unit is taken as the basic measure of language, rather than the sentence, since it is a good measure of writing development (Wolfe Quintero *et. al*: 32) and removes the problem of long sentences being produced by simple coordination. Using WE/EFT allows us to take into account the fact that words per T-unit might increase but only at the cost of a larger number of errors (*ibid*: 56).

A large number of different measures have been proposed for characterizing syntactic complexity in second and foreign language writing. Most of these seek to quantify in one way or another (length of production units, i.e., clauses, sentences and T-units) by stressing the amount of embedding or subordination, amount of coordination, range of surface syntactic structures and degree of sophistication of particular structures (Ortega 2003). The most useful measures of grammatical

complexity were the number of Clauses per T-unit (C/T) and the number of Dependent Clauses per T-unit (DC/T) (*ibid*: 34).

To measure lexical complexity, previous studies chose to use the Word Type to Tokens ratio (WT/T), where WT means the number of word type and T is the total number of words (tokens). They also used lexical Word Types divided by the number of T-units (LWT/T).

Measure No	Meaning	How measured	
Fluency			
1	Number of words (tokens)divided by the number of T-units	W/T	
2			
Accuracy			
3	Number of error-free T-units divided by the number of T-units	EFT/T	
4	4 Number of errors Divided by the number of T-units		
Grammatical c	omplexity		
5	Number of clauses divided by the number of T-units	C/T	
6	Number of dependent clauses Divided by the number of T-units	DC/T	
Lexical comple	xity		
7	Number of word types divided by number of T-units	WT/T	
8	Number of lexical words divided by the number of T-units	LWT/T	

Table 6.27: Measures Used in Previous Studies to Measure Fluency, Accuracy and

# Complexity

In this study, we opted to measure the three elements as follows:

Measure No	Meaning	How measured
Fluency		I
1	Number of words (tokens)divided by the number of T-units	W/T
Accuracy		
2	Number of errors divided by the number of T-units	E/T
Grammatical	complexity	
3	Number of clauses divided by the number of T-units	C/T
Lexical comple	exity	
4	Number of lexical words divided by the number of T-units	LWT/T

Table 6.28: Measures Used in this Study

# 6.6 Quantitative Results (descriptive statistics)

The pre-test and post-test have been evaluated according to the four criteria mentioned in table 6.28. Every participant mean and standard deviation were calculated and all the participants scores were then divided by the number of participants in the group. We will present the control group then the experimental achievements according to the criteria cited above.

# 6.6.1 Control Group Pre-test Achievements

We present, here, the results and comments on the achievements of the control group in the pre-test then the post-test. The mean scores and standard deviation scores have been calculated for fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity.

#### 6.6.1. 1 Control Group Pre-test Achievements in Fluency

We start by presenting the results and comments on the achievements of the control group in the pre-test in the area of fluency, referring to the number of words per t-unit. The mean scores and standard deviations have been calculated and presented in table 6.29 below. This is also supplemented by a frequency table (6.30) showing the students' scores.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard deviation
40	Pre-test	12.56	2.69



The results recorded as shown in table 6. 30 indicate that students' fluency in writing varies between 6 and 22.8 words per t-unit. According to the frequency table, only few students or precisely 8 recorded between 16 and 22.8 words per T-unit and. The value of the overall mean score is 12.56 per T-unit. These results will be compared later on with those of the post-test to prove if the experiment succeeded to develop students' writing in terms of fluency.

Frequency
6
5
7
7
7
8

N = 40(sum of frequencies)



#### 6.6.1.2 Control Group Pre-test Achievements in Accuracy

The results recorded in the area of accuracy are presented in table 6.31 and 6.32, followed by comments. The means scores and standard deviations have been calculated based on the number of errors made by each student per t-unit.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard deviation
40	Pre-test	1.97	0.97

 Table 6.31: Control Group Pre-test Overall Achievements in Accuracy

Referring to the students' productions (appendix 8) and table 6.31, it is clear that students face a big difficulty in writing in terms of accuracy. All of the productions contain errors varying from 1 to 3 errors per T-unit. According to the frequency table 6.32 below, 22 students made from 1 to 2 errors per T-unit and the rest, or 18 made from 2.16 to 3.33 errors per T-unit; no paragraph is free from errors. The average score or the mean is 1.97 errors per T-unit for all the group. If we consider this high score, we admit that the students' level in terms of accuracy is weak and that they were not able to develop this competency in previous education. Therefore, this calls for the need to find a remedy to this situation.

Mean	Frequency	
From 1 to 2	22	
From 2.16 to 3.33	18	

N= 40

 Table 6.32: Control Group Mean Scores Frequencies in Accuracy

# 6.6.1.3 Control Group Pre-test Achievements in Grammatical Complexity

The third quantified area refers to grammatical complexity in which the means sores for the number of clauses per t-units have been calculated in addition to the standard deviation concerning this area.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard deviation
40	Pre-test	1.56	0.45

# Table 6.33: Control Group Pre-test Overall Achievements in GrammaticalComplexity

As displayed in table 6.33, we can deduce that even in this area students competency can be considered as low based on the overall mean recorded (1.56). The frequency table 6.34 shows that most of the students (34) or 85% were not able to produce T-units made of more than 1.8 clauses; just 6 students' productions or 15% contain from 2 to 2.66 clauses per T-unit.

Mean	Frequency	
From 1 to 1.8	34	
From 2 to 2.66	6	
110111 2 10 2.00	0	

N= 40

 Table 6.34: Control Group Pre-test Mean Scores Frequencies in Grammatical

 Complexity

#### 6.6.1.4 Control Group Pre-test Achievements in Lexical Complexity

The quantitative results in lexical complexity (number of lexical words per t-unit are displayed in tables 6.35 and 6.36 below:

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard deviation
40	Pre-test	5.41	1.25

Table 6.35: Control Group Pre-test Overall Achievements in Lexical Complexity

Table 6.365 displays the control group pre-test results in terms of lexical complexity. The overall mean score of a value of 5.41 shows the students' performance level in this area. Besides, we can give more details using the means frequencies table below which indicate that the large majority of the students (32) recorded means between 4 and 6.66 lexical words per T-unit while just seven students' productions contain from 7 to 10.2 lexical words per T-unit and 1 can be considered as very weak with only 1.8 lexical word.

Mean	Frequency	
1.8	1	
From 4 to 6.66	32	
From 7 to 10.2	7	

N=40

 Table 6.36: Control Group Pre-test Mean Scores Frequencies in Lexical

 Complexity

# 6.6.1.5 Control Group Overall Pre-test Achievements

Table 6.38 summarizes all the results of the control group recorded in the four variables for each student. It is followed by two other tables (6.39 and 6.40) which show the overall results for each variable, and ultimately the overall score for pre-test achievement.

	Flue	ency	Accuracy		Gram	natical	Lex	ical
		-			comp	lexity	comp	lexity
student	Μ	SD	Μ	SD	Μ	SD	Μ	SD
01	10.12	6.52	1.87	1.15	1.75	5.28	4.37	2.03
02	7.16	1.76	2.33	0.45	1.33	0.21	4.16	0.34
03	11.25	3.78	2.25	1	1.5	0.81	4.16	3.89
04	7.33	2.85	2	0.35	1.11	0.45	4.44	1.38
05	19	6.63	1.83	0.65	2	0.63	5.66	1.93
06	13.85	4.56	2.28	- 1.14	1.28	1.04	5.87	1.78
07	13.33	2.24	3	0.63	1.33	0.47	6	0
08	13.5	3.3	2.16	0.44	1.66	0.31	6	0.89
09	9.33	3.78	2.33	-1.12	1.66	0.54	4.33	1.37
10	16.5	2.84	1.66	0.33	1.66	0.34	6.66	1.88
11	13.12	3.12	1.62	0.5	2	0.37	6.12	1.31
12	19	6.63	2	0.63	2.66	0.81	8.5	1.28
13	13.12	0.86	1.8	1.06	1.8	0.28	1.8	0.8
14	16.25	-8.49	2.75	0	1.5	00	7	1.63
15	22.8	5.37	2.4	1.67	2.4	-0.33	10.2	2.58
16	22	1.69	3	-2.23	1.2	1	4.6	0.48
17	22	5.58	2.6	2.8	1.8	0.44	9.4	2.22
18	14.87	4.42	1.12	0.8	2	-0.5	6.37	-1.3
19	16.75	1.93	3	1	1.5	0	7.75	0
20	14	2.37	1	1	2	0	5.5	-1.39
21	14	2.37	1.12	-0.34	1.62	0.07	4.22	0.81
22	14	5.08	1.25	4.88	1.16	0.32	4	2.59
23	12.08	1.04	2	0	1.2	0.42	4.3	0.42
24	9.3	4.71	2.33	0.6	1.5	0.51	6.66	1.59
25	12.66	1.7	1.16	0.54	1.8	-0.6	5.8	-1.11
26	10.66	4.37	1.9	-0.62	1.5	0.48	4.5	0.47
27	11.88	3.09	2	1.41	1.5	0.54	4.83	2.3
28	11.33	2.53	1.87	1.28	1.12	0.03	4.5	1.76
29	11.75	-0.62	1	0	1.5	0.5	6.66	2.71
30	14.33	3.5	1.66	-0.58	2.16	-1.02	9.83	0.87
31	17.66	6.77	1.8	1.05	1.6	0.29	7.4	1.74
32	11.7	2.9	1.66	-0.28	1.16	0.37	4.33	1.37
33	8.5	1.97	1.37	0.4	1.37	-0.13	4.66	1.32
34	10.25	1.45	3.33	-1.12	1.66	0.54	4.25	0.47
35	9.33	3.78	2	0	1.5	0	5.83	1.71
36	12.16	2.49	2	0.58	1	0.73	4	1.98
37	6	1.59	2.16	0.69	1.16	1.61	5	1.92
38	5.33	0.87	2.01	1.73	1.3	0.51	6	1.01
39	8.4	2.61	3	0.72	1	0.57	4.33	1.96
40	7	1.61	2.33	0.45	1.5	0.76	4.27	0.51

Table 6.37: Control Group Pre-test Overall Achievements in Fluency; Accuracy,

Grammatical Complexity and Lexical Complexity for Each Student

Ν	Test	Fluency		Accuracy		Grammatical		Lexical complexity	
						complexity			
		М	SD	Μ	SD	М	SD	Μ	SD
40	Pre-test	12.56	2.69	1.97	0.97	1.56	0.45	5.41	1.25

Table 6.38: Control Group Pre-test Overall Achievements in Fluency, Accuracy,Grammatical Complexity and Lexical Complexity

N	Test	Mean	Std deviation
40	Pre-test	5.37	1.34

# Table 6.39: Control Group Pre-test Overall Achievements

Table 6.37 displays all the results recorded in the control group pre-test, including each performant's mean and standard deviation scores, followed by table 6.38 which shows us the average scores of all the variables tested in this research before implementing the Process-Genre Approach as a kind of treatment. The mean and standard deviation scores recorded were 12.56 and 2.69 for fluency, 1.97 and 0.95 for accuracy, 1.56 and 0.45 for grammatical complexity and 5.41 and 1.25 for lexical complexity.

These results reveal the failure of previous education (middle and secondary) in developing learners' writing proficiency. This is apparent in the informants' productions which lack accuracy and grammatical complexity because of the big number of errors (1.97 per T-unit) and also the fact that most of the T-units contain 1.56 clauses which reveal that the informants were unable to produce complex sentences as most of them tend to write simple and rarely compound or complex ones. Most of them used coordination a lot or clauses joined with 'because'. Moreover, the productions, in this phase, were not rich in terms of lexical complexity or they lack variety of vocabulary as the words used are very usual words. These results will be compared with those of the experimental group to attest that the level of both groups is similar.

#### 6.6.2 Control Group Post-test Achievements

The control group post-test results are presented following the same procedure of the pre-test.

# 6.6.2.1 Control Group Post-test Achievements in Fluency

The results obtained from the first variables are displayed in tables 6.40 and 6.41 below:

-	Ν	Test	Mean	Standard deviation
-	40	Post-test	13.17	3.13

<b>Table 6.40:</b>	Control	Group	<b>Post-test</b>	Overall	Achiev	ements in	Fluency

Mean	Frequency
From 6.33 to 8.16	4
From 9 to 10.33	6
From 11 to 12.5	5
From 13 to 15.33	12
From 16.98	5
From 20 to 23	3

 Table 6.41: Control Group Post-test Mean Scores Frequencies in Fluency

The mean scores obtained in this post-test in fluency vary between 6.33.6 to 23 words per T-unit as displayed in table 6.40 above and the overall score was 13.17. High frequencies start from 13 words per T-unit to 23. The Values in this category include 8 out of forty writings which represent 20% of the total. The rest of mean values can be considered as lower if compared with the first category which represents twenty percent with just one with a value of 9.6 considered as weak and the others ranging between 12 to 15.4 . The mean scores distributions show that the progress recorded can be considered as slight due to the effects of the product approach on students' writings.

# 6.6.2.2 Control Group Post-test Achievements in accuracy

Table 6.42 and 6.43 below show the control group post-test results recorded in the area of accuracy.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard deviation
40	Post-test	1.82	0.57

Mean	Frequency
From 1 to 1.5 errors	12
From 1.66 to 2 errors	21
From 2.16 to 2.75 errors	7

N=40

### Table 6.43: Control Group Post-test Mean Scores Frequencies in Accuracy

Table 6.42 displays the overall mean in accuracy (1.82 errors per T-unit) in the post-test after a whole semester during which the students belonging to the control group have been taught writing according to the Product Approach. In addition to this, the frequency table supplements the results by showing the students' productions in terms of accuracy. This reveals that the students still face difficulties in this area as all of them make from 1 to 2.75 errors per T-unit which reflects their inability to produce a piece of writing free from errors or at least containing just a few.

#### 6.6.2.3 Control Group Post-test Achievements in Grammatical Complexity

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard deviation
40	Post-test	1.64	0.36

The third variable post-test results for the control group are presented below:

 Table 6.44: Control Group Post-test Overall Achievements in Grammatical

 Complexity

Mean	Frequency
From 1 to 1.82	31
From 1.9 to 2.2	9
	N = 40

# Table 6.45: Control Group Post-test Mean Frequencies in Grammatical Complexity

The post-test means, in table 6.44, show that the control group obtained 1.64 for grammatical complexity as a whole. This result reveals that the informants still write simple sentences rather than complex ones after having been exposed to the product approach for a whole semester. Most of them (31) or 77.5% were unable to produce T-units of at least two clauses, just 9 or 22.5% produced t-units made up of about two clauses as show in table 6.45. These results are still low if we consider that these students have been studying English for seven years in addition to the eighth one at the university. This confirms the failure of the product approach in developing students' Writing proficiency.

# 6.6.2.4 Control Group Post-test Achievements in lexical complexity

The last variable results obtained are displayed in tables 6.46 and 6.47 below.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard deviation
40	Post-test	5.79	1.26

Table 6.46: Control Grou	p Post-test	<b>Overall Achievements</b>	in Lexical	Complexity

Mean	Frequency
1.92	1
From 4 to 5.95	22
From 6 to 7.87	14
From 8.1 to 9.1	3

 Table 6.47: Control Group Post-test Mean Scores Frequencies in Lexical

 Complexity

As shown in table 6.46, the overall mean for lexical complexity is 5.79 with a standard deviation of 1.26. The number of lexical words recorded in students productions vary between 1.92 and 9.1. According to the mean scores displayed for each student in the table 6. 48 below and the frequency table 6.47 above, 22 students' T-units contain from 1.92 to 5.95 lexical words per T-unit and 18 from 6 to 9.1. Just 3 can be considered rich in terms of lexical complexity as they appear in table 6.48 (informants 15, 17 and 30). We can also add that this quantification did not rely on variety of lexical categories; otherwise, the results would have been worse.

# 6.6.2.5 Control Group Post-test Overall Achievements

Table 6.48 displays each student's scores and standard deviations in the four variables tested in addition to the total scores for each variable and the post-test as a whole.

	Flue	ency	Accuracy		Gram	matical	Lexical	
		-			comp	olexity	complexity	7
Student	М	SD	М	SD	М	SD	М	SD
01	11.12	4.22	1.82	1.12	1.9	5.33	4.45	2.04
02	8.16	1.84	2	0.25	1.58	0.31	4.5	0.46
03	13.25	1.78	2	0.98	1.67	0.98	4.96	3.9
04	7.33	2.85	1.86	0.34	1.55	0.62	5	1.48
05	18.33	4.63	1.5	0.32	2	0.76	5.66	1.91
06	13.25	5.36	2.16	- 1.04	1.36	1.15	6.1	1.86
07	14.36	3.5	2.5	0.55	1.39	0.52	6.5	0.02
08	13.5	3.3	2.	0.39	1.82	0.43	6.9	0.99
09	10.33	4.38	1.98	-1.12	1.66	0.57	4.7	1.42
10	15	2.61	1.66	0.33	1.77	0.44	7.1	1.28
11	13.24	3.16	1.62	0.51	2.16	0.48	6	1.03
12	17	5.32	1.89	0.54	2.5	0.71	7.5	1.07
13	14.58	1.26	1.6	1.04	1.95	0.35	1.92	0.9
14	17	4.69	2.25	0.1	1.61	0.06	7.5	1.82
15	20.16	5.31	2	1.78	2.2	-0.45	9.1	2.19
16	23	1.87	2.75	-2.3	1.4	1.02	4.86	0.63
17	22	5.14	2.5	2.4	1.8	0.44	8.1	3.22
18	15	4.66	1.5	1	2	-0.03	6.5	-2.2
19	17	2	2.66	1	1.67	0.07	7.87	1.01
20	15	2.54	1.25	0.99	2	0.05	5.95	-1.18
21	14	2.42	1.2	-0.44	1.5	0.07	4.27	0.83
22	14.68	5.2	1	4.68	1.36	0.28	4.7	2.65
23	13	1.25	2	0.48	1.4	0.62	5	0.92
24	9.5	4.83	2.16	0.63	1.5	0.66	6.64	1.47
25	13	1.9	1.28	0.72	1.7	0.04	6	-1.34
26	10	4.25	1.5	0.43	1.8	0.51	4.5	0.41
27	12.16	2.97	2	1.29	1.5	0.67	4.38	2.1
28	12	2.56	1.77	1.16	1.16	0.02	5.22	1.74
29	11.78	-0.64	1.25	0.18	1.6	0.7	7	3.01
30	15.33	3.7	1.66	-0.31	2	-0.92	9	0.87
31	16.98	5.49	1.73	1.08	1.5	0.12	7.6	1.86
32	12	2.94	1.5	-0.18	1.56	0.37	4.39	1.38
33	9	2.13	1.39	0.36	1.41	-0.11	4.95	1.37
34	13	2.15	3	-1.22	1.74	0.66	5.07	0.52
35	9.33	3.91	1.76	0.05	1.7	0.02	5.97	1.68
36	13.01	2.56	2	0.58	1.2	0.41	4.5	1.90
37	7.29	1.71	2	0.79	1.29	1.01	5.69	1.91
38	6.33	0.98	1.95	1.68	1.47	0.74	6.13	1.03
39	9	2.72	2.16	0.61	1	0.19	4.56	1.98
40	9	1.87	1.99	0.35	1.65	0.06	5	0.64

Table 6.48: Control Group Post-test Overall Achievements in Fluency, Accuracy,

Grammatical Complexity and Lexical Complexity for each informant

Ν	Test	Fluency		2		Grammatical		Lexical Complexity	
						complex	xity		
		Μ	SD	Μ	SD	М	SD	Μ	SD
40	Pre-test	13.17	1.13	1.82	0.57	1.64	0.36	5.79	1.26

 Table 6.49: Control Group Post-test Overall Achievements for Fluency, Accuracy,

 Grammatical Complexity and Lexical Complexity

Table 6.48 displays the overall post-test results for each informant of the control group, exposed to the product approach to writing instruction, in all the areas measured in this research and which are fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity with an overall mean score for each one as (fluency: 13.17, accuracy:1.82, grammatical complexity: 1.64 and lexical complexity: 5.979) . The overall results displayed in table 6.50 below indicate that the post-test overall mean score of the whole test was 5.6 with a standard deviation of 1.33. The efficiency of the product approach used in this research in parallel with the process genre approach will be proved through the comparison of the post-test results with those obtained in the pre-test to show if there is any progress and later on compared with the experimental group achievements to confirm or the reject the hypotheses formulated in this research.

Ν	Test	Mean	Std deviation
40	Post-test	5.6	1.33

Table 6.50: Control Group Post-test Overall Achievements

### 6.7 Quantitative Results of the Experimental group (descriptive statistics)

The experimental group pre-test and post-test results are presented and compared to confirm or reject the hypotheses formulated in this study.

# 6.7.1 Experimental Group Pre-test Achievements

As mentioned above, before the treatment we collected quantitative data as a kind of situation analysis in a form of a pre-test. The features analyzed in this pre-test were grouped according to the main traits of written proficiency: fluency, accuracy, grammatical and lexical complexity. All the forty written samples were transcribed using transcribing guidelines described previously.

## 6.7.1.1 Experimental Group Pre-test Achievements in Fluency

Tables 6.51 and 6.52 display the results obtained in the pre-test in the area of fluency. The same procedure followed while dealing with the control group is applied.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard
			deviation
40	Pre-test	12.17	3.27

# Table 6.51: Experimental Group Pre-test Overall Achievements inFluency

The results in table 6.52 show that students' fluency in producing a written composition within the time allotted to that writing task varies from 6.5 to 19.2 words per t-unit, only few students or precisely 4 recorded between 16 and 19.2 words per T-unit. This indicates that first year students in general are not really fluent in writing as the mean recorded was just (12.17). The frequency distribution of means in writing fluency is as follow:

Mean	Frequency
From 6.5 to 8.5	3
From 9.33 to 10.66	9
From 11.17 to 12.91	16
From 13 to 15.66	8
From 16 to 19.2	4

N= 40

Table 6.52: Experimental Group Pre-test Means Scores Frequencies inFluency

We can infer from this table that the mean scores recorded in fluency or the average of the number of words per T-unit varies from 6.5 to 19.2 with the following frequencies:

- 28 informed recorded mean scores from 6.5 to 12.91,

- and only 12 recorded mean scores between 13 and 19.2.

This means that the large majority of informants lack fluency in writing and need to develop their abilities in this area.

#### 6.7.1.2 Experimental Group Pre-test Achievements in Accuracy

Concerning the variable, accuracy, tables 6.53 and 6.54 below inform us about the students' results.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation
40	Pre-test	1.71	0.45

 Table 6.53: Experimental Group Pre-test Achievements in Accuracy

Referring to students' productions (appendix 2), we notice that all the students made errors in their production, no one if free. The number errors which varies between 0.01 and 3.6 per T- unit and the overall mean of a value of 1.71 indicate that the students' level is low in terms of grammar, syntax, spelling and also punctuation though the latter was not taken into consideration when counting the number of errors. We did not report error free T-units as done by many other researchers in this field, but during the quantification of other features, they were very rare in all the writing pieces. According to table 6.54, we notice that error frequencies in the informants' writings are as follows:

Mean	Frequency	
From 0.01 to 0.6	4	
From 1 to 1.83	22	
From 2 to 2.8	11	
From 3 to 3.6	3	
	N-40	

N=40

# Table 6.54: Experimental Group Pre-test Means Scores Frequencies in Accuracy

- Only 04 students out of forty made errors from 0.1 to 0.6 which is considered acceptable in such a situation if compared to the other results, but not acceptable with other situation in other educational situations because of lack of accuracy in the informants' productions.
- 22 students made from 01 to 1.83 errors per T-units which mean scores that each one contains 01 to about 02 errors,
- 11 students made 02 to 2.8 errors per T-unit
- and 03 made from 3 to 3.6 errors per T-units.

If we consider these results, we notice that the large majority of the students, 36 out of 40, made from 01 to 3.6 errors per T-unit or 90% of them are not able to write error-free T-units after having spent seven years studying English. Thus, this quantification reveal not only the failure of previous education, but also the urgent need for finding a treatment which may at least help these students develop their writing in terms of accuracy.

# 6.7.1.3 Experimental Group Pre-test Achievements in Grammatical Complexity

The experimental pre-test results are shown in tables 6.56 and 6.57 below:

_	Ν	Test	Mean	Standard deviation
	40	Pre-test	1.58	0.34

Table 6.55: Experimental Group Pre-test overall achievements inGrammatical Complexity

As far as grammatical complexity is concerned the overall mean recorded was 1.58. Most of the T-units were composed from 1 to 1.8 just 07 contain from 2 two to 2.41 clauses as shown both in figure (6.12) and table (6.59). Among all the writing pieces, just three students were able to write some subordinate clauses, the others tend to use coordination influenced by their mother tongue. Therefore, in addition to the lack of accuracy, the students' writings reveal also that after seven years spent in studying English, these learners are not able to produce complex sentences made up of more than one or two clauses relying mostly on coordination rather than subordination.

33
7

Table 6.56: Experimental Group Pre-test Means Scores Frequencies iGrammatical Complexity

# 6.7.1.4. Experimental Group Pre-test Achievements in Lexical Complexity

The last experimental pre-test group achievements are presented below:

Ν	Test	Means	Standard Deviation
40	Pre-test	5.40	1.36

# Table 6.57: Experimental Group Pre-test Overall Achievements in Lexical Complexity

As shown in table (6.57), the overall mean for lexical complexity is 05.40. The number of lexical words recorded in students productions vary between 2.06 an 11.66. According to the mean scores displayed for each student in the table 59 above and the frequency table below, 34 students' T-units contain from 2.06 to 6.66 and 6 from 7.4 to 11.66. Just four can be considered rich in terms of lexical complexity as they appear in

Mean	Frequency	
2.06	1	
From 3 to 3.5	5	
From 4 to 4.83	8	
From 5 to 5.8	8	
From 6to 6.66	6	
From 7.04 to 8.2	3	
From 9 to 11.66	3	

figure 6.12 (informants 12, 31 and 34). We can also add that if we relied in this quantification on variety of lexical categories, the results would have been worse.

N= 40

 Table 6.58: Experimental Pre-test Means Scores frequencies in lexical

 Complexity

# 6.7.1.5 Experimental Group Overall Pre-test Achievements

Scores obtained for each student in the four areas tested are presented in table 6. 59. They are followed by the overall scores of each variable and also those of the whole pre-test.

	Flue	ency	Accuracy		Grammatical complexity		Lexical complexity	
Student	Μ	SD	Μ	SD	Μ	SD	Μ	SD
01	7.33	2.85	2	0.35	1.11	0.45	4.44	1.38
02	16.5	2.84	2.66	0.33	1.66	0.34	6.66	1.88
03	10.12	6.52	1.87	1.15	1.75	5.23	4.37	2.03
04	7.16	0.45	2.33	1.76	1.33	0.21	4.16	0.35
05	11.25	5.18	2.25	1	1.5	0.81	4.16	3.89
06	9.33	3.78	3.33	- 1.12	1.66	0.54	4.33	1.37
07	12.66	4.21	1.83	0.65	2	0.63	5.66	1.93
08	19	-6.63	2	0.63	2.66	0.81	8.5	1.28
09	13.85	-4.56	2.83	-1.14	1.28	-1.04	5.87	-1.78
10	13.5	-3.3	2.16	0.44	1.66	0.31	6	0.89
11	13.33	2.24	3	0.63	1.33	0.47	6	0
12	13.12	-3.12	1.62	0.5	2	0.37	6.12	18.04
13	13.12	- 0.86	2.8	1.06	1.8	0.28	5.8	-0.8
14	16.25	8.49	4.75	-1.27	1.5	0	7	1.63
15	22.8	- 5.37	3.4	1.67	1.8	-0.33	10.2	-2.58
16	9.2	1.69	3	-2.23	1.2	-0.2	4.6	-0.48
17	22	-5.59	4.6	2.8	1.8	0.44	9.4	- 3.22
18	14.87	-4.42	2.12	0.8	1.75	-0.5	6.37	-1.3
19	15.14	7.08	0.57	0.42	2.42	0.37	6.57	2.31
20	16.75	1.93	4	1	1.5	0	5.5	0
21	14	1	1	1	2	0	5.5	-1.39
22	12.11	4.09	1.33	1.33	1.77	0.09	5.33	0.1
23	14	5.08	1.12	1.12	1.62	0.07	5.22	0.81
24	12.08	11.94	1.25	1.25	1.16	0.32	4	2.59
25	12	5.01	0.83	0.83	1.12	0.31	5.25	3.75
26	10.25	1.45	1.37	1.37	1.37	-0.13	4.25	4.47
27	9.3	4.71	2	2	1.2	0.42	4.3	2.06
28	8.5	1.97	1.66	1.66	1.16	0.37	4.66	1.32
29	17	7.64	2.8	2.8	2.2	-0.72	7.4	4.2
30	12.66	-1.71	2.33	2.33	1.5	0.51	6.66	-1.59
31	11.7	2.9	1.8	1.8	1.6	0.29	7.4	1.74
32	12.5	-3.22	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.75	5.12	-0.35
33	10.66	4.37	1.16	1.16	1.8	-0.6	5.8	-3.35
34	11.88	-3.09	1.9	1.9	1.5	0.48	4.5	0.47
35	11.33	2.52	2	2	1.5	0.54	4.85	2.23
36	11.75	-0.62	1.87	1.87	1.12	0.03	4.5	1.76
37	14.33	3.5	1	1	1.5	0.5	6.66	2.71
38	12.16	-2.49	2	2	1.5	0	5.83	1.71
39	19.2	2.03	3.6	3.6	2.8	0.5	8.2	-1.01
40	17.66	15.16	1.66	1.66	2.16	-1.02	9.83	-0.08

Table 6.59: Experimental Group Overall Pre-test Achievements in Fluency, Accuracy,Grammatical Complexity and Lexical Complexity for each Student

Ν	Test	Fluency		Accuracy		Grammatical		Lexical complexity	
						complex	xity		
		М	SD	Μ	SD	М	SD	М	SD
40	Pre-test	12.17	0.45	1.71	0.45	1.58	0.34	5.40	1.36

 Table 6.60: Experimental Group Overall Pre-test Achievements in Fluency,

Accuracy, Grammatical Complexity and Lexical Complexity

Ν	Test	Means	Standard Deviation
40	Pre-test	5.21	4.77

Table 6.61: Experimental Group Pre-test overall achievements

Table 6.59 displays all the results concerning the pre-test, including each performant's mean and standard deviation scores, followed by table 6.60 which shows us average scores of all the variables tested in this research before implementing the process genre approach as a kind of treatment. The mean and standard deviation scores recorded were 12.17 and 3.15 for fluency, 1.71 and 0.45 for accuracy, 1.58 and 0.34 for grammatical complexity and 5.40 and 0.83 for lexical complexity. These results reveal the failure of previous education (middle and secondary) in developing learners' writing proficiency. This is apparent in the informants' productions which lack accuracy and grammatical complexity because of the big number of errors (1.71 per T-unit, used as a measure) and also the fact that most of the T-units contain 1.58 clauses which reveal that the informed were unable to produce complex sentences as most of them tended to write simple and rarely compound or complex ones. Most of them used coordination a lot or clauses joined with 'because'. Moreover, the productions, in this phase, were not rich in terms of lexical complexity or they lack variety of vocabulary as the words used are very usual words.

The results displayed in table 6.59, 6.60 and 6.61 summarize the results obtained in the pre-test. These quantitative data collected were used for the purpose to prove that previous writing instruction was not successful though the competency-based approach had been implemented in teaching English for the last seven years. This is quite evident through the mean scores recorded in this pre-test (12.17 for fluency, 1.71 for accuracy, 1.58 for grammatical complexity and 5.40 for lexical complexity as displayed in table 6.60. These show the failure of middle and secondary education because students' writings lack accuracy and complexity, therefore a special remedy is required to enable them to write more
accurately and also to produce more complex sentences rather than relying only on simple ones or on coordination as it appeared in their production which contained either an overuse of coordination, or clauses joined with the conjunction 'because'. Moreover learners need to develop their lexical competence to be able to express their thoughts appropriately because their productions were not rich in terms of lexical complexity.

This does not mean that the CBA was not appropriate, but according to the collected data in chapter four, teachers lacked theoretical background concerning this approach and also service training in addition to other factors worth investigating in other studies, it is why we attempted to show, in this research, that if the principles of the competency-based approach were implemented in writing instruction, by suggesting the Process-Genre Approach to writing to be used under the CBA, students' writing would develop adequately.

### **6.7.2 Experimental Group Post-test Achievements**

The experimental group post-test results concerning the four tested variables tested are displayed below.

#### 6.7.2.1 Post-test Achievements in Fluency

Tables 6.62 and 6.63 show the post-test informants' results in terms of fluency.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation
40	Post-test	17.81	2.89

Table 6.62: Experimental Group Post-test Overall Achievements in Fluency

Mean	Frequency
9.96	1
From 12 to 13.53	4
From 14.22 to 15.4	6
From 16.22 to 18.83	14
From 19.14 to 22	11
From 24 to 26	4

N= 40

Table 6.63: Experimental Group Post-test Means Scores Frequencies in Fluency

The mean value frequencies obtained in this post-test for fluency vary from 9.6 to 26 words per T-unit. High frequencies start from 16 words per T-unit to 26. The Values in this category include 28 out of forty writings which represent 70% of the total. The rest of mean values can be considered as lower if compared with the first category which represents thirty percent with just one with a value of 9.6 considered as weak and the others ranging between 12 to 15.4. Just 15 informants scores are under the overall mean (17.87) with a standard deviation of 2.89 (table 6.62).

## 6.7.2.2 Post-test Achievements in Accuracy

The informants' post-test achievements in terms of accuracy are displayed in tables 6.64 and 6.65.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation
40	Post-test	1,07	0,25

 Table 6.64: Experimental Group Post-test Overall Achievements in

 Accuracy

The mean value in accuracy is 1.07 which means that students in general made about 1.07 errors per T-unit. Regarding error frequency in the informants' writing, it is apparent from that in spite of the treatment, students are still unable to write without making errors, all of them without exception make errors in writing varying from between 0.5 to 2.1 per T-unit. This is confirmed in the frequency table (6.65) below in which we can notice that 23 informants out of forty (57.5%) made from 1 to 2.1 errors per T-unit which is not really a good result while 17 informants (42.5%) made between 0.5 to 0.92 which does not also mean that students have developed in terms of accuracy.

Mean	Frequency	
From 0.5 to 0.92	17	
From 1 to 1.87	22	
2.1	1	

Table 6.65: Experimental Group Post-test Means Frequencies in Accuracy

## 6.7.2.3 Post-test Achievements in Grammatical Complexity

The experimental group results in grammatical complexity, which represents the third tested variable, are shown in tables 6.66 and 6.67.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation
40	Post-test	1,83	0,38

 Table 6.66 Experimental Group Post-test Overall Achievements in

 Grammatical Complexity

Mean	Frequency	
From 1 to 1.88	29	
From 2 to 2.66	11	

# Table 6.67: Experimental Group Means Score Frequencies in Grammatical Complexity

As can be seen in the frequencies presented above, the large majority (29) of the informants' mean scores vary between 1 clause to 1.88 per T-unit or 72.5% of the learners produced T-units not exceeding two clauses while the rest (11) or 27.5% produced T-units made up of 2 to 2.66. Moreover, this is confirmed by the overall post-test mean score in grammatical complexity as shown in table 6.66 (1.83) which did not exceed 2 clauses per T-unit. All of this indicates that though there is progress in terms of grammatical complexity, the large majority of learners, as said previously, still wrote simple sentences instead of complex ones relying more on coordination rather than subordination. They were mostly influenced by their mother tongue (Arabic) in which coordination is used a lot. This has been demonstrated in the error analysis conducted in our magister (Chelli, 2006: 102) in which students used the coordinate conjunction 'and' in a series abusively because in Arabic, each item in a series is preceded by this conjunction. This leads us to insist on the necessity of teaching grammar in context and also extending courses in this area in order to help learners develop their grammatical competence and thus enabling them to progress in writing.

## 6.7.2.4 Post-test Achievements in Lexical Complexity

The experimental group results in lexical complexity are displayed in table 6.68 showing the post-test overall achievements. This is followed by table 6.69 which informs us about the frequency of the recorded means.

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation
40	Post-test	6,95	1,29

 Table 6.68: Experimental Group Overall Post-test Achievement in Lexical

 Complexity

Mean	Frequency	
From 4 to 5.61	8	
From 6 to 7.88	22	
From 8 to 9.97	10	

N= 40

 Table 6.69:
 Experimental Group Mean Scores Frequencies in Lexical Complexity

As shown in table (6.69) above, frequencies in lexical complexity, or the number of lexical words per T-unit varies from 4.35 to 9.87. These results reveal that there is progress in the informants' productions in terms of lexical complexity. The overall mean is 6.95 with a standard deviation of 1.29 ( table 6.68) which means that the results recorded are not very dispersed from the overall mean and that all the informants developed in this area. The lowest records are ranging around 4. This progress is due to the treatment including models presented during the writing course and also to the preparation phase enabling learners to brainstorm, giving ideas related to the topic and enabling them to enrich their vocabulary through either teacher or peer interaction.

## 6.6.2.5 Experimental Group Overall Post-test Achievements

The experimental group overall post-test results are summarized in three tables (6.70, 6.71 and 6.72) below.

	Flue	ency	Accu	racy		matical	Lexical	
		GD		(D)	1	olexity	complexity	
Student	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
01	16,88	4,95	0,77	0,73	1,88	0,53	6,44	0,22
02	19,22	4,59	0,88	1,05	2,33	0,49	6,66	2,02
03	20,42	6,52	0,71	-0,31	1,85	2,58	7,71	-1,01
04	18,22	2,37	0,66	0,42	1,77	1,11	9,55	4,42
05	20,37	4,8	1,87	2,18	1,75	0,31	7,5	3,06
06	18	10,34	2,1	0,42	1,8	0,42	6	1,15
07	14,22	4,26	1,12	-0,3	1,44	0,12	5,33	-0,36
08	14,75	0,66	1,5	-0,44	1,25	0,31	6,25	1,24
09	14,15	3,65	0,6	0,84	1,6	-0,23	6,8	1,84
10	20,5	2,22	1	0,34	2,4	0,24	8	-8
11	21	2,36	1,16	0,16	2,33	0,51	6,83	1,21
12	16,28	-6,75	1,14	-3,38	1,85	-2,58	7,28	0,18
13	18,62	6,05	0,87	0,4	1,62	0,57	7,62	2,97
14	20	2,59	0,88	0,52	2,25	0,28	7,77	1,45
15	19,14	4,99	1	0	1,85	0,36	7	1,4
16	23,33	18,63	1,77	0,38	2,58	0,23	7,88	-1,13
17	14,77	0,26	1,22	-0,26	1,22	-0,26	6	5,6
18	17,8	3,23	1	0,7	1,6	0,64	8	-1,09
19	15,4	1,44	1,7	0,43	1,6	-0,22	5,1	-1,07
20	21,2	2,12	0,7	-0,53	2,3	0,53	6,9	1,35
21	16,88	-4,17	1,88	-0,34	1,44	0,11	6,44	2,5
22	19,14	-3,73	1	0	2	0	7,87	1,17
23	12,5	7,78	0,75	-0,17	1,37	0,3	5,12	1,42
24	16,22	3,15	0,77	0,56	2,11	0,77	6,44	0,86
25	20,33	-6,59	0,77	0,31	1,88	0,14	6,22	1,4
26	26	2,29	1,44	-0,03	1,88	0,14	7,66	-1,4
27	13,53	2,15	0,92	1,79	1,69	0,47	5,61	2,99
28	20,33	6,74	0,66	0,43	2,66	0,35	6,88	1,67
29	21,33	4,25	1,16	-0,14	2,33	-0,34	9	2,54
30	12,7	4,5	1	0	1,5	0,02	4,7	6,02
31	18,7	6,62	0,7	0,27	1,8	0,45	6,5	8.47
32	9,96	-5,8	0,5	0,38	1,0	0,31	4,35	2,92
33	18	2,07	0,62	0,44	1,62	0,76	8	-0,92
34	15	2	1,16	0	1,83	0,38	8,83	1,12
35	18,6	2,37	1,10	0,55	2,4	0,5	8,6	1,39
36	18,85	2.78	0,71	0,63	1,87	2,58	9,87	-1,3
30	18,3	6,33	1	0,03	1,07	0,55	6,5	1,3
38	23	3,70	1	0,47	1,88	0,33	9,33	4,26
<u> </u>	18,57	8,78	1,42	0,77	1,85	0,23	4,85	0,49
<u> </u>	10,27	-0,33	1,42	0,77	1,85	0,43	4,85	-0,77
40	10,27	-0,33	1,40	0,05	1,27	0,77	4,79	-0,77

Table 6.70: Experiment Group Post-test Overall Achievement in Fluency, Accuracy,

Grammatical Complexity and Lexical Complexity for Each Student

N	Test	Fluency	1	Accur	acy	Gramm Comple		Lexical Co	omplexity
		М	SD	Μ	SD	М	SD	М	SD
40	Post-test								
		17.81	2.89	1.07	0.25	1.83	0.83	6.95	1.29

Table 6.71: Experimental Group Overall post-test achievements for fluency	y,
Accuracy, Grammatical Complexity and Lexical Complexity	

Ν	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation
40	Post-test	6,84	5,35

 Table 6.72: Experimental Group Post-test Overall Achievements

Table 6.70 displays the overall post-test results for each informant used in the experiment in all the areas measured in this research, representing the dependent variables including, fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity with an overall mean score for each one as shown in table 6.71 (fluency: 17.81, accuracy:1.07, grammatical complexity: 1.83 and lexical complexity: 6.95) . The overall results of the experiment displayed in table 6.72 indicate that the post-test overall mean score of the whole test was 6.84. The efficiency of the treatment used in this research will be proved through the comparison of the post-test results with those obtained in the pre-test later to show if there is any progress. Thus, this would allow us as a researcher to prove that the socio-cognitive approach to writing, the Process-Genre Approach, used as a treatment and believing that it is the one fitting the Competency-Based Approach is the most suitable writing approach to be applied in the era of globalization in line with the Competency-Based Approach and also the LMD system, and at least experiencing a change in teaching methodology rather than keeping on using traditional methods in spite of the reform undergone in different educational levels.

## 6.8 Comparative Evaluation of Results and Achievements

The results recorded in both tests ( pre-test and post-test) for the control then the experimental group will be compared in order to show if any improvement occurred, this will be followed by the comparison of the results obtained by the two groups in order to prove or refute the hypotheses formulated in this study concerning the effects of the independent variable, the process genre approach to writing under the competency-based approach to language learning, on the dependent variable which is writing and more precisely on three areas: fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity considered as important in showing development of writing proficiency as stated previously. We prefer to display the performance of each one separately before giving the overall results because it may appear difficult to depict the results of three variables together.

## 6.8.1 Comparison of the Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements

The control group means scores obtained in the pre-test and post-test will be compared to show if any improvement occurred in the informants' productions after having been taught writing according to the product approach. The comparison of the two tests is shown through graphs and tables.

## 6.8.1.1 Comparison of the control Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements in Fluency

After having measured the control group informants' pre-test and post-test writing productions, we will compare them seeking information about whether they have improved in writing.



Figure 6.10: Comparison of the Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievement in Fluency

N	Tests	Means	Standard Deviation
	Pre-test	12.56	2.69
40	Post-test	13.17	3.13
	difference	0.61	0.44

 Table 6.73: Comparison of the Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements

 in Fluency

As we can notice in both tables 6.74 and graph 6.10, the control group did not obtain higher results in the post-test in fluency if compared to those of the pre-test. This means that the use of the product approach for teaching writing to this group was not really efficient since the difference (0.61) cannot be considered as really significant. Just informants 10, 12 and 15 as shown in figure 6.9 improved in terms of fluency.

## 6.8.1.2 Comparison of the Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements in

## Accuracy

Figure 6.11 and table 6.75 below show very clearly the comparison of the control group pre-test and post-test achievements in terms of accuracy.



Figure 6.11: Comparison of the control group pre-test and post-test achievement in Accuracy

Ν	Tests	Means	Std deviation
	Pre-test	1.97	0.97
40	Post-test	1.82	0.57
	difference	0.15	0.4

 Table 6.74: Comparison of the Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements

 in Accuracy

The slight decrease of means in making errors (0.15) did not reflect a significant progress in terms of accuracy as shown in table 6.74. This is apparent in figure 6.11 which shows each informant's scores in both test and which reveals that only 9 informants' mean scores out of 40 or 22.5 % increased significantly. This suggests that the approach used for teaching writing to the control group was not successful as the informants continue to make a lot of kinds errors in their productions regardless of those in other areas as mechanic ones

such as errors in punctuation, capitalization and organization which were not taken into account in this research.

## 6.8.1.3 Comparison of the control Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements in Grammatical Complexity

The control group results recorded for both tests in the area of grammatical complexity are displayed in figures 6.12 and 6.76 below.



Figure 6.12: Comparison of the Control group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements in Grammatical Complexity

Ν	Tests	Means	Standard Deviation
	Pre-test	1.56	0.45
40	Post-test	1.64	0.36
	difference	0.08	-0.09

Table 6.75: Comparison of the Control Group Pre-test and Post-testin Grammatical Complexity

The results displayed in table 6.75 and figure 6.12 show clearly that there is not a noticeable, distinctive increase in term of grammatical complexity in the achievement of the control group as the difference in means between the two tests was just 0.08. The informants were still unable to produce complex sentences as the post-test mean was 1.64 which means that their writing productions were at their lowest level in this area.

## 6.8.1.4 Comparison of the Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements in

## Lexical Complexity

The results concerning the control group post-test achievements in lexical complexity are shown in figure 6.13 and 6.77 below:



Figure 6.13: Comparison of the Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements in Lexical Complexity

Ν	Tests	Means	Standard Deviation
	Pre-test	5.41	1.25
40	Post-test	5.79	1.26
	difference	0.38	0.01



The results of the control group in terms of lexical complexity do not differ from those recorded in fluency, accuracy and grammatical complexity. The difference between the pretest and post-test of a value of 0.38 displayed in table 6.76 is not significant as the informants' level in this area remained nearly the same after a whole semester during which they have been taught according to the product approach. Figure 6.13 shows clearly a very slight increase in some informants' productions while others level remained as it was when they arrived from the secondary school.

Table 6.77 summarizes the results obtained from the control group in terms of fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity.

N	Pretes Differ	t/Posttest ence	Fluend	су	Accur	асу	Gramm comple		Lexical complexi	ty
40			Μ	SD	Μ	SD	Μ	SD	М	SD
			0.61	0.44	0.15	0.4	0.08	- 0.09	0.38	0.01

Table 6.77: The Control Group Overall difference of Pre-test-Post-test Achievements inFluency, Accuracy, Grammatical Complexity and Lexical Complexity

Comparing the results obtained in the pre-test and the post-test, we discover that a slight increase has been recorded. This proves that teaching according to the product approach was not efficient as the difference in means between the two tests was just 0.23 as shown in table 6.78. This allows us to say that using another approach to teaching writing is required, or at least reflection on the way writing is taught is compulsory.

Ν	<b>Overall Pre-test/Post-test</b>	Means	Standard Deviation
	Difference		
40	Post-test	5.6	1.33
	Pre-test	5.37	1.34
	Difference	0.23	-0.01

 Table 6.78: Control Group Pre-test / Post-test Overall Difference

## 6.8.2 Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements

The experimental group means scores obtained in the pre-test and post-test in fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity will be compared to show if any improvement occurred in the informants' productions after having been taught writing according to the Process-Genre Approach. The comparison of the two tests is shown through graphs and tables.

## 6.8.2.1 Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements in Fluency

The comparison of the experimental group pre-test and post-test achievements in fluency are shown in table 6.79 and figure 6.14 below:

Ν	Tests	Means	Standard Deviation
	Pre-test	12,17	3.27
40	Post-test	17,81	2.89
	difference	5,64	-0.38

 Table 6.79: Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test

Achievements in Fluency



Figure 6.14: Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievement in Fluency

As can be inferred from figure 6.14, the subjects' mean scores for fluency obtained in the post-test differ considerably from the mean scores obtained in the pre-test with an overall mean score of 17.81, which represents the average score for this variable. If we refer to table 6.79, we notice that the difference between the post-test and the pre-test was 5.64, confirming that the informants writing development in terms of fluency was significant. All of them improved in this area as shown in figure 6.14 except numbers 9, 19, 32 and 39, four informants out of forty or 10% produced paragraphs nearly of the same length. The rest of the informants (90%) succeeded to write paragraphs in which the mean scores, or the average

number of words as measured in this experiment, were ranging between 13.53 and 21.33 as shown in table 6.70.

Therefore, the obtained data prove that the treatment was efficient in that the large majority of the informants developed not only in terms of fluency, but also in terms of organization of their paragraphs. Despite the fact that this element was not measured, it was very visible to the researcher during the results' evaluation because most of the paragraphs were composed of a topic sentence, supporting details and a conclusion.

## 6.8.2.2 Comparison of Experimental Pre-test and Post-test Achievements in Accuracy

Table 6.80 and figure 6.15 below display the comparison between the experimental group pretest post-test achievements in terms of accuracy.

Ν	Tests	Mean	Standard Deviation
	Pre-test	1,71	0,46
40	Post-test	1,07	0,25
	difference	0,64	0,21

 Table 6.80: Comparison of the experimental Pre-test and Post-test achievements

 in Accuracy



Figure 6.15: Comparison of the Experimental Group Pretest and Posttest Achievements in Accuracy

In table 6.80 all the informants' mean and standard deviation scores of the pre-test and post-test are reported. At the first glance, we notice that most of them improved as the sores decreased significantly as also shown in figure 6.15 in which each students' scores of the pre-test and post-test are very apparent, showing the difference recorded in the latter. We should note here that we used the term decreased because the informants writing improve in terms of accuracy when the number of errors decrease. This confirms our assumption that the implementation of the Process-Genre Approach would bring positive results in terms of accuracy. This is made evident through the difference of the two mean scores which was 0.64. All the informants made less errors in the second test except five out of forty. The participants: number 19, 21, 26 and 37 achievements remained the same as they were before the experiment. These constitute the minority or 12.5% versus 87.5% who produced more accurate paragraphs in the post-test if compared to the pre-test productions. However, these learners still need to write more accurately than this since academic writing is the main one in teaching English in our department, required in exams and especially in professional life.

## 6.8.2.3 Comparison of the experimental Pre-test and Post-test Achievements in Grammatical Complexity

In the area of grammatical complexity, the differences in mean scores between the pre-test and the post-test for the experimental group are shown in table 6.81 and the graph 6.16 below.

Ν	Tests	Means	Std deviations
	Pre-test	1,58	0,34
40	Post-test	1,83	0,38
	difference	0,25	0,04

Table 6.81: Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-testAchievements in Grammatical Complexity



Figure 6.16: Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievement in Grammatical Complexity

In terms of grammatical complexity, as displayed in figure 6.16, most of the informants' mean scores increased except informant number 30 and 37. Considering individual results and the overall difference recorded between the pre-test and the post-test in this area (0.25), we confirm the efficiency of the treatment. However, as a researcher, we seek better results to be achieved in future, so this requires the involvement of all writing teachers, more commitment on their part and also a review of the writing syllabus to reach better results. Other pedagogical implications drawn from this research will be provided at the end of this thesis.

## 6.8.2.4 Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievements in Lexical Complexity

The comparison of the experimental group achievement in the area of lexical complexity is displayed in table 6.82 and figure 6.17 below:

Ν	Tests	Means	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
	Pre-test	5,40	1.36
40	Post-test	6,95	1,29
	difference	1,55	- 0,83

Table 6.82: Overall Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test andPost-test Achievements in Lexical Complexity243



Figure 6.17: Comparison of the Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test Achievement in Lexical Complexity

The evaluation of the three areas measured previously confirmed the efficiency of the treatment significantly. Moreover, according to the mean scores for lexical complexity displayed in table 6.82 and figure 6.17, the results were positive in that most of the informants' writings in the post-test improved significantly if compared with those recorded in the pre-test. The difference of 1.55 realized in the short time devoted to the experiment reveals that better results could be obtained in future if this treatment were extended to the whole year. This confirms that the implementation of a new approach which enhanced students writing strategies led them to develop their writing proficiency in important areas in writing such as fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity. This occurred due to the fact that the Process Genre Approach takes into account the development of learners' cognitive abilities, hence encouraging creative thinking in social contexts on the one hand. On the other hand, it develops their linguistic competence through the presentation of models, their deconstruction, joint construction and ultimately individual production. During all these stages, learners interact between them and their teacher getting benefit from the feedback presented to them. Hence, the writing process strengthened their writing strategies and also increased their awareness about the writing process and thus motivated them to write more than one draft trying each time to improve it like experienced writers.

N		st/Post- ifference	Fluend	су	Accur	acy	Grammat Complex		Lexic Comple	
40	Μ	SD	Μ	SD	Μ	SD	М	SD	М	SD
			5.64	-0.38	0.64	0.21	0.25	-0.04	1.55	- 0.83

Table 6.83: Experimental Group Overall Difference of Pre-test-Post-test Achievements

in Fluency, Accuracy, Grammatical Complexity and Lexical Complexity

Ν	Overall Pre-test/Post-test	Means	Standard Deviations
	Difference		
40	Post-test	6.84	5.35
	Pre-test	5.21	4.77
	Difference	1.63	0.58

 Table 6.84:
 Experimental Group Overall Pre-test / Post-test Difference

Summing up, the overall results of the whole experiment including the pre-test and post test through the use of descriptive statistics are displayed in table 6.83 and 6.84 from which we can infer the efficiency of the treatment which resulted in a difference of 1.63 between the two tests. This allows us as a researcher to consider this significant difference as a success of the implemented writing approach, the Process-Genre Approach, believing at the beginning of the experiment that this socio-cognitive approach fitted the competency-based approach. Thus, to confirm the hypotheses formulated in this research showing the effects of that approach, considered as the independent variable on the dependent variable, writing, and more specifically on fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity, a t-test will be used to test them. But before that, a comparative evaluation of the results obtained by the control and experimental groups will be presented.

## 6.9 Comparative Evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups

After having compared the results obtained in the pre-test and the post-test for the control and the experimental groups separately, we will present a comparative evaluation between the two groups in fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity.

### 6.9.1 Comparative Evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups in Fluency

Table 6.85 below displays all the results recorded by the control and the experimental groups in fluency for both tests and providing the difference between them. In addition, figure 6.18 shows clearly the difference between all the informants of the two groups.

	Control Group				Experimental Group				
Ν	Tests	Means	Std Deviation	Ν	Tests	Means	Std Deviations		
	Pre-test	12.56	2.69		Pre-test	12,17	3.27		
40	Post-test	13.17	3.13	40	Post-test	17,81	2.89		
	difference	0.61	0.44		difference	5,64	-0.38		







Figure 6.18: Comparative Evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups in Fluency

We can notice in table 6.85 that the control and experimental groups achieved nearly the same means in fluency, 12.56 and 12.17 respectively in the pre-test. These means indicate clearly that their performance in this area is approximately the same since their educational background is similar. However, after the exposition of the control group to the product approach and the experimental group to the Progress-Genre Approach, the former recorded a slight increase in the means score, while the latter increased significantly from 12.17 to 17.81. A difference of 5.64 if compared to 0.61 of the control group as it is shown in table 6.86 and 4.64 between the two groups confirms the effects of the Process-Genre Approach on the informants' writing development in this area.

## 6.9.2 Comparative evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups in Accuracy

Table 6.86 and figure 6.19 below display the results obtained in the pre-test and the post-test for the control and experimental groups in the area of accuracy, showing the significant difference between them.

	Control Group			Experimental Group				
Ν	Tests	mean	Std deviation	Ν	Tests	Mean	Std Deviation	
	Pre-test	1.97	0.97		Pre-test	1,71	0,46	
40	Post-test	1.82	0.57	40	Post-test	1,07	0,25	
	difference	0.15	0.4		difference	0,64	0,21	

 Table 6.86: Comparative Evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups in

 Accuracy



Figure 6.19: Comparative Evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups in Accuracy

Concerning the second variable in this evaluation, the pre-test means of accuracy for the two groups, as it appears in table 6. 86 above, are nearly the same as the former obtained 1.97 and the latter 1.71. According to these scores both groups have difficulties in producing paragraphs or more precisely T-units free from errors. The high occurrence of errors reveal the informants' low level in terms of accuracy. But after exposing them to two different approaches as stated above, we notice that the number of errors in the control groups decreased of a value of 0.15 whereas those of the experimental group decreased of a value of 0.64 which is greater than that of the former with a difference of 0.75. This proves that students exposed to the process genre approach performed better than those exposed to the product approach, though even the experimental group informants need to do better to attain an adequate level in this area.

## 6.9.3 Comparative evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups in Grammatical Complexity

The comparative evaluation between the experimental and control groups mean scores and standard deviations in terms of grammatical complexity is displayed in tables 6.87 and figure 20.

	Control Group				Experimental Group			
N	Test	Mean	S/Deviation	N	Test	Mean	Std Deviations	
	Pre-test	1.56	0.45		Pre-test	1,58	0,34	
40	Post-test	1.64	0.36	40	Post-test	1,83	0,38	
	Difference	0.08	-0.09		Difference	0,25	0,04	







Figure 6.20: Comparative Evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups in Grammatical Complexity

In this area, too, the pre-test means scores for the two groups are similar. But, when we compare the post-test mean scores, we find that the experimental group outperformed the control group in grammatical complexity as it is shown in table 6.87 above. The former

recorded a difference of 0.25 in means sores between the two tests while the latter's performance remained the same with a difference of just 0.08. The two groups' performance can be seen clearly in figure 6.20; however, even the experimental group needs to progress more in this area because the informants have to use more complex sentences in their writings. This can be done through the introduction of activities which can help them improve in this area.

## 6.9.4 Comparative Evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups in Lexical Complexity

The last area to be evaluated is lexical complexity. The mean scores and standard deviations for the experimental and control groups are presented in table 6.88 and figure 6.21.

	Control Group			<b>Experimental Group</b>			
Ν	Test	Mean	S/deviation	N	Test	Mean	S/deviation
	Pre-test	5.41	1.25		Pre-test	5,40	1.36
40	Post-test	5.79	1.26	40	Post-test	6,95	1,29
	difference	0.38	0.01		difference	1,55	- 0,83

 Table 6.88: Comparative evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups in

 Lexical Complexity



Figure 6.21: Comparative Evaluation between Experimental and Control Groups in Lexical Complexity

Referring to table 6.88, it is apparent that both groups have the same pre-test means in terms of lexical complexity. Therefore, this can help us to compare them after the experiment to prove its efficiency or its failure. The experimental group results show that the participants increased their means in lexical complexity from 5.40 to 6.95. The difference (1.55) is significant as a result in this area. However, the control group results remained nearly the same because of the slight increase recorded (0.38). The difference in means scores between the post-test experimental group and that of the control group is 1.17 and the difference between most of the participants of both groups is important.

The significant increase in the experimental group's results in fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity confirms by and large the assumptions of this research. The positive impact of the hypotheses prove the efficiency of the Process-Genre Approach, a socio-cognitive approach appropriate to be used under the Competency-Based Approach to help students develop their writing proficiency.

#### 6.10 Hypothesis Testing (inferential statistics)

After having used descriptive statistics to analyze students' writing performance in both tests for the two groups used in this research, the next step the researcher will take is to perform a statistical test.

Data statistical analysis (Crawley, 2007: 32):

The hardest part of any statistical work is getting started. And one of the hardest things about getting started is choosing the right kind of statistical Analysis. The choice depends on the nature of your data and on the particular question you are trying to answer.

To test the hypotheses, inferential statistics has to be used, so we opted for a t-test to compare the two means (a pre-test and a post test means). A t-test is any statistical hypothesis test in which the test statistics follows a student's t -distribution, if the hypothesis is supported (Wikipedia, 2010). There are two types of t-tests: the independent t-test, an unpaired test, when the groups are different (control/ experimental group) and a dependent test, a paired t-test when we deal with the same group tested before and after the treatment (Mackey & Gass, 2005: 273). In the study, the most appropriate t-test is the former because we have used two groups exposed to two different writing approaches. For more precision, the experiment we have conducted is one-tailed in that we opted to test the effectiveness of using the process-based approach in teaching writing.

The purpose of conducting statistical tests is to provide information about the likelihood of an event occurring by chance (Kanji, 2006:265). The statistical test is used to determine the probability that the observed results could have occurred under the null hypothesis. If this probability is less than, or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis and the results are said to be significant.

In this research work, we formulated three hypotheses as stated in the introduction. We should note that our role is to confirm that the null hypothesis has to be rejected and that the alternative hypothesis has a significant difference. Let us clarify this by saying that:

- The null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) assumes that there are no significant differences between the pre-test and post-test means.
- The alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) assumes that there are significant differences between the pre-test and post-test mean scores as it is the case of this study.

In this research, we have to prove that the treatment used in the experiment, the implementation of the Process-Genre Approach, in teaching writing enhanced students' writing proficiency in terms of fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity. In order to do this, we have chosen:

- The independent sampled-test to check our hypotheses,
- 0.05 as a p-value which means that only 5% of the results is due to chance while 95% are likely to be sure. Small p-values suggest that the null hypothesis is unlikely to be true. The smaller it is, the more convincing is the rejection of the null hypothesis.
- Degree of freedom suitable for this T-test is: N+N

The following stages will be followed to calculate the independent test for this experiment (Miller, 1984:. 80):

I. Calculate the two samples means  $X_1, X_2$  using the formula

$$\overline{x} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

II. Calculate the two samples variances  $S_1^2$  and  $S_2^2$  using the formula;

$$S^2 = \frac{\sum X^2}{N} - \frac{\sum X^2}{X}$$

III. Substitute the values of:  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $S_1^2$ ,  $S_2^2$ ,  $N_1$ ,  $N_2$  in the computational formula for t:

$$t_{N_1} + N_2 - 2 = \frac{(X_1 - X_2)\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}}$$

### 6.10.1 Hypothesis Testing in Fluency

Before proceeding to hypothesis testing, let us remind the reader of the alternative hypothesis formulated in this research and specifically in this area:

 $H_1$  = the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach will enhance students' writing in terms of fluency.

Thus the null hypothesis is:

 $H_0$  = the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach will not enhance students' writing in terms of fluency.

**P-Value or**  $\alpha = 0.05$ 

**Degree of freedom**=  $N_1 + N_2 - 2 = 40 + 40 - 2 = 78$ **Critical value:** 1.66

In order to reject the null hypothesis or accept the alternative hypothesis, we have to calculate the t-test, but before doing that we need to know the means and squared means as done in the table below in order to calculate the differences between the pre-test and post-test means for both the control and experimental groups.

	Experime	ental group	Control Group		
Informants	Post-test Mean	Post-test Mean Squared	Post-test Mean	Post-testMean squared	
1	16,88	284.93	11.12	123.65	
2	19,22	369.40	8.16	66.58	
3	20,42	408.84	13.25	175.56	
4	18,22	331.96	7.33	53.72	
5	20,37	414.93	18.33	335.98	
6	18	324	13.25	175.56	
7	14,22	202.20	14.36	206.20	
8	14,75	217.56	13.5	182.25	
9	14,15	200.22	10.33	106.70	
10	20,5	420.25	15	225	
11	21	441	13.24	175.29	
12	16,28	265.03	17	289	
13	18,62	346.70	14.58	212.57	
14	20	400	17	289	
15	19,14	366.33	20.16	406.42	
16	23,33	544.28	23	529	
17	14,77	218.15	22	484	
18	17,8	316.84	15	225	
19	15,4	237.16	17	289	
20	21,2	449.44	15	225	
21	16,88	284.93	14	196	
22	19,14	366.33	14.68	215.50	
23	12,5	156.25	13	169	
24	16,22	263.08	9.5	90.25	
25	20,33	413.30	13	169	
26	26	676	10	100	
27	13,53	183.06	12.16	147.86	
28	20,33	413.30	12	144	
29	21,33	454.96	11.78	138.76	
30	12,7	156.25	15.33	235	
31	18,7	349.69	16.98	288.32	
32	9,96	99.20	12	144	
33	18	324	9	81	
34	15	225	13	169	
35	18,6	345.96	9.33	87.04	
36	18,85	355.32	13.01	169.26	
37	18,3	334.89	7.29	53.14	
38	23	529	6.33	40.06	
39	18,57	344.84	9	81	
			1	-	
40	10,27	105.47	9	81	

 Table 6.89: Experimental and Control Groups Scores Differences in Fluency

**Calculation of the T-test in Fluency** 

$$\overline{X}_{1} = \frac{\Sigma X_{1}}{N_{1}} = \frac{715.91}{40} = 17.89$$

$$S_{1}^{2} = \frac{\Sigma X_{1}^{2}}{N_{1}} - \overline{X}_{1}^{2} = \frac{13140.05}{40} - 17.89^{2} = 8.45$$

$$\overline{X}_{2} = \frac{\Sigma X_{2}}{N_{2}} = \frac{498}{40} = 12.45$$

$$S_{2}^{2} = \frac{\Sigma X_{2}^{2}}{N_{2}} - \overline{X}_{2}^{2} = \frac{8139.93}{40} - 12.45^{2} = 48.49$$

$$t_{N_1} + N_2 - 2 = \frac{(X_1 - X_2)\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}}$$

$$= \frac{(17.89 - 12.45)\sqrt{40 + 40 - 2} + 40 \times 40}{\sqrt{(40 \times 8.45 + 40 \times 48.49) + 40}} = \frac{5.44\sqrt{78 \times 1600}}{2227.6 \times 80}$$
$$= \frac{1507.53}{422.14} = 3.57$$

**T-test in Fluency** 

Ν	Tests	Mean	Std deviation	T-test value	P-value
	Pre-test	12.17	3.27	3.57	
40	Post-test	17.81	2.89	/	0,05
	difference	5.64	0.38	/	

 Table 6.90:
 T-test in Fluency

#### Interpretations

After having seen the results of this t-test, we conclude that there is a significant difference on students' writing in terms of fluency since the value of t (5.64) is greater than the critical value for seventy-eight degrees of freedom (1.66, see appendix 5). This confirms that students' productions after the treatment showed much more fluency; in other words, the informants were able to produce longer paragraphs than those before the treatment in a similar period of time. This can also be explained as easiness for them to express themselves retrieving from knowledge stored in the long term memory thanks to the training they had been exposed to during the treatment.

## 6.10.2 Hypothesis Testing in Accuracy

The alternative hypothesis in this area is:

 $H_1$ = the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach will enhance students' writing in term of accuracy.

 $H_0$  = the implantation of the Competency-Based Approach will not enhance students' writing in terms of accuracy.

**P-Value or**  $\alpha = 0.05$ 

**Degree of freedom:**  $N_1 + N_2 - 2 = 40 + 40 - 2 = 78$ 

Critical value= 1.66

The data needed to do the t-test are calculated in the table below before using the suitable formula.

	Experime	ental group	Control Group		
Informants	Post-test mean	Post-test Mean Squared	Post-test Mean	Post-test Mean squared	
1	0,77	0.59	1.82	3.31	
2	0,88	0.77	2	4	
3	0,71	0.50	2	4	
4	0,66	0.43	1.86	3.45	
5	1,87	3.49	1.5	2.25	
6	2,1	4.41	2.16	4.46	
7	1,12	1.25	2.5	6.25	
8	1,5	2.25	2.	4	
9	0,6	0.36	1.98	3.92	
10	1	1	1.66	2.75	
11	1,16	1.34	1.62	2.22	
12	1,14	1.29	1.89	3.57	
13	0,87	0.75	1.6	2.56	
14	0,88	0.77	2.25	5.06	
15	1	1	2	4	
16	1,77	3.13	2.75	7.56	
17	1,22	1.48	2.5	6.25	
18	1	1	1.5	2.25	
19	1,7	2.89	2.66	7.07	
20	0,7	0.49	1.25	1.56	
21	1,88	3.53	1.2	1.44	
22	1	1	1	1	
23	0,75	0.56	2	4	
24	0,77	0.59	2.16	4.66	
25	0,77	0.59	1.28	1.63	
26	1,44	2.07	1.5	2.25	
27	0,92	0.84	2	4	
28	0,66	0.43	1.77	3.13	
29	1,16	1.34	1.25	1.56	
30	1	1	1.66	2.75	
30	0,7	0.49	1.73	2.99	
32	0,7	0.25	1.5	2.25	
32	0,62	0.38	1.39	1.93	
33	1,16	1.34	3	9	
35	1,10	1.96	1.76	3.09	
<u> </u>	0,71	0.50	2	4	
<u> </u>	1	1	2	4	
37	1	1	1.95	3.80	
<u> </u>	1,42	2.01	2.16	4.66	
<u> </u>	1,42	2.10	1.99	3.96	
40	$\sum X_{1^{2}} = 41.96$	$\sum X_{1^{2}} = 52.73$	$\sum X_2^2 = 72.3$	$\sum X_2^2 = 146.59$	

**Calculation of the T-test in Accuracy** 

$$\begin{split} \overline{X}_1 &= \frac{\Sigma X_1}{N_1} = \frac{41.96}{40} = 1.09\\ S_1^2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_1^2}{N_1} - \overline{X}_1^2 = \frac{52.73}{40} - 1.09^2 = 0.13\\ \overline{X}_2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_2}{N_2} = \frac{72.3}{40} = 1.80\\ S_2^2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_2^2}{N_2} - \overline{X}_2^2 = \frac{146.59}{40} - 1.80^2 = 0.42\\ t_{N_1} + N_2 - 2 &= \frac{(X_1 - X_2)\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1 N_2}}{\sqrt{[(N]_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}} \end{split}$$

$$= \frac{(1.09 - 1.80)\sqrt{78 \times 40 \times 40}}{\sqrt{(40 \times 0.13 + 40 \times 0.42)40 + 40}} = \frac{-0.70\sqrt{78 \times 1600}}{\sqrt{(5.2 + 16.8)80}}$$
$$= \frac{250.82}{41.95} = -5.98$$

**T-test in Accuracy** 

Ν	Tests	Mean	Std deviation	T-test value	<b>P-value</b>
	Pre-test	1.71	0.40	5.98	0.07
40	Post-test	1.07	0.25		0,05
	difference	0.64	0.21		

 Table 6.92: T-test in Accuracy

### Interpretations

As the observed value of t (5.98) is greater than the critical value for seventy-eight degrees of freedom (1.66), we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. This means that the treatment realized through the implementation of the CBA had positive effects on the informants' productions and proves that using the Process-Genre Approach under CBA is effective in teaching writing to first year students who failed to develop their proficiency previously because of lack of understanding that a change in teaching a foreign language such as English should also be accompanied by the search for the most appropriate methodology in teaching different skills including writing.

## 6.10.3 Hypothesis Testing in Grammatical Complexity

The alternative hypothesis:

 $H_1$ = the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach will enhance students' writing in terms of grammatical complexity.

 $H_0$ = the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach will not enhance students' writing in terms of accuracy

**P-Value or**  $\alpha = 0.05$ 

**Degree of freedom**=  $N_1 + N_2 - 2 = 40 + 40 - 2 = 78$ 

Critical value: 1.66

	Experime	ental group	Control Group		
Informants	Post-test mean	Post-test Mean Squared	Post-test Mean	Post-test Mean squared	
1	1,88	3.53	1.11	1.23	
2	2,33	5.42	1.66	2.57	
3	1,85	3.42	1.75	3.06	
4	1,77	3.13	1.33	1.76	
5	1,75	3.06	1.5	2.25	
6	1,8	3.24	1.66	2.57	
7	1,44	2.07	2	4	
8	1,25	1.56	2.66	7.07	
9	1,6	2.56	1.28	1.63	
10	2,4	5.76	1.66	2.57	
11	2,33	5.42	1.33	1.76	
12	1,85	3.42	2	4	
13	1,62	2.62	1.8	3.24	
14	2,25	5.06	1.5	2.25	
15	1,85	3.42	1.8	3.24	
16	2,58	6.65	1.2	1.44	
17	1,22	1.48	1.8	3.24	
18	1,6	2.56	1.75	3.06	
19	1,6	2.56	2.42	5.85	
20	2,3	5.29	1.5	2.25	
21	1,44	2.07	2	4	
22	2	4	1.77	3.13	
23	1,37	1.87	1.62	2.62	
24	2,11	4.45	1.16	1.34	
25	1,88	3.53	1.12	1.25	
26	1,88	3.53	1.37	1.87	
27	1,69	2.85	1.2	1.44	
28	2,66	7.07	1.16	1.34	
29	2,33	5.42	2.2	4.84	
30	1,5	2.25	1.5	2.25	
31	1,8	3.24	1.6	2.56	
31	1,3	1.46	1.5	2.25	
32	1,62	2.62	1.8	3.24	
<u> </u>	1,83	3.34	1.5	2.25	
35	2,4	5.76	1.5	2.25	
<u> </u>	1,87	3.49	1.12	1.25	
<u> </u>	1,87	2.25	1.12	2.25	
37	1,5	3.53	1.5	2.25	
<u> </u>	1,85	3.42	2.8	7.84	
<u> </u>	1,85	1.61	2.8	4.66	
40	$\sum X_{1^{2} = 73.36}^{1,27}$	$\sum X_{1^{2} = 136.46}$	$\sum X_2^2 = 63.39$	$\frac{4.00}{\sum X_2^2 = 113.92}$	

 Table 6.93: Experimental and Control Groups Scores Differences in Grammatical

Complexity

Calculation of the T-test in Grammatical Complexity

$$\begin{split} \bar{X}_{1} &= \frac{\Sigma X_{1}}{N_{1}} = \frac{73.36}{40} = 1.83 \\ S_{1}^{2} &= \frac{\Sigma X_{1}^{2}}{N_{1}} - \bar{X}_{1}^{2} = \frac{136.45}{40} - 1.83^{2} = 0.07 \\ \bar{X}_{2} &= \frac{\Sigma X_{2}}{N_{2}} = \frac{63.39}{40} = 1.58 \\ S_{2}^{2} &= \frac{\Sigma X_{2}^{2}}{40} - 1.58^{2} = \frac{113.92}{40} - 1.58^{2} = 0.35 \\ t_{N1} + N_{2} - 2 &= \frac{(\bar{X}_{1} - \bar{X}_{2})\sqrt{(N_{1} + N_{2} - 2)N_{1}N_{2}}}{\sqrt{t}(N]_{1}S_{1}^{2} + N_{2}S_{2}^{2})(N_{1} + N_{2})} \\ &= \frac{(1.83 - 1.58)\sqrt{78 \times 40 \times 40}}{\sqrt{(40 \times 0.07 + 40 \times 0.35)40 + 40}} = \frac{0.25\sqrt{78 \times 1600}}{\sqrt{(2.8 + 14)80}} \\ &= \frac{88.31}{36.66} = 2.40 \end{split}$$

## **T-test in Grammatical Complexity**

Ν	Tests	Mean	Std deviation	T-test value	P-value
	Pre-test	1.58	0.34	2.40	
40	Post-test	1.83	0.38		0,05
	difference	0.25	0.04		

## Table 6.94: T-test in Grammatical Complexity

## Interpretations

As observed in the results of hypothesis testing, the value of t (2.40) is greater than the critical value (1.66) for t required for seventy-eight degrees of freedom. This proves that the treatment implemented to the experimental group was efficient in terms of grammatical complexity in that students' productions realized in the post-test are positive if compared with those recorded before the experiment. The more learners become proficient, the more their writing becomes more complex containing more than one clause per t-unit

## 6.10.4 Hypothesis Testing in Lexical Complexity

The alternative hypothesis:

 $H_1$ = the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach will enhance students' writing in terms of lexical complexity.

 $H_0$ = the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach will not enhance students' writing in terms of lexical complexity

**P-value** or  $\alpha = 0.05$ 

**Degree of freedom**=  $N_1 + N_2 - 2 = 40 + 40 - 2 = 78$ 

Critical value: 1.66
	Experime	ental group	Control Group		
Informants	Posttest mean	Posttest Mean Squared	Postest Mean	PostestMean squared	
1	6,44	41.47	4.45	19.80	
2	6,66	44.35	4.5	20.25	
3	7,71	59.44	4.96	24.60	
4	9,55	91.20	5	25	
5	7,5	56.25	5.66	32.03	
6	6	36	6.1	37.21	
7	5,33	28.40	6.5	42.25	
8	6,25	39.06	6.9	47.61	
9	6,8	46.24	4.7	22.09	
10	8	64	7.1	50.41	
11	6,83	46.64	6	36	
12	7,28	52.99	7.5	56.25	
13	7,62	58.06	1.92	3.68	
14	7,77	60.37	7.5	56.25	
15	7	49	9.1	82.81	
16	7,88	62.09	4.86	23.61	
17	6	36	8.1	65.61	
18	8	64	6.5	42.25	
19	5,1	26.01	7.87	61.93	
20	6,9	47.61	5.95	35.40	
21	6,44	41.47	4.27	18.23	
22	7,87	61.93	4.7	22.09	
23	5,12	26.21	5	25	
24	6,44	41.47	6.64	44.08	
25	6,22	38.68	6	36	
26	7,66	58.67	4.5	20.25	
27	5,61	31.47	4.38	19.18	
28	6,88	47.33	5.22	27.24	
29	9	81	7	49	
30	4,7	22.09	9	81	
31	6,5	42.25	7.6	57.76	
32	4,35	18.92	4.39	19.27	
33	8	64	4.95	24.50	
34	8,83	77.96	5.07	25.70	
35	8,6	73.96	5.97	35.64	
<u> </u>	9,87	97.41	4.5	20.25	
37	6,5	42.25	5.69	32.37	
38	9,33	87.04	6.13	37.57	
39	4,85	23.52	4.56	20.79	
40	4,79	22.94	5	25	
UF	$\sum X_{1=}267.38$	$\sum X_{1^{2}} = 2009.75$		$\sum X_2^2 = 1426.68$	
	∠	$\angle \Lambda_1^{-} = 2007.15$	$  \Delta A_2^ 231.74$	$\angle \Lambda 2^{-1420.00}$	

 Table 6.95: Experimental and Control Groups Scores Differences in Lexical

Complexity

**Calculation of the T-test in Lexical Complexity** 

$$\begin{split} \bar{X}_{1} &= \frac{\Sigma X_{1}}{N_{1}} = \frac{267.38}{40} = 6.68\\ S_{1}^{2} &= \frac{\Sigma X_{1}^{2}}{N_{1}} - \bar{X}_{1}^{2} = \frac{2009.75}{40} - 6.68^{2} = 5.62\\ \bar{X}_{2} &= \frac{\Sigma X_{2}}{N_{2}} = \frac{231.74}{40} = 5.79\\ S_{2}^{2} &= \frac{\Sigma X_{2}^{2}}{40} - \bar{X}_{2}^{2} = \frac{1426.68}{40} - 5.79^{2} = 2.14\\ t_{N1} + N_{2} - 2 = \frac{(X_{1} - X_{2})\sqrt{(N_{1} + N_{2} - 2)N_{1}N_{2}}}{\sqrt{K(N]_{1}S_{1}^{2} + N_{2}S_{2}^{2})(N_{1} + N_{2})} \end{split}$$

$$= \frac{(6.68 - 5.96)\sqrt{78 \times 40 \times 40}}{\sqrt{(40 \times 5.62 + 40 \times 2.14)40 + 40}} = \frac{0.89\sqrt{78 \times 1600}}{\sqrt{(224.8 + 85.14)80}}$$
$$= \frac{314.41}{157.46} = 1.98$$

T-test in lexical complexity

Ν	Tests	Mean	Std deviation	T-test value	P-value
40	Pre-test	5.40	1.36	1.99	0.05
	Post-test	6.95	1.29		
	difference	1.55	-0.83		

#### Table 6.96: T-test in Lexical Complexity

#### Interpretations

The t-test value found above (1.98) suggests that the null hypothesis has to be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted because the significance is great if compared with the critical value (1.66). This proves the efficiency of the experiment and therefore that of the process genre approach to writing which succeeded in a limited time to help students improve their lexical competence. This has occurred due to the Genre Approach which provided them with descriptive and persuasive texts exposing them to models that supplied them with the grammatical and rhetorical features of each one. Besides, collaborative work during the writing process enabled them to benefit from their peers experiences and their teacher assistance, mainly in brainstorming ideas and dealing with activities enabling them to reinforce their linguistic abilities.

#### 6.11 Summary of the Quantitative Findings

To summarize, none of the hypotheses predicted in this study was rejected. First, descriptive analysis of the four variables, fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity implied a significant increase in all of them in the post-test if compared with the pre-test which reflected the participants' low level in writing. In spite of the implementation of the CBA in teaching English in middle and secondary education, first year students' writings in our department are still weak. For more precision, these participants have been tested just as they arrived to the university (a pre-test and also two questionnaires administered to both writing teachers and a sample of the same learners including the participants in the experiment). The data collected was intended to prove that the CBA failed in middle and secondary education to develop students' writing proficiency because teachers did not apply an appropriate writing approach fitting the reform. It is why, we predicted that the use of the Process-Genre Approach would suit the change and would bring improvement. Second, the unpaired t-test results used to test the hypotheses confirmed the success of the experiment due to the significant differences obtained in all the variables tested if compared with the critical value of thirty nine degrees of freedom for the t-test.

#### **6.12 Qualitative Results**

After having dealt with descriptive and inferential statistics to show the quantitative results obtained in this study, we will provide the qualitative results obtained from two post interviews with some of the informants used in the experiment in addition to the writing teacher who conducted it.

#### 6.12.1 Results of the Students' Post Interview

As already stated, the main purpose of this interview was used in conjunction with the post-test results to supplement the findings and to provide an in-depth insight into the experiment results. This is based on Wallace (1998: 124)) who argues that these techniques are classified as 'introspective' since they involve respondents reporting on themselves, their lives, their beliefs, their interactions and so on and can be used to elicit factual data. This is also stressed by Cohen *et. al.* (2005) in that 'they can yield rich material''. Triangulation from this perspective should be understood as a strategy that attempts to add more vigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to the research study (Silverman, 2006: 291).

The qualitative data generated by this interview validated the obtained results and helped the researcher build awareness about students' perceptions and attitudes towards the treatment and its effectiveness in developing their writing competency. Just after the post-test, an in-depth interview was conducted with a subset of fifteen experiment respondents who were invited to participate used in this individual face-to face, semi-structured interview which was conducted in English and lasted one hour. The interview was held in a quiet classroom and the respondents' answers were digitally recorded and then and later transcribed manually. The guiding questions can be found in appendix (5). The categories of the questions identified when coding the interview can be seen in the analysis below.

#### 6.12.1.1 Students' Perceptions of the Writing Process

Students were aware that in order to produce a good paragraph, they should not write directly as they did in the pre-test, but they should follow a process similar to that of experienced writers, starting by brainstorming and writing more than one draft seeking improvement and relying on their teacher's and peers' feedback. All of them were able to name the different phases of the writing process and found that it was beneficial for them to proceed in the same way as good writers. Two respondents even added that as they were aware of how to write, they felt more confident and able to write more effectively. This is apparent in most of the students' post writings which are better than their productions in the pre-experiment test.

#### 6.12.1.2. Students' Experience in Paragraph Writing

Bearing in mind that the questions under this heading looked into students' experience in writing a paragraph, we wanted to confirm that they were aware of the good organization of a paragraph as well as the conventions used in each genre. In fact, all of them were self confident while identifying the different parts of a paragraph which are: topic sentence, supporting details and conclusion. Most of them declared that before the experiment they used to write without following any plan and just listed sentences about the topic lacking coherence. One of them added that they knew about the importance of the topic sentence and the supporting details in the production of a good paragraph. All of them also revealed that they gained knowledge about different types of texts and could to a certain extent differentiate between mainly the ones dealt with in the experiment (description and persuasion). Most of them believed in their ability to use the conventions required for the two genres, however, they complained about time and expressed the need to write more or to practice more to be more proficient. It is also the researcher's opinion that three hours per week devoted to writing in the first year is not enough and that the writing syllabus should be modified according to the students' needs if we want to reach better results. Knowing about the complexity of the writing skill, as a researcher, we believe that students need more and more training to develop their competency in this skill.

# 6.12.1.3 Students' Perceptions and Attitudes towards their Peers and Teacher's Feedback

Most of the interviewees reported that they developed learning and social skills through cooperative learning, they did not use this term, but they meant the fact of working in groups and benefiting from their experiences. They were happy because they could express their own ideas openly and freely and provide their peers with helpful suggestions, a new experience to them. Such a kind of atmosphere in a student-centred classroom encouraged them to take more responsibility of their own learning, to work in cooperation and to develop more autonomy. However, some students raised some concerns about peer feedback concerning their drafts arguing that they did not expect their peers to correct their linguistic errors if their level was the same or below their own. This did not mean that they did not benefit from their peers because they developed a positive attitude towards being criticized and criticizing others' writing. However, teachers should acknowledge the concerns raised and train students extensively so that they become able to provide their peers with constructive comments and can have a positive impact on students' revision types and quality of paragraphs. Training can be done through the use of checklists as in the previous chapter.

Students' beliefs and attitudes concerning teacher feedback were all positive as they expressed their confidence in the teacher's ability to guide them and provide them with helpful feedback either in the choice of the appropriate topic sentence, coherence or linguistically. All of them felt at ease while receiving feedback and tried to improve their paragraphs according to the teacher's remarks. However, some of them complained that the big number of students in the group gives them little opportunity to receive feedback whenever it is needed. This represents one of the factors hindering students training in writing as it becomes impossible for the teacher to supervise all the students during the writing process although formative assessment is something essential in order to show them their strengths and weaknesses.

#### 6.12.1.4 Students' Perceptions of their Writing Development

When asked whether they have improved in writing if compared to the beginning of the year, all of the students answered positively. They reported that their paragraphs were more organized and that they did not write anything related to the topic as they used to do, but they had learnt that the selection of the most important ideas and their order is primordial in writing. Two of them added that writing in English was better clarified for them and that their cognitive abilities in performing this skill were better developed than before the experiment.

After getting a general answer, we asked them specific questions to confirm the hypotheses formulated in this research. Most of the students (75%) found that they developed in terms of fluency. Here the researcher explained the concept 'fluency' in writing in order to avoid confusion concerning this terms. 60% found that their paragraphs developed in terms of grammar and lexical complexity arguing that the models presented to them in the writing courses helped them not only to write more complex sentences, but to enrich their vocabulary and therefore to develop their lexical competence concerning the genres used in the classroom. However, most of them still make a lot of errors in writing. This means that just a few students developed in terms of accuracy as shown in the post test results and confirmed by the students themselves. This calls for a deep study to identify the reasons why students are unable to produce a piece of writing free of errors. This also calls for the involvement of grammar teachers and coordination with writing teachers including a review of the syllabi of the two modules.

#### 6.12.1.5 Students' Difficulties

Most interviewees (65%) reported that they were anxious about their situation because in spite of the improvement they achieved in writing in terms of organization and fluency, they still make a lot of errors mainly in grammar and mechanics. When asked about the reasons, most of them of them (80%) found that they always think in Arabic and then translate their thoughts. Others complained about the lack of practice of grammatical structures either in previous education or at the university. Therefore, we can deduce that students tend to refer to literal translation because of the mother tongue interference and also to intralingual interference which is the result of lack of practice of the English language structures in previous learning and also at the university level as shown in our magister dissertation (Chelli, 2006). As a solution to this problem, all the students suggested that grammar courses should be extended to enable them to write more accurately. We totally agree with them and add that grammar should be taught in context and in line with the writing course requiring all the teachers' contribution to help students improve in terms of accuracy. This can be criticized by saying that the most important is that learners can communicate in a written form, but we should bear in mind that this writing is considered as academic and that most of them will be future teachers. So this urges us as researchers to find remedies for such a critical situation.

#### 6.12.1.6 Students' Suggestions

In addition to the extension of grammar courses stated previously; the participants find that the content of the programme of grammar does not really help students improve. They also complained about the time lost in the first semester in theory concerning writing instead of stressing practice. As a teacher and a researcher, we also find it necessary to elaborate a new writing syllabus based on students' needs and on recent theoretical grounds. This calls for the collaboration of teachers of grammar and writing and also the need for a kind of refreshment in those areas in order to be updated. This can allow us as teachers to relate teaching practices to recent findings and try to adapt them to the Algerian context. In this way, we can find remedies to our students' difficulties.

Moreover, the participants were aware that reading is very helpful for writing, but they expressed their inability to choose appropriate reading and according to their comments, we deduced that as teachers we should train them to read so that they can develop into effective readers. Therefore, reading activities should be incorporated into writing courses in addition to the models the students are provided with before dealing with each type of writing in the phase of modelling.

#### **6.12.2 The Teacher's Interview**

After having interviewed students, we also interviewed the teacher who conducted the experiment. This interview was also semi-structured and lasted half an hour during which we tried to know the teacher's attitude towards the writing approach adopted in the experiment believing that it is the appropriate one to be applied under the CBA on the one hand. And on the other hand, this participant's opinion on the effectiveness of such an approach is of great importance because of her experience in teaching writing and because we noticed that before being involved in our experiment, she was always complaining about the students' low level and the need for finding a remedy and elaborating another syllabus suiting the students' need and also the change in the Algerian educational system. The last question in this interview consisted of knowing what she could suggest as improvement to be made in teaching writing.

#### 6.12.2.1 The Teacher's Attitudes towards the Process-Genre Approach

When asked about her attitude towards the process genre approach, the teacher found that on the one hand such an approach enhances students cognitive abilities as the process approach principles is to train them to write following a process generally adopted by experienced writers. This develops their awareness about planning and writing more than one draft before reaching a final and more acceptable piece of writing. On the other hand, the genre approach allows them to be exposed to different real life types of writing through which they become aware of the linguistic features of each genre and also emphasizes the discourse value of the structures they are using. This means that this approach increases students' awareness of writing conventions as organization, from and genre. She added saying that after deconstructing a model as done in the lessons in chapter five and after writing an example together with the help of the teacher (joint construction), the students were able to a certain extent to write their own based on what they did before and on their peers and teacher's feedback.

When asked whether the process genre approach fits the CBA as well as the LMD system, she answered positively because she finds that the reform at the university level should be followed by a change in teaching approaches or moving from traditional teaching, teacher-centred, to student-centred teaching. She continued arguing that both the competency-based approach and the process genre approach promote cooperative learning and prepare autonomous learners, effective in real life situations. In fact, the researcher shares the same view as both approaches are socio-constructivist necessary today because learning specific genre construction can be considered as a way to help students come up with appropriate actual writing in their real life. The interviewee added saying that adopting such an approach could bring improvement in students' writing, but this requires from teachers a great deal of commitment to reach positive results. First, they should know about theory in order to translate it into practice and second, they should try to adapt such theoretical concepts to the Algerian context in a way that goes along with globalization in order to facilitate students' mobility and job opportunities.

#### 6.12.2.2 The Teacher's Opinion of Students' Writing Progress

When the teacher was asked to give her opinion about the students' progress if compared to previous years, she confirmed that the implementation of the process genre approach in teaching writing came up with positive results. She continued explaining that the use of a combination of two approaches proved efficient in the way that the process genre approach enhanced students' writing strategies; they learnt that writing implies to write step by step to reach the final product. The use of this approach created a cooperative atmosphere between the students themselves and the teacher whose role was to move among the students providing them with feedback. This kind of formative assessment reinforced their selfconfidence and motivated them to improve their paragraphs. Exchange between the teacher and students helped them to learn new techniques and enhanced their critical thinking.

The teacher added that in fact students developed their writing proficiency in terms of organization. Their paragraphs were better organized including a topic sentence and all the necessary parts. They no more write randomly putting any ideas, they tend to be selective; however, their vocabulary still needs to be enriched. This can be reached by providing them with reading passages followed by appropriate activities. Their paragraphs were longer than before, this means that they progressed in terms of fluency, but they still make grammatical and spelling errors even if they were less than before the treatment. Thus, this calls for remedial activities and also the need not only to extend grammatical courses, but also to review the syllabus. The need for a new syllabus meeting the students' needs is essential, together we stress the need of teaching grammar in context to train students to produce a piece of writing acceptable in terms of accuracy. This also concerns grammatical complexity in which there was a certain progress but students still need to be trained to practise writing compound and complex sentences and at the same time enabling them to develop their lexical completence.

#### 6.12.2.3 The Teacher's Suggestions

Education, in general emphasizes writing for taking tasks, or the only reason to practice writing is to pass examinations or to get a good grade. This focus on examinations reduces writing to a product and receiving a grade from teachers. All of this is not likely to make students interested in writing which becomes decontextualized and artificial giving students no real sense of purpose and perspective of a target audience, however, the implementation of an integrated approach, the process and genre approaches, allows them to relate real situations though writing is done in a classroom. This also motivates them and prepares them for

audience outside. Thus, she suggested this approach to be used not only for teaching first year students, but for all the levels in our department, but this of course requires a general review of all the writing syllabuses.

The participant added that when using the Process-Genre Approach, first teachers should be aware that writing is difficult, therefore, they should adopt the role of assistants and guides and should work closely with students encouraging them and providing them with helpful feedback which is very important for them to revise their paragraphs effectively, and thus to improve in writing. Second, they should train students using writing strategies by demonstrating the effectiveness of prewriting, drafting and revising. In this way, learners will develop their writing competence. Third teachers should include listening, speaking and reading skills in writing because the integration of the four skills promotes the expansion of students' overall competence.

Moreover, for teaching and learning to be effective, teachers also need to reflect upon their teaching and realize that it holds a very important role as an agent for social changes. Therefore, it is advisable to prepare lessons based on students' needs and also on the goals set each time to be able to test the extent to which progress has been achieved. In addition, teachers should be more creative to motivate students and also to keep them aware of future challenges by promoting higher-order thinking such as critical and creative thinking. In order to achieve this, the good selection of genres to be used is also an important factor for the success of the process genre approach implementation in the Algerian context.

Furthermore, in spite of the participant's belief that the Process-Genre Approach has proved effective in the experiment, it is advised to be adopted not only in our department as a writing approach, but in middle and secondary education as well. Being a socio-constructivist approach fitting the Competency-Based Approach, it is not easy in such large classes as ours. In this case, providing all the students with constructive comments and feedback is not evident. So, class size should not exceed thirty students in order to be able to obtain better results in addition to the organization of workshops, seminars and training allowing teachers and researchers not only to share their experiences, but to find a solution to the Algerian students' difficulties in the writing skill.

#### 6.13 Summary of Qualitative Findings

Qualitative results realized through two interviews show to a great extent the success achieved in this research as, on the one hand, the participants expressed their satisfaction with the instruction they received. All of them revealed that they gained knowledge about different types of texts and developed awareness about the way a paragraph is organized and the necessity of writing more than one draft in a process during which they received feed back and interacted positively to improve their writing. This allowed them to develop not only their writing strategies, but they also developed linguistic competencies in terms of fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity. However, they complain that they still need to be more accurate as they are still making errors and that their writings still lack complexity as they tend to write simple sentences not rich enough in terms of vocabulary.

On the other hand, the writing teacher confirmed the effectiveness of the Process-Genre Approach in that students' paragraphs developed if compared to those produced before the treatment. In addition, she found that a change towards a methodology suitable to the reform at the university is required because what is needed is to promote collaborative learning and prepare autonomous learners able to express themselves through writing either in a formal or an informal situation. However, we should admit that in spite of the positive results recorded in this study, learners still need teachers' commitment to overcome their problems in writing and especially linguistic ones due to their weak background.

#### Conclusion

Both the quantitative and qualitative results drawn from this study, as described and discussed in this chapter, confirm to some extent the effectiveness of having implemented the Process-Genre Approach to writing instruction to first year students in our department. In fact, this approach enhanced students writing in terms of fluency, accuracy, grammatical complexity and lexical complexity as proved by descriptive and inferential statistics used to test the hypotheses predicted in this study. On the one hand, the Genre Approach has the potential and good influence to develop students' English competencies by understanding different genres through direct and explicit techniques. The good influence can be identified in the enhancement of their participation in speaking and writing in joint construction and then in individual construction.

On the other hand, the Process Approach enhanced learners' critical thinking through the different stages of the writing process during which students gained much self-confidence and developed different writing strategies enabling them to be effective problem solvers in future life. Thus, the combination of the process and genre approaches offers the learner the opportunity to develop not only his linguistic competencies, but also his critical thinking through meaningful activities such as meaningful reading, questioning, classroom discussion, and written assignments, including revision and feedback. All of these are considered as powerful vehicles in promoting critical thinking, necessary for the development of an intellectual being. However, the implementation of such an integrated approach requires some preparation, not only in designing classroom activities that meet the students' needs, but also in creating a democratic atmosphere facilitating their engagement in learning by doing as advocated by the CBA and thus enabling them to gain competencies.

## **Chapter Seven**

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### Chapter Seven Conclusion and Implications

#### Introduction

In higher education settings, the role of English is very important because for learners in advanced academic settings like the university, the use of writing extends beyond the basic goals for personal expression. Rather, university writers are often expected to analyse and interpret information critically, synthesize disparate sets of information, argue alternative perspectives and create information through effective writing in the various subjects they are exposed to. Thus, the ability to write a good essay as a major vehicle of individual expression often exclusively determines a student's success in his or her area of study. However, most of the students did not succeed to develop their writing ability during the previous years in our department. We found this issue worth investigating mainly this year (2010/2011) during which we have received students from the secondary school educated according to the CBA, adopted due to the reform, seeking improvement in the field of education and fitting the rapid change in the other fields caused by globalization. Another thing which motivated us to conduct such a study is the assumption that even after the implementation of the CBA, the problem remains the same. So, as a researcher, we wanted to prove that such an approach could have brought better results than before the reform if an appropriate approach to writing instruction had been applied together with learning English under this approach. In this chapter, we will provide a summary of the main findings and then discuss their implications and limitations. Finally, we will outline some potentially fruitful areas of future research.

#### 7.1 Summary of the Findings

Believing that the Process-Genre Approach is the most appropriate to writing instruction under the CBA to language learning, we decided to conduct this study at the university in order to prove on the one hand the effectiveness of the Process-Genre Approach and thus that of the CBA, which has failed in previous education, to develop learners' writing competence. All of this is based on the data collected from the questionnaires, the interviews and the two tests. On the other hand, we wanted to show that we can succeed in teaching writing or any other skill if the right methodology is used. Relating the Process-Genre Approach to writing instruction under the CBA to language learning is based on the fact that the latter is a cognitive approach according to which the learner develops lower-order objectives before he can achieve higher order objectives. This can be translated in writing instruction to the objectives of the writing process during which the learner can develop his writing abilities through the different steps of brainstorming, planning, drafting and editing.

This enables the learner to test and therefore to develop his problem-solving capacities. And more than this, because of the use of different genres of texts being deconstructed and jointly constructed throughout the writing process, learners develop their lower-level skills such as grammar, organization and spelling. In addition, as stated in the third chapter, the CBA is based on socio-constructivism which encourages the learner to construct new knowledge through social interaction; it is what occurs in the writing process during which students interact with their peers and the teacher gaining new knowledge for composing their own paragraphs efficiently. This can also be implied from what Richards & Rodgers (2001: 143) who asserted that the CBA is based on functional and interactional perspectives on the nature of language. If we consider the Process-Genre Approach again, we can relate it to Richard and Roger' (ibid.) claims in that the use of different genres enables the learners to achieve specific goals and purposes through writing since certain life encounters require a certain kind of language. Thus, the CBA calls for an integrated approach to develop learners' communicative competence and here we refer to its different components: the grammatical competence, discourse competence, strategic competence and pragmatic competence. It is what is realized by the use of the Process-Genre Approach.

Students' writing proficiency can be enhanced if on the one hand, teachers develop a state of awareness or meta-cognitive awareness of the impact of their teaching methods on learners' competency development and also the urgent need to look for an alternative approach to writing instruction to lead our students to success. Besides, teachers can adopt new teaching strategies and design lessons not only to promote learners' writing cognitive strategies but also their lower-level skills such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, mechanics and organization as well. This can be realized by the adoption of the Process- Genre Approach. On the other hand, learners can also develop a meta-cognitive awareness of the way they should proceed to reach improvement. This duality is the dynamic process of educational development. Moreover, coordination between secondary and university teacher becomes a necessity to assure continuity and to make the educational goal of improvement common to all.

In fact, driven by such beliefs, the implementation of the Process-Genre Approach to writing instruction to an experimental group of first-year students, who showed obvious weaknesses as shown in the pre-test like those belonging to the control group, were able to develop both higher- level skills such as planning, drafting revising through collaboration with their peers and the teacher and also lower-level skills such as the rhetorical features of descriptive and argumentative paragraphs used in the planned courses. The scaffolding method of writing has been used to help students acquire the knowledge and skills to be able to write their own paragraphs with confidence in the last stage after having studied a model in terms of organization, content, grammar and syntax. This scaffolding method proved successful as students construct knowledge receiving special assistance that helped them move towards new skills, concepts or levels of understanding as stressed by (Gibbons, 2002). This emphasizes the view that learning occurs best when learners engage in tasks that are within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the area between what they can do independently and what they can do with assistance (Vygotsky, 1978).

The results of this experiment as shown in the sixth chapter confirm to some extent the hypotheses formulated in this research in that the Process-Genre Approach helps the teacher to unite form and content, ideas and organization, syntax and meaning, writing and revising and more than this writing and thinking. Thus, the experimental group students' writing is better than before the experiment in terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity (the overall mean of the pre-test being **5.21**; and that of the post-test **6.84**). Besides, the comparative evaluation between the control and experimental groups proved that the treatment was efficient if compared to the effects of the Product Approach used with the control group. This is clear in that the results show that the former recorded a slight increase in the means scores as shown in the sixth chapter (**0.61** in fluency, **0.15** in accuracy, **0.08** in grammatical complexity and **0.38** in lexical complexity) while the latter recorded a difference in the means scores of (**5.64** in fluency, **0.64** in accuracy, **0.25** in grammatical complexity and **1.55** in lexical complexity).

Moreover, the t-test values recorded: **3.57** in fluency, **5.98** in accuracy, **2.40** in grammatical complexity and 1.98 in lexical complexity were significant if compared with the critical value (**1.66**) for seventy-eight degrees of freedom. And even if the writing lessons were confined to the classroom, they relate strongly to real life situations because of the use of different writing genres and the writing process, motivating students and preparing them to write for audiences outside the classroom.

#### 7.2 General Implications

From our experience in implementing the Process-Genre Approach to writing to first year students as an approach fitting the CBA, we have found that applying such an approach can develop students' higher-order thinking in that it allows them to progress in their improvement of cognitive skills (through, brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing), it facilitates experiential learning, promotes active learning and also a deep approach to learning through which the students develop their abilities of synthesis and analysis, but also their behaviour within the classroom considered as a small intellectual community. In addition, getting involved in writing different genres related to real life fosters students' abilities to use the writing skill for communicative purposes either in the classroom or outside of it. Moreover, we should stress the need of integrating the reading skill in a writing course because of their complementarity. This engages students in authentic writing activities and provides them with constructive feedback. All what has been implied in this study confirms that the writing approach selected for the experiment really complies with all the characteristics of the CBA embedded in social constructivism.

#### 7.2.1 Development of Higher-Order Thinking

The Process-Genre Approach to writing can develop students' higher-order thinking which in turn can affect positively their writing skills, but also their personal, interactive and analytical skills, vital in everyday life. This approach allows students to progress in their improvement of cognitive skills from basic remembering of key features and acquiring knowledge to understanding and critically assessing theories and constructing their own theories (Bloom's taxonomy). In the writing process, students are involved in higher-order skills such as application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. These skills are developed during the different phases followed in writing as stated in the second chapter.

#### 7.2.2 Facilitation of Experiential Learning

The Process-Genre Approach facilitates experiential learning which stresses personal involvement, self-initiation and evaluation by the learner. It makes students reflect, discuss, analyze and evaluate their experience either individually, in pairs or with the teacher as we have seen in the second and third chapters. Students experience writing through different phases during which they write more than one draft, receiving feed back from either their peers or the teacher seeking improvement. In this way, they learn how to assess their own writing as well as their peers (formative assessment). This activates their ability to revise and correct their errors in a cooperative way in a relaxing atmosphere. All of this motivates them to think harder, analyze and reflect deeper and also to discover and develop not only textual knowledge about different genres, but also to increase their lexical and grammatical competence.

#### 7.2.3 Promotion of Active Learning

The Process-Genre Approach also promotes active learning in the classroom, a strategy that involves students in doing things and thinking about things they are doing. The active learning strategies used are group brainstorming, pair and group work in addition to discussion and conferencing usually used with the teacher to provide them with feedback on their writing.

#### 7.2.4 Promotion of a Deep Approach to Learning

Furthermore, it promotes a deep approach to learning instead of a superficial one because the strategies used in the process genre approach allow students to use different cognitive skills in the writing process in cooperation with their classmates. This writing approach encourages learners' autonomy, thinking skills, reflection and analysis. In addition, it takes into account the social characteristic of writing which occurs in the classroom in which students work in a cooperative way together with their peers and the teacher and also writing for purpose, constructing their own knowledge to improve their writing proficiency.

The choice of the different genres fosters students knowledge of the language features used in each genre fitting the social context as it is confirmed by Enwistle and Enwistle (1991) who view learning as a social activity either in an intellectual or a professional context and suggest that a deep approach can be fostered when students are given the opportunity to discuss their work with other students in a small intellectual community. All of these are the characteristics of the CBA, the social constructivist approach, which propounds that through communication within peers and through authentic realistic assignments, students are able to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the subject and therefore develop autonomy. As a conclusion, we can say that the scaffolding learning strategy used in this approach helps learners develop a deep approach to writing.

#### 7.2.5 Writing/Reading Connection

Another implication derived from this study is that as writing teachers, we should stress reading and writing connection in our teaching lessons and also make students aware that without building knowledge from reading, they will not be able to develop their writing proficiency. This should be done by the good selection of the models to be used in lessons as shown in the experiment and the incorporation of a reading session using selected books to reinforce students' knowledge about the different genres, or just to devote some minutes before the introduction of a new genre for students to talk about what they have read (in the preparation phase). This can allow students to share experiences with their classmates and thus motivate them to read more. In this way they may realize the importance of reading for writing and the fact that they are complementary skills in that reading is the construction of meaning through relationships of parts of the text and prior knowledge, while writing is relating our prior knowledge and experiences to the text by putting meaning on the page. This strengthens students' comprehension abilities allowing them to access knowledge, understand and elaborate concepts integrating information from books.

In fact, competencies in both reading and writing have been considered to be of fundamental relevance to university students because when they have to write, there is a gap to be bridged as their problems are deeper than the surface level. They include difficulties in grammar, punctuation and style and knowing what is expected from them and from the text because different subjects have different requirements (Creme, 2000). Such difficulties are similar to those of Algerian students. It is why the use of the Process Genre Approach to teaching writing is seen as necessary so that students develop knowledge concerning different genres either in the text organization or the grammar and vocabulary used in each one. Applying such an approach and motivating students to read help students become better writers. Through reading, they have incidental contact with the rules of grammar, they develop a sense for the structure of the language and increase their vocabulary. By adopting that balanced approach can compensate for major problems of current writing instruction by incorporating formal aspects of writing with the writing process. However, as Grabe and Kaplan (1996) argue, the issue is not whether students can recognize the relation between

language structures and the role they play in conveying meaning. It is why the teacher takes the role of an interventionist ensuring that students are able to understand and reproduce writing they need to express their meaning.

To experience diverse kinds of texts, to apply various tasks and genre models, the writing curriculum should be integrated with various resources including extensive reading material (books, articles and magazines), searching for different information on the internet and watching documentaries. The wide range of reading resources will help students extend their knowledge and support them to complete their final drafts. In addition, by using diverse resources, students develop the additional and useful vocabulary, experience the important linguistic and semantic features of language and have an opportunity to practice a wide range of writings. Moreover, with self-discovery in writing students will be familiar with solving problems by themselves, and thereby, they will rely on themselves developing autonomy.

#### 7.2.6 Engagement in Authentic Writing Activities

Another thing worth mentioning is that writing becomes easier if students are engaged in authentic writing activities which are those in which students are asked to express their thoughts, to share their ideas, or to describe their lives and experiences. This can be illustrated by the examples used in the lessons (chapter five). Instead of asking students to describe a certain person or a certain place given by the teacher, we simply ask them to describe the place or the person they like letting them free to express themselves presenting a description of their choice, or in the cause effect paragraph choosing a problem and trying to provide the arguments they think are the most appropriate.

#### 7.2.7 The use of Meaningful and Productive Assessment

To provide meaningful and productive assessment, teachers in our university might consider applying various types of assessment that help students' interaction and encourage more active learning. The types of assessment to be used in teaching writing, or the way we assess how our students are doing and to see how we are teaching and to get a sense of what skills need to be taught or which remedies should be brought are of great importance. As presented in chapter three, formative assessment is primordial during the writing process during which the teacher provides students with feedback enabling them to progress. We know that the only form of assessment in the past relied on the teacher's correction of the final product. However, because of its failure, other types of assessment have been used recently. Among them the use of 'portfolios' has become appreciated and even suggested to be used in the CBA. The portfolio contains all the students' drafts including the final one, it shows the students' work from the beginning to the end, giving the opportunity to the teacher and student to assess how much progress has been attained. This can be used as a holistic process for evaluating the course work and thus promoting autonomy because students rely also on their self assessment without forgetting that peer assessment promotes critical thinking enabling students to gain knowledge in all the writing steps.

Collaborative peer assessment is also a form of assessment which helps learners engage in a discourse community and create an authentic social context for interaction and learning (Mittan, 1989). Moreover, students benefit from knowing how readers understand their ideas and gain skills necessary to critically analyze and revise their own writing. However, students involved in peer assessment should receive very clear instructions from the teacher, or they should be well trained to be able to provide their peers with constructive feedback.

Another form of assessment worth trying is the use of dialogue journals, a notebook kept by two people usually a student and a teacher or a kind of written conversation. Each one writes entries as messages to the other. The journal is next exchanged after this entry. This kind of assessment can help students develop their writing skills, to be independent and eventually able to read and respond to their teacher's entries. The most important is that it involves them in learning and constructing their own knowledge as it is advocated by constructivism and the competency-based approach. In addition, it gives the teacher an opportunity to interact with students and to know more about their progress.

Assessment can also be done through conferencing, a face-to face conversation between the student and the teacher, is considered an effective means of teacher's response to students writing as it enhances students-teacher negotiated interaction. Both forms can be done one after the other, first providing written feedback then oral one. Another beneficial form of writing assessment is the use of checklists prepared by the teacher and given to the students to assess themselves or used in peer assessment as it is supported by Mesan (2006) " A selfreport checklist would help to promote learners' motivation; raise consciousness writing skills and strategies; strengthen their positive attitudes towards writing". These can be used in the different stages of the writing process and more in the editing phase in which students correct their errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation and the choice of words. However, instructions in the checklists should be set clearly in order to guide them to polish their productions.

#### 7.2.8 Decrease of Students Number per Group/ Extension of Writing Course Density

However, some of the implications stated above cannot be realized in our classes effectively under the existing conditions such as the large number of students in the same class which exceeds sixty in some of them. In fact, this hinders such things as providing feedback to all the students or for example conferencing with all of them or recording written comments for them in dialogue journals. Therefore, the number of students should not exceed thirty in the same group. Besides, the writing course density of three hours per week is not enough to use models for each genre, to follow the writing process and to provide students with feedback for their various drafts. Thus time allotted to writing should be extended at least to four hours and half (three sessions).

#### 7.2.9 Design of a New Writing Syllabus

As a teacher and researcher, we are well aware, in agreement with writing teachers in our department, that the old writing syllabus is not only inefficient as it does not help students to develop their writing proficiency, but does not sideline the new educational reform under the LMD system. If we refer to that old syllabus (appendix 8), we find that more than a whole semester is spent in theory . We find that it is a loss of time in activities which promote neither the students' linguistic competence nor their critical thinking. Hence, a new syllabus meeting the students' cognitive, academic and social needs is required. After having met with all the writing teachers of our department, we tried in collaboration and under my guidance to design a syllabus for first year students which is suggested to be used starting from next year (2011/2012). Syllabuses of other levels would effectively be designed later on.

#### 7.2.10 Design of a New Grammar Syllabus

Due to the fact that first-year students come from the secondary school with a weak linguistic background and that they make a lot of errors in grammar unable to write meaningful sentences (as it appeared in the pre-test), we stress the need of coordination of both teachers of writing and grammar. They can first design a syllabus for grammar that enhances the writing skill because if we refer to the old one (appendix 8), still used in spite of the change of the educational system (LMD), we discover that it does not really help students who spend more than one semester dealing with parts of speech, and whose level remains the same even after spending a whole year learning grammar. Therefore, we suggest that such a syllabus should incorporate the use of grammar in context so that students can benefit from it and that it should be designed by teachers of writing and grammar relying on students' needs, so this requires reflection on what we are teaching and how effective it is. Second, after designing a new syllabus, both teachers should continue to work together, meeting at least once a month in order to reflect on their teaching and to prepare remedial activities that may strengthen students' level. In addition to this, teachers of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) are also concerned as they need to teach about different genres and types of texts so, it is better to include them in coordination meetings so that they can plan lessons requiring a certain type of writing at the same time as those done in the writing courses. What we have suggested here is based on one of the teachers of that module who noticed that her students' writing proficiency (in description) is better than before. This is not due to chance but to the training they have just received in the writing courses, therefore, ESP teachers' involvement is beneficial for the improvement of the writing instruction.

#### 7.2.11 Incorporation of Vocabulary Activities in Writing Courses

After having shown the importance of grammar to writing and insisted on teachers' cooperation and the need of a new syllabus fitting the change and also working writing courses, we all agree about the importance of vocabulary in writing because without vocabulary no messages will be conveyed. This was also shown in the students' responses in the pre-experiment questionnaire in which they complained about their difficulties in finding the right words during the writing process. In fact, this hinders them from putting their ideas on paper. Thus, planning vocabulary activities in writing courses would be beneficial for students as they could help them to enrich their vocabulary concerning a certain type of text. So, a good selection of activities based on the kind of text dealing with can foster students' writing fluency. For instance in the lesson describing people, we may devise activities in which we help students to acquire more adjectives which can be used in this kind of description, this is also the case when we want to describe places or objects. Types of activities within the writing course will be helpful to students in addition to the effects of reading as stated previously.

### 7.2.12 Organization of More Seminars and Conferences on Writing in Algerian Universities

Research in higher education should be a central concern because it is through research that teaching can be made more efficient. Different educational issues are continuously been exposed and treated by researchers in the field. Therefore, it is through seminars and conferences that solutions are suggested. These kinds of meetings commonly update teachers with the latest progress and issues in a particular field and as writing represents a challenge for Algerian students, organizing more conferences and seminars on writing would probably enable teachers to reflect on this serious issue trying to adopt new strategies in teaching this skill.

#### 7.2.13. The Necessity of Coordination between University and Secondary Teachers

As stressed previously, coordination between writing teachers themselves and those of grammar in our department is something of great importance as they have to follow a parallel program enabling them to foster students' grammatical competence as well as composing strategies. Coordination is helpful in that teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their teaching effectiveness and prepare remedial activities in collaboration to strengthen students' writing abilities. In addition to this kind of coordination at the university level, we find it necessary to coordinate with teachers of secondary schools so that continuity may be achieved.

Teachers of both levels can exchange experiences and try to bring a change suitable to the adoption of the competency-based approach and the LMD system. Another positive effect of coordination between the two levels is that such coordination can give the opportunity to secondary teachers to benefit from university teachers who are conducting research in different fields not only in writing and are also more aware of learning and teaching theories. Hence this can make teaching in the Algerian context more beneficial if findings from research are put in practice in the field in all the educational levels. For instance, as a researcher, the kind of change we suggested in teaching writing is the implementation of the process genre approach seen compatible with both the competency-based approach and LMD system. In this way, we way together make our teaching more efficient and may find ways of developing our learners' proficiency in the English language.

#### 7.3 Limitations of the Study

This research study raised a number of issues and questions that may provide a basis for future research. This is partly due to some limitations identified in this study and partly because of issues and concerns that rose in the analysis and could not be pursued as part of this inquiry. Thus, a brief reference to the limitations will be presented.

Firstly, this is a short term study conducted over a space of one semester. As it was not a longitudinal study and did not allow the researcher to deal with more types of genres, any conclusions established do not provide a full picture of the effects of the Competency-Based Approach and more specifically of the Process-Genre Approach on learners' writing achievement.

Secondly, since the study was confined to two groups of students from the Department of Foreign Languages, Section of English at Biskra University, the findings of the study may not be generalized to represent all the Algerian universities or elsewhere. Nonetheless, they can be regarded as an illuminative one, applicable to other similar contexts.

#### 7.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The limitations identified in this research study as well as issues raised during data analysis and mainly those obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews are fertile grounds for further research. Out of these findings, several conclusions can be made among them we can mention the failure of both middle and secondary education in developing students' writing competence. This issue could be investigated from different angles including teachers and students' perceptions and also the possibility of coming out with different related issues that should be investigated in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning English in both the Algerian school and university. This can be considered as one of the main roles of university researchers.

Another issue worth mentioning is that university students need to acquire learning strategies, either in writing or in another area, to enable them to develop into independent and proficient learners. These kinds of necessary strategies are required for the development of any skill; therefore, they need to be cultivated and taken into consideration while designing any activity in any lesson or course. This area which entails a large amount of topics could be interesting to investigate.

Finally, we find it useful to emphasize the importance of integrating grammar and vocabulary exercises within the course of writing. The effectiveness of such activities and how to integrate them successfully could be investigated in future research to develop academic writing, an area which is dominant in many countries in the present time.

#### Conclusion

The pedagogical implications in this chapter were drawn from the experiment results and the researcher's experience in teaching English in middle school, secondary school and ultimately at the university. We were motivated by the will to find out if the reform in the Algerian school, through the adoption of the CBA, developed students' writing. However, the results obtained in both the situation analysis in chapter four and the pre-experiment test proved the inefficiency of writing instruction in previous education. Being aware of the complexity of the writing skill and both teachers and students' difficulties, we tried to prove through this research that if we implement a methodology in writing fitting the CBA and why not the LMD system, we can help learners overcome their problems by developing their critical thinking, being active in learning to write, reading interesting texts and receiving constructive feedback from the teacher and their peers. However, the writing and grammar syllabuses should be reviewed, and the coordination between teachers of these two modules is necessary so that students can overcome their linguistic difficulties, and thus, develop these competencies that would enable them to write more accurately and use not only complex sentences but also rich in terms of lexis. In addition, the development of students' learning strategies in writing or in another area is one of the necessary requirements leading to autonomy and ultimately to proficiency. Thus, this area could be worth investigating because of its importance. Moreover, many issues concerning teaching under the CBA could also be investigated in order to help secondary school teachers adopt methods in teaching different skills, complying with the tenets of the CBA. This means providing them with the necessary theoretical background because theory informs and supports practice.

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# Appendix 1

# Teaching and Learning as Transmission of Information Versus Construction of Knowledge

Transmission View	Social Construction View
Knowledge as fixed body of information transmitted from teacher to students	Knowledge as developing interpretations coconstructed through discussion
Texts, teacher as authority sources of Expert knowledge to which students defer	Authority for constructed knowledge resides in the arguments and evidence cited in its support by students as well as by texts or teacher; everyone has expertise to contribute
Teacher is responsible for managing students' learning by providing information and leading students through activities and assignments	Teacher and students share responsibility for initiating and guiding learning efforts
Teacher explains, checks for understanding, And judges correctness or students' responses	Teacher acts as discussion leader who poses questions, seeks clarifications, promotes dialogue, helps group recognize araes of consensus and of continuing disagreement
Students memorize or replicate what has been explained or modeled	Students strive to make sense of new input by relating it to their prior knowledge and by collaborating in dialogue with others to coconstruct shared understanding
Discourse emphasizes drill and recitation in response to convergent questions; focus is on eliciting correct answers	Discourse emphasizes relective dicussion of network of connected knowledge; questions are more divergent but designed to develop understanding of the powerful ideas that anchor these netorks; focus is on eliciting students' thinking
Activities emphasize replication of models or applications that require following step-by step algorithms	Activities emphasize applications to authentic issues and problems that require higher-ooeder thinking
Students work mostly alone, practising what has been transmitted to them in order to prepare themselves to compete for rewards by reproducing it on demand	Students colaborate by acting as a learning community that constructs shared understandings through sustained dialogue

( in Brophy ( 2002: X)

# **Discourse Types**

Recount	Narrative	explanation	Information report	procedure	discussion	exposition
Purpose	Purpose	Purpose	Purpose	Purpose	Purpose	Purpose
-to retell	- to retell	- explain	- to describe the way	- to explain	- to present	- to promote a
event in	events in	natural or	things are	How to do	Arguments	particular
order to	order to	social	1. opening general	Something	from different	point of view
inform	entertain	processes	Classification	1. statement of	viewpoints	1.opening
1.	1.	Or how	2. (more technical	What is to be	1. statement of the issue	statement of
orientation	orientation	something	Classification)	Achieved 2. list of materials/	2. argument(s) against	Position
/scene-	2. initiation	works	3. description:			(thesis)
setting	3.	1. general	- qualities	tools needed 3. sequence of		2. arguments-
2. retelling	complicatio	Statement of	- parts & their	instructions	+evidence 4.	point +
of events	n	Introduction	function	4. diagram, illustration	(recommend	elaboration
3.(reorientati	4. resolution	2. series of	- habits, behaviour,		ation- Summary/	3. restatement
on)		logical steps	uses		conclusion	of opening
4.(closing						position
statement)						

# **Teachers' Perceptions of Writing Questionnaire**

Dear colleague,

This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a doctorate 'e-sciences' in applied linguistics. It investigates the effects of the competency-based approach on first year students' achievement in writing. Whatever your qualifications and experience in the field, your answers will be of a great help to us. Will you please tick the appropriate answer or give your own whenever it is necessary?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Chelli Saliha.

## I. Qualification and experience

1. Degree:	2. academic year:
3. Experience in teaching at the university	
4. Experience in teaching first year students	
5. Experience in teaching writing	
6. Experience in teaching writing to first year students	

### II. Importance of writing in EFL instruction

1.	Why is writing proficiency in English required at the university level?	
	a. It is needed in most of the modules as essay writing is usually used in exams.	
	b. It determines to what extent a student masters the language.	
	c. It is an academic requirement necessary for further studies.	
	d. It is the determinant of students' academic success.	
	e. It is a means of communication needed in the era of globalization	
	Other reasons	
		• • • • • •
		• • • • • •
		• • • • • •
		• • • • • •

2. Do you think the way writing is taught in our department goes alongside with the rapid changes of the globalized world?

a. Yes	
b. partly	
C. No	
If your choice is no	o, please say why

#### III. First- year students' level in writing:

- 1. The level of first year students in the previous years was:
  - a. weak □ b. average □ c. fairly good □ d. good □

2. The level of students in writing this year is:

- a. weak
  b. adequate
  c. fairly good
- d. good

3. If compared to the previous years, the level of the students in writing this year is:

- a. better
- b. the same  $\Box$
- c. worse  $\Box$
- d. don't know 🗌

## III. Teachers' opinion about the reasons of students' weaknesses or strengths

- 1. Are first year students' weaknesses due to the reform undergone in middle and secondary education?
  - a. Yes□b. Partly□c. No□

Other reasons.

2. Are the students' strengths due to the reform undergone in middle and secondary education?

a. Yes	
b. Partly	
c. No	

Other rea	sons:	 	
	•••••	 	

3. To be more specific, do you think that the competency-based approach has positive Effects on students' writing in terms of:

	yes	partly	no	Don't know
Accuracy				
Fluency				
complexity				

• See the definitions of these terms at the end of the questionnaire

4. If no, is it because the competency-based approach?

- a. is not an adequate approach.
- b. it is not applied appropriately by secondary teachers.
- c. secondary teachers are not well informed about the competency-based approach.

d. they are just using new course books, but not really applying the competency-based approach.

Other reasons.

#### IV. Approaches used in teaching writing at the university level:

1. Which approach are you using to teach writing?

a. the product approach	
b. the process approach	
d. the product process approach	
e. the genre approach	
f. the process genre approach	
g. the product-process genre approach	
h. not using any approach	
i. don't really know	

- 2. Do you believe that a teacher may be using a certain approach without really being aware of it?
  - a. Yes 🗌
  - b. Sure
  - c. No
  - d. Don't know  $\Box$
- 3. If you are not using any approach, would you say briefly how you teach writing a paragraph?

 $\square$ 

- a. use group work
- b. don't ask students to write directly  $\Box$
- c. use brainstorming
- d. ask students to write a first draft
- e. give them remarks/ feedback
- f. use peer revision of the drafts  $\Box$
- g. use self revision of the drafts  $\Box$
- h. students edit the written piece
- i. use portfolios

#### V. Teachers' opinion about the implementation of the principles of the competencybased approach in teaching writing

1.Do you think that the implementation of the competency- based approach will bring improvement in first year students' writing?

a. Yes	
b. No	
c. Don't know	

2. In your opinion, will the continuity in applying such an approach at the university level will have positive effects on students' writing in terms of:

a. accuracy	
b. fluency	
c. complexity	

c. complexity

#### VI. Teachers' difficulties in teaching writing

1. What difficulties do you face in teaching writing?

..... ..... ..... ..... .....

### VI. Teachers' suggestions

1. What do you suggest to improve teaching writing to first year students in our department?

..... ..... ..... ..... .....

#### Definitions

Accuracy: the learner's ability to use the target language according to the norms.

Complexity: the learner's ability to use more elaborate and complex structures.

Fluency: the learner's ability to communicate in real time. (Shehadeh, 2005, p. 23)

Thank you very much for your help.

## **Students' Perceptions of Writing Questionnaire**

Dear student,

This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a doctorate 'e-sciences' in applied linguistics. It investigates the effects of the competency-based approach on first year students' achievement in writing. Your answers will be of a great help to us. You should know that the questionnaire is totally anonymous. This means that no one will know what you wrote on it. And when the results of the study are reported, everyone's answers will be grouped together, so no one can trace your answers back to you. Will you please tick the appropriate answer or give your own as truthfully as possible?

Thank you for your cooperation. Chelli Saliha.

I. General information		
1. Gender: male		female
2. Age: years		
3. Residence:		
4. Secondary school:		
5. Baccalaureate; li	iterary 🗌 scie	ntific 🗌 technical 🗌
6. Is learning English your choice?		
a. Yes		
b. No		
7. What is your major purpose in least	rning English?	
a. To get a job		
b. To go for further studies		
c. To communicate with people		

## II. Writing in the secondary school

1. How often did	you use to	write in the	secondary	school?
------------------	------------	--------------	-----------	---------

- a. Sometimes  $\Box$
- b. Rarely
- c. Never

2. Did you learn about the types of writing?

- a. descriptive  $\Box$
- b. narrative  $\Box$
- c. expository  $\Box$
- d. persuasive

### 3. Were the topics you were asked to write about

a. very interesting		
b. interesting		
c. not interesting		
d. not interesting at all.		
4. How did you use to write	2?	
a. individually		
b. in pairs		
c. in groups		
5. Did you use to write the	assignment given by the teacher?	
a. in the classroom		
b. at home		
c. sometimes in the class	room and sometimes at home.	
6. Did you use a folder?		
a. Yes		
b. No		

7. Did the teacher turn round to help you with his/ her remarks to improve your writing?

- a. yes
- b. no

8. Did you start directly writing after you have being given the subject or

- a. you generate ideas
- b. prepare a planning  $\Box$
- c. then you start writing  $\Box$

10. Did you use to read your paragraph (first draft) again, trying to make it better after having received remarks either from your teacher or your peers?

- a. Yes
- b. No

#### 11. If yes, who revises your drafts?

a. the teacher	
b. your peer or peers	
c. You do the revision by yourself	

### 12. When you write do you make errors in

a. Grammar	
b. building sentences	

• .1 1 •	· · · □
c. in the choice of	vocabulary

- 13. When you write, do you use
  - a. short sentences  $\Box$
  - b. simple sentences □ c. complex sentences □

## 14. Did the teacher give you a mark for?

a. the first draft	
b. the final draft after having revised and improved it	

### 15. Were you able to write the paragraph given in the baccalaureate exam?

a. yes	
b. Partly	
a. No	

16. If no, did you rely just on the m	nark of?	
a. reading comprehension		
b. grammar		
c. vocabulary		
III. Students' perceptions of writing		
1. Do you believe that writing is		
a. a gift		
b. a skill that can be develope	ed through practice	
c. a gift that that can be devel	oped through practice	
2. For you, why is writing importa	ant as a language skill?	
	•••••••	••••••
3. How would you rate your lev	el in writing?	
a. highly proficient $\Box$		
b. proficient		
c. adequate		
d. weak		
4. If you find that your level in	writing is not acceptable, can yo	ou say why?
5. What are your main difficulti	es in English writing?	
6. Do you want to improve your	e level in writing?	
a. Yes		
b. Of course $\Box$		
c. not really $\Box$		
d. No		
7. If you want to add anything c	concerning writing, please do (co	omments, suggestions)
	Thank you for y	our cooperation

Degree of freedom	$\alpha = 0.05$
1	6.3138
2	2.9200
3	2.3534
4	2.1319
5	2.0150
6	1.9432
7	1.8946
8	1.8595
9	1.8331
10	1.8124
11	1.7959
12	1.7823
13	1.7709
14	1.7613
15	1.7530
16	1.759
17	1.7396
18	1.7341
19	1.7291
20	1.7247
21	1.7207
22	1.7172
23	1.7.139
24	1.7109
25	1.7081
26	1.7056
27	1.7033
28	1.7011
29	1.6991
30	1.6979
31	1.6955
32	1.6939
33	1.6924
34	1.6909
35	1.6896
36	1.6883
37	1.6871
38	1.6859
39	1.6849

## Table of Critical Values of the T- distribution: One-Tailed

40	1.6839
41	1.6829
42	1.6820
43	1.6811
43	1.6802
44	1.6794
45	1.6787
48	1.6779
48	1.6772
49	1.6766
50	1.6759
51	1.6753
52	1.6747
53	1.6741
54	1.6736
55	1.6730
56	1.6725
57	1.6720
58	1.6715
59	1.6715
60	1.67506
61	1.6702
62	1.6.698
63	1.6.694
64	1.6.690
65	1.6.686
66	1.6.683
67	1.6679
68	1.6.676
69	1.6.673
70	1.6.669
71	1.6.666
72	1.6.663
73	1.6.660
74	1.6.657
75	1.6.654
76	1.6.652
77	1.6.649
78	1.6.646
/0	1.0.040

# Students' Interview

- 1. Are you able to identify the writing process you followed in producing a paragraph?
- 2. Can you name the different phases?
- 3. Do think that a good writer should proceed in this way?
- 4. What is the benefit of using such a process?
- 5. Did you benefit from the feedback provided by your teacher and your peers?
- 5. Are you able to identify the different parts of a good paragraph?
- 6. What are they?
- 7. How many types of paragraphs did you write?
- 8. Did you benefit from the use of models in each course?
- 9. In terms of what?
- 10. Do the types of paragraphs you used require the same conventions? Explain
- 11. Do you think that you have improved in writing in general during these weeks?
- 12. Do you think that you have improved in terms of:
- a- fluency
- b- accuracy
- c- grammatical complexity
- lexical complexity

13. Are you aware now that a good writer should follow a process and should take into account the type of writing?

- 13. Do you still face any difficulties?
- 14. What do you suggest to overcome these difficulties?

# The Teacher's Interview

## I. The Teacher's attitudes towards the process genre approach

- 1. What is your attitude towards the process genre approach?
- 2. Does the process genre approach fit the competency-based approach?

## II. The Teacher's opinion of students' writing progress

- 1. Do you think that the process genre approach enhanced students' writings proficiency?
- 2. In what areas did they really improve?

## **III.** The Teachers' suggestions

1. What do you suggest to enhance students' writing proficiency?

# The Writing Syllabus

First year written expression programme

- Parts of speech
- British English versus American English
- Sentence patterns
- Sentence types
- Punctuation
- Paragraph writing
  - Definition
  - Parts

# **Control Group - Productions**

- Everyone con emphasis on the benifit of Advestising in our life individual as society but as it has advænteges, it has also a negative aspects. 5 sour that it can infleunce negatively on pecepte and change their though to be Just a matifiel ideas, and they give aadvestising more than its size in addition, this influence from inchividual spread into the hel secrety because and as we Know that advestising need a let of money which depend on the had cover af society and this later become sety after step Suffer from the financial problemes. That why we must know how and when me use advertising.

Student 7

In our daily life, the advertsting plays on important Note Tmony Companys merthet their production, for ottract the attention of clients/ my point of view door the obverstising / it not all the production have a good qualite / pointimes the obversting to chest pepple. Do I'om app Complet by apposite with adversting !

In our moderne life Advertising is so important for companies to buy this products, and make it more popular. But like other things, it has two faces, a good face and a bad face. It has a dangerous effect on Indiwiduals and societies. First not all the products that we saw in adverti -ring the good and have a superior quality. Second advertisement inforference our eating habits like "chips" that countainse dangerous substances that hurt our + health specially children. In addition people when they saw a product in advertising thought that this is the best product, they buy it without seeing the carte that follow it. It doesn't matter for them if it is expensive or not. Finally the scandal of the chinese milk that kill more than thousand people specially children show to us that not every thing in advert is good. We should be cone fuland preserve aus selles and our families, because companies lookinfor money and doesn't matter for them what happen

Any entreprise want to be so famou and to realise this hope, they use the ardvertising in order to help them to publish their products , But sometimes, the odvertising don't play the pasitive rate - So what is its negative aspect on individuals and society I think that the advertising is megative because not all the advertising help us = there are some product are less important and have a big publicity and this is wrong for me why did they waste a lat a financy in this publicity and rather than help. The poor presple.

Student 11

all we know that the publicity is taking the big part on out le EUPS. Sundevely momen releisa pel praduct-on new adver lotof entrephiserand the Which produce every day new medicinations Rli all the ad Butnot help nertisin A rent out Milk or Rofs them a ep or not very in Dor 5 Rolow their not spla it's better t Lo at Chan think they waste a money boutout nothing a thin Somal as len importan

Advertising is not always poritive, we may find negative sides came with it, when It cames to advertising boards on the road, devicently it will cause some accidents like what I remember, an accident was happened because of an advertising board for a woman in the road (Attraction Factor), and also may to uch the speciety values like our Islamic society, some advertising Demoybe not a propredie for hids and soon.

- Advertising play an important role in our life because it is the medium for advertise products and it help people and it is our always presitive, there are a latef not negative aspect in individual and seately example, Advertising of Alcohic because is danger for shuman and our life also smaking and there a let of product it advertise and it is bad for unhealthy
A directiving plays an important role in our daily life, but it is not always positive, it have a lot of negative things first, with our children, the Advertising learn they many things not good for etcs the impolite games that could be hurt then The advertising second, some times immoral publish and this, will infulence in our society. negotinely

- Advertising is the most important thing in our life noundays specially in the commerce domain, every one want to show what he has by any way even he will give ineal andatra flic information about the products, and This thing happing a lat taday. The most of advertisers give a worg ideas about their products tis matre the people buyit and motivate the people buy it even this can make inhealthy infleunce, and also in the majority of time the products weren t onizinal. So the people should be aware about the negative sides of advertising and try to be sure before buy any thing, and also the advertises stranted be responsible.

Student 17

Advertising is one from many things in the life which have positive and negative expects. what I watthe write about in my short poragraph is the negative expects of In my opinion of deem that some prodect is not the same as the advertising said because this companies don't respect the life of people the most important thing for it to sell and gain money, plus that advertising some Time didn't respect The believiour of society and the religious by some boxing actions in the advertise, ie bad may

# Appendix 10

# **Experimental Group Pre-test Productions**

- Advertising is very important in work of some Records because they use in our products Eq: the company of soop palmolive or ail Africa ... etc. The workers produce a good products they wants to television and put our products of comparison money. Intelevision daily see this Advertising may be good or bad. Tome people was franceulence from This advertising because sometimes disorder in some people and they can It buy this products because it is disgusting.

The advertising is an important thing in our life, because it inform as about many thing and nows which we don't know it this othing doe forleid that the advertising have a nigative side which is worse in our socity like when we were walking in read with some one who we respect him very much and we hound a big advertising about a beauty produce which shows a women with shameful clothes, So we feel shame which this person Siome time we found also advertisin not internest for us but it's very publish in our road.

- The my personal opinion I Think That The adventuig is very important mecially Weare in The 21 centery, and we are a develored generation, in other meaning I can say or I can call our seffer That we are suns of technologe. Go our world or our life is about build, so The advershing helf The costumer to by The product on The best one.

tining take an important neer die le, le cause il adds a lat al e aur life; with a profeline that a Kreuch lare it 12 tires; lecause A Vertisuie d a wording way and m that your dan't even yeen an Eduses addiction a del serie ceciely Ace 泛大 becch ashien buy it ha tistig shows the your wi ad that 1 it 4 was Re Q mai arraye pea 4 for H Laree the get cent the del an leest 2 crunte of advertising and lie 大 em te light of up satisfaction

talt sail ab trum remaymen for treen and we me - I abeers isold read pulsitienter no estom and produces all that to show its - historymen no yedy privit scho, philitis want to low any ding, we long of course in the T. V on at pictures in our cities and countries, also the advertising shows places the less good and have it work and use, but not shorys advertising initiopen and the , plue recitized and also, sometimer a let of advertising shows sigh boost tem in tails spirit locammit Leser inder trul beag print a extern ad print tout build sen ti . Finaly, we must know and here introduce boas all resented reffite at and the bod one, because the new l

- Actually we saw many Advertising in our life play a great role. We watch it in television and in street in many places because it's necessery and many people interest grit, because it help Theme to Know more information about what's news and what's news .: production of company -- etc, but we should not foget This advertising it's not always Good and positive it's abor have some negative aspects on individuals and society. in my opinion I have when every one watch any Thing about news merchandise he/she go to buy it without Know The negatives of it may be it's not Goodfor her thin. and Generally many advertising being don't tell The truth just for selling The production of company. and The people believe This. - Simally. There is negative and positive aspects of Advertising, just people should wak our minds. and Think a lot befor buying any Thing -

Advertising plays an important role in our daily live it's the easiert very to inform people about new product but like any company they tries very hand to sell their product even if it have a negative ride for example the cigarate ve find it all aver the world with this big advertisment but it has an ensurmers danger on human's live and it's the most selling product in the wold because mokens are edicted and it's not easy for them to stop even if advertising has this bad ride It also helps us very much in our live and in my point of view & think we can't hive without advertisment because it's the best vary to sell product and to stay in toutch with the people

- Advertising plays an important role in our daily life but it had negative aspects mich as the product is not good and but the Advertising plays show the opensite the important thing is not get money by all the way, and the important Thing is esp spread the product by Adultising false or True, and mativate the people to p buy this Wrong thing and to take wrong idea about this product. the people must sure about this product befor buy it

The advertising is telling people about Things to buy and It is so important in our life, but it has a positive way and negative way. It is easy way for division The information I'm my opinion, The negative way of This advertising, Fristely, may be it attract the people at the same moment and interest them for This Thing but when they purchase it, they found That is not good on limite it. Secondly, Some times, it representa bad produce.

Student 38

Advertising plays is important roule in our daily life because he give more imformation of all society ley: the tetrisions, Internet \_\_\_\_\_ect, but 3t have some negatives aspects on indireiduals and society like. someone watch this Advertising he will belærer it, and may be it's not

# Appendix 11

# **Control Group Post-test Productions**

#### Student 5

For sevral russons, people see That The U.S.A. is the appace plicate .. wantery ... she life , and .. they .. should ... im mg. bate. to it. First, the U.S.A. try to be an model of the best Country on the world. That's maky it try to be made deve he ped country ... and materaled the ignared minds in the athes winties and give them the chance to ... give, express theirs selves and abo. most. Stay in the dashmen in their countries. Second, USA takes in the consideration the scistere of uhizens. Elusing .... The decision made and give them. The appestunities to be an effective prople, Some of them "immeg satire per ple !! Said that so here you want to U.S.A., you can take mere breath and your feel that your rebirth again ... Finally, MS.A. by 15 readed influenced institutions attract per ple aver the so off also by its shegants . liberty ... Democracy, individual freedome. etc. In sheet F. U.S. A. Successed The attrat generations. from countries and may be the turn will be cous , to be one . colo the mone of datine persons the U.S.A.

that it is not only better than thier native country but also the lest country in the world, and I am agree with them. Son many reasons First the U.S.A. is the country of the glabalization ... it is a developed country , and the life in .. it is organized in all sides so we can say that the life in the U.S.A. is more than perfect a Second its. responsibles respect. The citizens and they do this lest to. see them live in a good life without any probleme in all with good way ... they respect each other ... they have thier... rights and do all thier duties Finally ... I want to say that the U.S.A. stay. the first country in world, and its competition is an impossible thing.

USA is the best and the first powerful country in the world First, USA is the center of technology, it produce it with. high levels second, It is the first economic power in the world, it. contains the biggest companies, factories and banks. Also the national have a high hiving to vel . There are the greatest hospitals, schools, Rotels. (. Hilton hotels). which offer ... tervices with high fevels. . Horeover, MSA is an industrial power, because it contains industrial. -bactories like: vehicles, clothes, house equipement and electronic. ones such as: Microsoft. Company. and others. The American products are with a high quality. A to. Education back a high levels and students have all the materials that they meed to improve .... their level and have a good marks. Finally, we should learn. and benefit from the American experience to reach what they .... neach.

I think that there are two important and famous reasons which push people to immigrate to the U.S.A. rather than staying in their native Country First of all, in the U.S.A., people Cam live in pood conditions according to the secial services us hich sive provided there, such as = high ... petron ! s., famiens. universi ties., good hospitals -- etc Second, (people) lecause of the developement of easily, and they can also make their own companies lecause the U.S.A. enconverge the individual works. That's w. try pergole immorphate to the U.S. A and le lieve that is the best country in the world. ..... 

A. Lated people from different countries and specialy lapmont. ones are immigs bm. hon-delle ating to old er to a selves Ehey believe that from the first momen hey will gove them jales, houses, believe that Il SA means money en of immigrating people think that the en socia be changed to the best because they heard that many people who want to M. .ho hing became sich like that, but the troth. he opposite J. J. agree that. IL SA is the best .... e warld, but just in tec Com the in hology and. may bedcu l.we.loo tuse that e une . Cm re & Laich side M. SA is the most inpostant cause our situation now wars f.

In fact I agree, Lody today the USA has become a powerful Country and a leader in every aspect of this life lowomy, technos politics. One. Can find a better chances and opportunities over there the. Than in his country, and that's a fact we must accept for instan of the leader Companies and the a.Job. an. D.C. Sound. e. the mayority. enistes. only there. Add to that education espec in national factors. t, the best universities, agend teachers, and also per are a Minelas alities all of that with a high level In addition, are better their horfitals takes care of its patient . servi security that is offered starting with your home in ende net and also in manie and free ackers t Dy you walking un the st the internet and the GI S. in streets ... A ctu celly no one can say the opposite

Realy many poeple from the third world leave their mother country in order to live so far from theirs, especialy m. U.S.A. The most important factors for that are without doubter founding what they profer to do in their life and realizing their dreams, they thought that USA is the country where they can make all what they want without any problem. But reality is other than their thoughts. In my (modest) modest opinion, I don't believe in that. For me, that country is not the best one in the world, even it is the greatest in economy, freedom, justice and finance and that are what the imingrants had not in their own country (W) USA is a liggest country in all things and domains, but smallest in others especially when we talk about values, there are no human values there, in certain cases we can't for ever make difference between human being and animal. In addition to that, We can't forget that United States of America is usually acting against human beigne rights, with is happening now adays in Libya and other places around the world is a good example showing us that that kind of country is also. great in imperialism, and colonization . Finally, for that reasons and others not mentionated, I don't agree with that statment above

Many people believe that the VSA is the best country in the world. and this. for many reasons. First of all, because Aminica is the city of peace, it is sliverys try to acquite the presser in the world. Secondly, it is a big conomic city, it had a great conomic place i The whole of the work and it is always concealment. The needs of the people von food, dithes, means of transport, every thing. Thisday, it has the finenss " the production and it is always try to eschalart. the natural product in a good way . Finally, Amirico, is s. Resutiful city, it make you happy and confortable when you visit it . All these reasons makes me and all the people believe that the USA is the best (contay) country in the works.....

1. Many people believe that the USI is the best country in the World for this they immigrate to it. For me I agree with this is but not completely because every thing has a .... negative suite as it has an appointe one is farct that us.4. has all things that make life care and better but the good Ching is related with the pearson and this priorate hily ... Maybe there are many chances of jobs in USA. but which Kind of job is it? Bisityourd on bed? for many people this doesn't matter the importance is just them geting money and many people in USA now work meguhan works. Freedom also is one from these reasons which let people immigrate to USA ... but this freedom is not a good one be since it makes people changing this minds cultur, Seleiner religions. Non duys USA colonized The majority of countries by indirect manner by Reeping the minds and the eyes. Lind and just immitate These don't mean that Usis has. just a negative sale, but we also com bene fet from its. high level of Knowledge and education ... Josether more people must try to be aware more about different aultines. because it has a. mired matumulities. No one can denied that us in the Lest country in the world by its power in different domains but a teal person must charge from where he should benefit

Many people immigrate to USA because they believe better than their native country ... many people se that the USA is the best contry in the morted for me agree with this opinion because there is no one distike ve or to visit the parce and strong contry in the world. n) U.S.A. every thing is perfect specialy the may How people are and how they Thinking and how the contry give their night and free dom without ony problem between iministration of the contry and the people and this is the negative 1 as the arabic contries ... is addition to that the mether is fect, there is a job for every one, there is no man, the acation is very different than our contry i.e. that all social services is (very effect and helpfull with people. According to all this reasons how can I be descare the immigrate to the USA

# Appendix 12

# **Experimental Group Post-test Productions**

. people learees there math e. U.S.A., they do leferre better life is waiting for them. A. Amally an easter you have the ree. everythig you got to empress peceple. It go de n ...a. munit. for you ... in the same time you will n ...any one the support you mether your friends mar your y. ... Maylee the remaineration is gling but you are dys in a risk lecause the chances te get. fire. is nou In pressing lose your principeles ......... identity and your self ... Trespect. Moreoneen you can mot lince with a saciety th all they want is the been it fromyon regiplant you Enen if they pay to alat ef maney they will make sure take from you the place in your la jay and the most important the ta is the pleasure of leening with people clorees your , and cares about you the be with your family E reem if USA is the lest country in this was d, you brow deep inside that it is net the lest country for you.

USA is The best country in The norld Than other countries. Many people immigrate toto U.S.A. because it is very devidened country and force majeure and it hat many reasons: First of all it is a rich. country which is has new arms and duster bombs and incendiary bombs etc. Second, it has hew technology. such as robots, new machines and has new phanes. cars trains, metrie etc. many factories and many. industries which is struggles joblesness and helps poor family etc. Third, USA has mether tonque (English because its longuage of The world and . thas good life such as good estication, Job ( medecine menistry \_\_ ). In USA there is high levels etc. Forth, Everything in USA is new (Jashian of clouthes, fortratured houses etc.), until people in USA is good. USA is aqueron of The world 

USA is the best country for people, they think it is better then their country because of many nearons. The first reason we can mention, is. ... the developenent and the high technology that we ....find in USA rather than other countries spicifilly . M. Communication and transport, they are the important things for people to be quillere from the new events oround all the world. People. ... always prefer to take every thing in the easiest way for that they likes to live in U.S.A. where they find their needs of confort. In U.S.A. people . com. find the job have and the atmosphere that they need to do their job in good way ... as. a short the USA is the country that every one. dreams to live in , it is considered a paradise in people'smind.

problems. in their native country, so they shope to travel to the U.S.A. in on dea to make their life better. But when they around there, They suffer more, because they will not find. The perfect life in a country which is in fact not theirs. First of all they have not a legal instituation, so they will not enjoy their simple rights In addition to that they are always afraid from The police Also . they will not find a respectable job and a place. even The food it will be difficult to Them to find some thing to eat. U.S.A. is a wonderful country. frut. in a legal way and for tourisme not for immigrante, because it's really diffrent for what it seem like. More Than That, they Will find a different relegion and This is not easy at all no mosque, mo Ramadan it swrong, I know That we have a lot of problems in our country but to me it's more save Than America.

Mest of paceple lelieve that the USA is the leest and then eager ten mat the block alt me withuses. eitt ar enertrig elit. average emore. Je eurasel alai has at ile of ... constite. el. T. a. astater ent. mi. eremannen. las it iles people ushon sule in the government practice what they always wout themselves met rehat the Inumarity meed, they always grinhtamac got in tauf. Areacu twent the defender annerage said conly and the right ereample for that is Palastine. -tonene. the U.S.A. is a new country. Itrene free many periode ment man merge elipsed etilen alt re shall alt , the man been been man Anemergaande ymenn beeuwes neiter jimmin sult tuel assalq. pleasen the white was dealed and bear at her and user tel see in television this racusma A has what the USA manufactures. like anno which threaten the weard and the environment. Then the use of everyin which . Analy eacha. Mamina bura jutuacionul. Je afit elt Aqueras. As a sesult and me has fin thinking about the that the U.S. A. is the lest country and there is centre to the :

that it is not only better than thier native country but also the best country in the world, and I am agree with them. Sor many reasons First the U.S.A. is the country of the: globalization it is a developed country, , and the life in. it is organized in all sides so we can say that the life in the U.S.A. is more than perfect. Second, its responsibles respect the citizens and they do thier best to see them live in a good life without any probleme in all the time ... Third, the people in the U.S.A. deal with others with good way ... they respect each other ... they have thier. rights and do all thier duties . Finally ... I want to say that the U.S.A. stay. the first country in world, and its competition is an impossible thing.

The USA is known as the most ponserful country in the wold. ... Monradays people are immigrating frequently to the USA believing it is the best country, and that is for some Reasons. First, they have beter houses in reaching higher level of education because the most amazing Universities are there like HARVERED Secondly, theirs native country don't offer much apportunities as much as the USA specialy mindustry, and that 's because native country alon it. have enough material to support their people. Also they have beter chances in finding jobs that is appropriate for them with good salary because the majority of big companies are situated these ... Finaly these are a lot. of ways to entertain your self we then by visiting theaters 1. the Cinema on even check the beaty of the City . The US.A. is considered as the most glorious country in the... wold and it's true.

Personally. I think that the USA is the best Country in The World where I can live that it due to some neasons-Firstly. It las post of wak. We can get a work or a gob carily without any problems in my level and with a.g.ood monthly salary . Secondly, kinds of colucation. the education is very developed there, it has a good material a men way every day and it can educate Our children in high level. Also it has all hanches of edu cation with Perfect teachers. In addition, The development in Acience Amain: U.S.A. is the first Country in The Wald with his power. and his development; the other countries is importer all new thing from it mch. as: thoughto, moterials and in the melicin domain also which is very evoluted there . it was discovered a new medicament as a gainht. The concer. More that, The Standards living is improvement and higher there that " why all people immig sole to The USA because they find all cases which they need it to live like food, weather, ... Finally, The USA is my dream to travel to there and The be Country in the world where I can hive -

... Many people immigrate to the U.SA because they believe that it is better than their native country. In Pact, many people believe that the U.S.A. is the best country in the world. This phenomenon has many reasons, some of this reasons we find : The fondemental leason; is they find a big Variety of 50 appropriate in U.S.A, because now a days we noticed many people without work and they can't lik very well with their family . So they immigrate their home entirement to U.S. A- where they Can Carn food to live The second reason; is the derk lopenent of U.S.A. in many fields on domains for exemple = desclopement of technology and good materials that can help people to like in a better and confortable life . In addition, we find the plople locape to the U.S.A. where they find a good Services healths, because they don't find a care to their health in their native countries especially the polite way that the U.S. A. doctors dealing with their patients and also the purity of hospitals of U.S. A. In short, we can say the Repole immigrate to U.S. A., because they need to built their Rutur with strong stone if with better ways of life, with Wew materials and investion and they have a wight to like in better life.

Many people believe that the USA is the best country in the world because they immigrate to the USA due to the USA is the powerful country in many rearons. the world in all the domains as in manufacture, actriculture, production of movies and films Second, USA Las a l better like good places make the person enjoy and forma Third, in USA, the spread of technology florida, cali in all the fields make the life lazy and comfortable. Fourth, in U.S.A. the level of education is better them es in rebools, in univer other countr El Huls and . tal's scortai et elex tralicita no superior that ter in this country all the needs are available Funally ause. Le USA is a rith country . The an attractive country and powerful one in all the

#### Résumé

La plupart des étudiants algériens éprouvent des difficultés à maîtriser tous les aspects de l'écriture. Cela est dû à la complexité de l'écriture et aussi à son instruction qui reste traditionnelle. Ce travail de recherche a pour objectif l'étude des effets de l'approche par compétences sur la réussite des étudiants de première année au département des langues étrangères à l'université de Biskra. Il vise à démontrer que si cette approche avait échoué dans l'enseignement moyen et secondaire, elle pourrait être un succès à l'université. Cela est fondé sur la conviction que si une approche sociocognitive de l'écrit, basée sur les principes de l'approche par compétences, est mise en œuvre dans l'enseignement de celuici, elle réussira à promouvoir les écrits des étudiants en terme de fluidité, d'exactitude et de complexité grammaticale et lexicale. Ceci peut être réalisé grâce à l'utilisation d'une approche éclectique de l'écrit, la plus appropriée à l'approche par compétences. Afin de confirmer ou de rejeter l'hypothèse que la mise en œuvre d'une telle approche apporterait des résultats positifs par rapport à l'approche traditionnelle, un groupe contrôle (N=40) et un groupe expérimental (N=40) ont été sélectionnés pour une recherche quasiexpérimentale. Cette étude a été réalisée, d'abord, par la proposition de deux questionnaires, l'un pour les enseignants de l'expression écrite (N=40), et l'autre à un échantillon d'étudiants de première année (N=180) pour tester les effets de l'approche par compétences de l'enseignement précédent. Ensuite, par la comparaison des écrits des participants avant et après l'expérience pour démontrer les effets du traitement. Ceci a été renforcé par deux interviews entretenues après l'expérience, l'une avec un groupe d'étudiants (N=15) qui ont participé à l'expérience et l'autre avec l'enseignante qui l'a réalisée. En fait, les questionnaires ont révélé l'échec de l'approche par compétences dans l'enseignement moyen et secondaire. Et inversement, les scores obtenus par le groupe expérimental ont confirmé les hypothèses formulées dans cette étude. Ces résultat ont atteint des niveaux statistiquement plus importants par rapport à ceux obtenus avant l'expérience et aussi à ceux obtenus par le groupe contrôle. En résumé, les résultats quantitatifs et qualitatifs obtenus dans cette recherche indiquent qu'une telle approche peut aider les étudiants à développer non seulement leurs compétences à l'écrit mais aussi l'organisation des structures et les caractéristiques linguistiques des différents genres. Tout cela aide à développer les compétences nécessaires à la transmission des messages dans des situations réelles.

ملخص

يعاني أغلبية الطلبة الجزائريين من صعوبات في التمكن من الكتابة بالانجليزية من جميع النواحــى،و يرجع ذلك لصعوبتها و كذلك لتدريسها الذي لا يـزال تقليدي سعت هذه الدراسـة إلى البحث في تأثير منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات على كـــــتابات طلاب السنــة الأولى قسم اللغـــات الأجنبيـــة بجامعة بسكرة رغم فشل هذا المنهج في تحسين كتابات الطلاب في التعليم المتوسط و الثانوي ( حسب نتائج نموذجــى لاستطلاع) فإنه يمكـــن أن يحقـق نجـاحا لو يطبق منهـجا ذهنـيا اجتماعيا في تعليم الكتابة يتماشي مع خصائص منهج المقاربية بالكفاءات ، فسوف تتحسن كتابات الطلاب من حيث الطلاقة، الدقة و التعقيد. لكى تثبت أو ترفض الفرضية، إن منهجا من ذلك النوع سيحقق نجاحا و شارك في هذه الدراسة التجريبية فوجان متكونان من 40 طالبًا في كل واحد، فالفوج الأول هو الفوج الضابط يمثل الطلبة الذين درسواحسب المنهج التقليدي ، أما الفــوج الثانـــى التجريبــى فإنه درس حسب خصائص منهج المقاربـــة بالكفاءات. إضافة لذلك استعمل نموذجين استطلاعين، و أخذ الأساتــذة التعبيـر الكتابـي بنفـس القسم ( 12 أستــاذا ) و الثاني لمجموعــة من طلبة السنة الأولى متكونــة من 180 طالب، و كما أجريت مقابلتين بعد التجربة مع 15طالب من نفس المجموعة التي شاركت في التجربة و الأستاذة التي طبقتها. تدل نتائج النموذجين الاستطلاعين على فشل منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات في تحسين كتابات الطلبة في التعليم المتوسط و الثانوي .أما فيما يخص التجربة فإن الفوج الذي درس طبقًا لمنهج المقاربة ا بالكفاءات قد حقق مستويات أعلى من حيــث الطلاقة، الدقة و التعقــيد مقارنة بالفوج الضابط الذي درس حسب المنهج التقليدي و بلغت هذه المستويات دلالة إحصائية إضافة إلى ذلك، فإن نتائج المقابلتين أكدت مصداقية النتائج المتحصل عليها في التجربة و مدى صلاحية منهج تدريس الكتابة بمنهج يتماشى مع منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات لأن ذلك يؤدي إلى تحسين كتابة الطلبة و تعليمهم التخطيط البنيوي و الخصائص اللسانية لكل نوع من الكتابة. كل هذا يؤدي إلى تطور كفاءة الطلاب الكتابية التي تمكنهم من نقل الرسائل المناسبة في حالات فعلية.