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**Problems Facing Teachers in Implementing the
Competency-Based Approach in Teaching Writing:
A Case Study of EFL Secondary School Teachers in Batna**

A Dissertation Submitted for the Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the
Master Degree in Science of Language

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem

The world has recently witnessed rapid changes because of the globalization which increases the mobility of individuals and thoughts that was rendered the world as a small village. Education, as the other fields, was influenced by these changes. Consequently, a recent approach known the Competency-Based Approach was imposed in some educational systems. Algeria as well as all the countries has responded to this global changes by reforming the educational system in 2003 and has adopted the Competency– Based Approach as a first step of change. The new approach aims to enhance learners' competencies in order to use them in their real life. Moreover, it focuses on learning and pupils' activities rather than the teacher 's role. Despites its importance, some Algerian secondary school teachers still fail to implement appropriately this new approach especially in teaching writing since it is the most difficult skill for both teachers and foreign learners. Therefore, Why are teachers unable to implement this approach in their written courses?

2. Aims of the Study

As future teachers, we would like to investigate three main points in the teaching process. First, to present the situation of teaching and learning under the Competency-Based Approach in secondary school classes. Second, to investigate the main problems that face teachers in teaching writing under this approach to secondary school pupils. Finally, to provide teachers with useful recommendations which may help them in implementing their knowledge about teaching writing using to the Competency-Based Approach. For this purpose the following research questions have been formulated.

3. Research Questions

Our project centers on finding some answers to the following questions:

- 1 / How do Algerian secondary schools teacher of English implement this approach?
- 2 / How do we teach writing under the Competency-Based Approach?

3 / What are the problems that face secondary school teachers in teaching the writing skill?

4 / How do teachers of secondary schools promote their pupils' writing proficiency when using the Competency-Based Approach?

5 / Which writing approach is more effective under the Competency- Based Approach ?

4. Hypothesis

As the aim of the present study is to examine teachers' problems in teaching writing, we hypothesize that if Algerian teachers of English at secondary school level knew how to apply the Competency-Based Approach, they would promote their pupils' writing proficiency.

5. Significance of the Study

This study is intended to offer deeper insights into theory and practice that underly problems of teaching writing under the Competency-Based Approach in Algeria. Concerning practice, this research project might serve as help to secondary school teachers as well as a guide to future ones. Regarding theory, this research may contribute in filling a gap of references about the present subject.

6. Research Methodology

6.1 The Choice of the Method

We found it appropriate to use the descriptive method because it seems the most appropriate to be used in this research work.

6.2 Population

The population of the study consists of secondary teachers of English in the academic year 2011-2012. We have chosen the secondary teachers of English to be used in our study because these teachers have great relation with the subject, as they can recognize the problems that face them in implementing the competency-based approach in teaching writing. This could provide teachers and students with better insight about the main problems that hinder the EFL teachers in teaching writing under the competency-based approach.

6.3 Sampling

Since it was difficult to carry out the research work on the whole population of secondary school teachers, a representative sample of population under study has been chosen randomly from four secondary schools in Batna (Abas Leghrour, Mohammed Elaid El khalifa, Bouzina, and Manaa). In this way, each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

6.4 Research Tools

To show that the assumption made in this study is built on solid ground and to accomplish the research aims, a questionnaire for secondary school teachers was designed to know their views about the application of the Competency-Based Approach as a new Algerian one in teaching the writing skill. In addition, we attempted to add classroom observation in Si Elhawese Secondary School in Biskra during one month but we faced many problems as teachers did not help us to attend their writing courses which are the core of our research. Hence, after one month we could not deal the classroom observation and limited our research one questionnaire.

7. Structure of the Dissertation

The present research is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter contains detailed information about the Competency-Based Approach as a new approach in Algeria. It is clarified by defining firstly the terms approach, method, and technique and presenting background information of this approach. This chapter also deals with teaching under the Competency-Based Approach showing teacher's role, learners' role, and teaching and learning activities. It also highlights assessment under the Competency-Based Approach with a particular attention given to the portfolio as the important tool to assess students' work.

The second chapter deals with teaching writing which is considered as an important issue in the Algerian school. After having given an overview of the nature of writing and its mechanics, we tried to show the difference between the writing skill and speaking skill, two productive skills, and also the relation between writing and reading. Finally, we suggested how to teach writing effectively, through steps, and also how to assess learners' written productions.

The third chapter outlines the field work. It seeks to shed light on some problems that face teachers in teaching writing under the Competency-Based Approach. This chapter involves a detailed analysis of secondary school teachers' questionnaire and some recommendations about teaching writing.

Chapter One : An Overview of the Competency-Based Approach

Introduction

The field of foreign language teaching has known academic prosperity, with increasing numbers of books, magazines, articles and dissertations which constitute a huge stock of knowledge. In this variety of topics, the Competency-Based Approach remains an area of great interest because it represents a new and a dynamic topic.

This chapter provides researchers and teachers, especially the novice ones who face problems in implementing this new approach, with a clear presentation of the essential foundations of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA). First of all, we will start with its background and we will define the terms – competence, competency, and CBA. Next, we will tackle the theoretical origin of CBA. Then, we will shift to its design. Finally, we will show how to assess its productions according to the Competency-Based approach.

1.1 Definition of Approach, Method, and Technique

Many people cannot differentiate between approach, method, and technique and they consider it as one concept but each term has its own meaning. The three terms are defined in Richards & Schmidt (2002, p. 30) as "Different theories about the nature of language and how languages are learned (The approach) imply different ways of teaching language (The method), and different methods makes use of different kinds of classroom activity (The technique)" .

1.1.1 Approach

Anthony (1963) defines an approach as "a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and learning" (cited in Krumaravadeveli, 2006, p. 48). Likewise, Harmer (2001) stated that an approach is about both how to use language and how its components overlap. According to Richards & Rodgers (2002) an approach refers to " theories about the nature of language and language learning that serves as the source of practices and principles in language teaching"(p. 78). Besides, Davies (2002) argues that an approach can help the teacher but it may not offer detailed information about the

teaching process and he said that " it is the realm of methods" (p. 186). It means that an approach is broader than a method which encompasses theories about language and language learning and it is not about what the teaching process should include and this represented by a method.

1.1.2 Method

This term refers to " the practical realization of an approach"(Harmer, 2001, p. 78). It means that an approach is applied in a method and the latter represents the practical part of it. In other terms, the method is "an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural" (Anthony, 1963, p. 65 cited in Krumaravadiveli, 2006, p. 85). Moreover, for Davies (2002) a method includes a general approach but it is more detailed than an approach because it collects such things as syllabus, learning - teaching activities, materials and so on (p. 186).

1.1.3 Technique

According to the American applied linguist, Edward Anthony, a technique is "implementational which actually takes place in a classroom...Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well" (cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2002, p. 19).

An approach is the broadest one since it involves theories about both language and language learning. In addition, a method is the practical side of an approach but it involves detailed elements about teaching language such as a syllabus, objectives, the textbook, and so on. Finally, a technique is more specific because it takes place inside the classroom.

1.2 Background of the Competency-Based Approach

Chelli stated that the "theoretical roots of the competency based approach lie in the behaviorist model from the 1950s" (2010, p. 14). Henny, (2005) also agrees with Chelli about the starting point of CBA. He considered the emergence of CBA as a reaction to the situation after the Second World War (p. 14). Where teaching English as a second or foreign language became an important matter, because of the role of English as international language for communication by the 1950, and the influence of the

technological prosperity in reinforcing English. All these circumstances led to the need for practical English for people in many parts of the world rather than academic English language acquired in school (Richards, 2001, pp. 23- 24). Consequently, Extensive demands for curriculum development which led to the emergence of new reformulations suggested; for instance, by Bloom's Taxonomy which became the core of audiolingualism in 1960s in the United States, and which tried to bridge the gap between students' learning and the real life. After that, a new approach called the Competency Based Approach emerged in the educational field (Henny, 2005, p. 16). "CBLT first emerged in the united states in 1970s and was widely adopted in vocationally-oriented education and in adult ESL programs" (Auerbach, 1986, pp. 411-412 cited in Richards, 2001, p. 128). So, we can conclude that both teaching by objectives that represent behaviorist perspective and CBA share the same purpose which is the formation of learner who can apply his knowledge in real life.

Moreover, Richard (2006) gave more explanation about the development of this approach. He considered CBA as an extension of communicative language teaching (CLT) which emerged in the 1970s, and which has great influence on language teaching around the world, especially approaches of language teaching that appeared today (Richard, 2006, p. 1). He considered 1970s as a point of departure in the way of the language teaching approaches and methods. In this year old methods such as Audiolingualism Method and Situational Language Teaching which focus on grammar became an old school. So, language ability oversteps grammar competence to communicative competence. While grammar competence aimed to construct correct sentences, the interest shifted to the knowledge and skill needed to use grammar and other language aspects to achieve different communicative purposes.

Communicative language teaching has passed through a number of phases. In its first phase, 1970s and 1980s the interest was turned to the development of syllabus and teaching approach that will be suitable with the new conception of communicative competence. This led to many suggestions about the organization of syllabuses in terms of functions and notions rather than grammatical structures (ibid, 2006, p. 11). After that, supporters of CLT realized that many English learners have specific needs in their occupational or educational settings rather than just concentrating on more general

English. This led to the appearance of needs analysis as an essential component of communicative methodology (ibid, 2006, p. 12).

From the manifestation of CLT, teachers and materials writers have investigated designing classroom activities that fit the principles of a communicative methodology focusing on fluency rather than accuracy. These activities include, group work, task work, and information-gap activities. (ibid, 2006, p. 14).

Since the 1990s, the communicative approach has seen wide spread. Therefore, the notion of communicative competence has regarded as the main goal of second and foreign language teaching, and a communicative syllabus and methodology as a tool to realize this purpose (ibid, 2006, p. 22). These changes have led to the development of not only a single model of CLT, but to a number of different language teaching approaches which represent different perspectives within communicative language teaching using different ways to enhancing communicative competence (ibid, 2006, p. 26). For example, Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Task-Based Instruction (TBI) are two recent methodologies which considered as process-based methodologies, since they focus on creating classroom processes that are believed to facilitate language learning (ibid, 2006, p. 27). Some focus on outcomes or products of learning as Text-Based Instruction and Competency-Based Instruction (ibid, 2006, p. 36).

CBA is as an approach which has known wide spread since the 1970s. Its implication in language teaching is called competency-based language teaching (CBLT) as an approach which seeks to teach students the basic skills they need in everyday life. Recently, competency based have become adopted in many countries. Algeria has adopted CBA since 2003 as a first step in the educational reform imposed by UNESCO. That led to series of changes at the level of syllabus and course book in a way fits the new approach as stated by (Roegiers, 2005, p. 2). We can say that the real emergence of CBA and its application on the teaching foreign languages field refers to recent years.

1.3 Definition of Competence

Competence is often considered as an important concept in order to learn any foreign language. Knouwenhaven defines this term as "the capacity to accomplish 'up to standard' the key occupational tasks that characterize a profession" (p. 126). In like

manner, Mansfield (1989) claims that the term competence differs from one view to another some of these views see it as a broad concept which is doing with occupational tasks; however, others consider it as a narrow concept which focuses on "the routine aspect of work activity, and veers towards the input of knowledge, skills and understanding'[sic] which are attributed of individuals"(Mansfield, 1989, p. 23). According to DeSeCo (2005), the term competence is defined as "A system of internal and external mental structures and abilities assuming mobilization of knowledge, cognitive skills and social behavioral components such as attitudes, emotions for successful realization of activity in particular context "(cited in Chelli, 2010, p. 58). In spite of the variety definitions, all of them stress the fact that competence is both a physical and an intellectual ability to do something well through repeated experiences.

1.4 Definition of Competency

In studying competency, one is faced by the lack of unified definitions, and this leads to confusion between terms such as competence, competency, competencies, and competences. For example, the *New Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2005) defines competence as "the ability to do something well" (p. 294). Oxford further states that competence and competency are synonymous as are competences and competencies. This view is also shared by Dobson (2003) in his definition. "Competency (Also competence) the ability to perform tasks and duties to the standard expected in employment" (p. 62).

Attempts by researchers, such as Blakemore, to define the term competency have resulted in various definitions. Blakemore (2008) from his part coined the term of competency as follow: "A competency is a skill performed to a specific standard under particular conditions". Then, he describes Competencies as "result from breaking down a job or role into the specific and observable skills that are needed to do it well" (p. 2). We notice that the writer in his definition emphasizes about some key words which represent the main elements that distinguish between the two terms competence and competency which are specific and particular condition; therefore, we can consider the competency as superior level in mastery and accuracy to do thing in comparison to competence, also the competency can be realized in specific condition.

Another definition of competency is stated by The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (2002) as follow: "competency is the combination of skills, abilities, and knowledge needed to perform a specific task". The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (2002) believes "Competencies are the result of integrative learning experiences in which skills, abilities, and knowledge interact to form bundles that have currency in relation to the task for which they are assembled" (p. 7). From this definition we can infer that competency consists of a set of components which are skills, abilities, and knowledge and the competencies as a collection of competency. Later, Quality Assurance Manual for Flight Procedure Design (2009) proposed a definition to Competency as " A combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes required to perform a task to the prescribed standard (p. xi). Then, he also describes its components from his view and defines them as follow: "A skill is the ability to perform an activity that contributes to the effective completion of a task", "Knowledge is specific information required for the trainee to develop the skills and attitudes for the effective accomplishment of tasks, and" "Attitude is the person's mental state that influences behavior, choices and expressed opinions" (pp. 2-22). All these definitions, enable us to have a clear idea about the concept 'competency' which involves being good at doing something.

1.5 Definition of the Competency-Based Approach

Implementing the CBA is an important issue in the Algerian education system since most of the teachers mainly the novice ones are unaware of its principles. Therefore, it is worth presenting this approach. Many researchers seek to facilitate and to explain this educational change; for instance, Richards and Rodgers (2002) define this new approach as "an educational movement that focuses on the outcomes or outputs of learning in the development of language programs. CBE address what the learners are expected to do with the language, however they learned to do it. The focus on outputs rather than on inputs to learning is central to the competencies perspective " (p. 141). In addition, the U. S. Office Education (1978) defines CBE as a functional approach that focuses on life skills and evaluates those skills according to learner performance (Savage, 1993; cited in Kathleen, 2006) .

As a conclusion, this new approach is based on developing learners' competencies in order to help them to face some problems in their daily life. It aims to

enable learners to put what they have learned in other life settings. For that reason, the CBA come to relate the two settings: school life and real life setting, to help learners become competent in their society.

1.6 Characteristics of the Competency-Based Approach

The first apparent characteristic of the CBA is the focus on learning and pupils' activities (learner's centered) rather than on the teacher's role. The CBA is socio-constructivist approach based on training students to construct their own knowledge to be able to use it in the daily life. According to Auerbach (1986, cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2002, p. 146) the essential features that included in implementing the CBA syllabus are:

- A focus on successful functioning in society. It aims to give students a chance of learning with themselves to encounter problems in the society.
- A focus on life skills. The CBA not only interest on teaching knowledge but also teaching a function of communication in real life.
- Task or performance-oriented instruction. The focus on clear behaviors rather than on the ability talk about language.
- Outcomes that are made explicit a priori. Outcomes are recognized and decided by both learner and teacher.
- Continuous and ongoing assessment. Assessment is the important integrated part in implementing the CBA which considered not only in exams but also in an ongoing instruction.
- Individualized, student-centered instruction. According to the content, level, and space, objectives of the lessons are stated via individual requirements.

In addition to these characteristics, there are additional ones that are relevant to this approach :

- Regarding the competency-based approach, all the types of syllabuses, the grammatical, the lexical, the functional, the situational, and the task based syllabi, are important in teaching foreign language because their aim is to enhance the learner's role. So, they are important in developing the program of the CBA.
- Richards (2006) identified the nature of objectives according to the competency based approach. He said that "Objectives are broken into narrowly focused sub objectives, so

that both teachers and students can get a clear sense of progress" (p. 42). In the CBA the objectives must be realized in the learner production as competencies, other way the teacher cannot move to other item till the learner achieves proficiency in learning the item was studied.

- Each approach needs specific teaching materials in order to realize the aim of its foundation. Therefore, the authentic materials fit the CBA since as Phillips and Shettlesworth 1978; Clark 1989; Peack 1997 (cited in Richards, 2001) claimed that this kind of materials motivate the learner because they provide him with information in interesting way, bring the real life situation and cultural information to the classroom, supply learner with real exposure to the target language, and meet the needs of the learner because they approach the real life to him (cited in Richards, 2001, p.152).

1.7 Learning Theories Related to the Competency-Based Approach

Before we start to expose the theories related to the CBA, we intended to give a brief look to behaviorism and Bloom's Taxonomy, Because of the strong relation between theories from one side, and the important role of Bloom's Taxonomy in education till now.

1.7.1 Behaviorism

Behaviorism had a powerful influence on second language teaching. Its influence appears in the development of the Audio-lingual behaviorist theory as application to language learning (Light Brown & Spada, p. 34). This influence appears in that it dominates the field of teaching till now. " In the behaviorist view language learning is seen like any other kind of learning, as the formation of habits." learning is a behavior formed according to the notions of stimulus and response. The response to stimuli will be reinforced if successful outcome is achieved. Through the repetition of reinforcement the habit will be formed (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 30). We found this way efficient when we want to learn anything by heart, so we cannot neglect this way of teaching in some cases.

When we learn the first language, the process is easy since new habits are acquired responding to environmental stimuli. However, in learning a second language the learner face the problem of interference between the old learned habits and the process of learning. If there are similarities between the first and second language the learning

process happen easily, if there are differences learning will be difficult (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 31). However, the reality proves the contrary, we find facility to learn two things different more than to learn two things approximately similar. "A way to anticipate errors was to conduct a contrastive analysis, comparing and contrasting the students' native language with the target language" (Chelli, 2006, p. 32). This means this offers a way to identify and correct errors, therefore, prevent bad habit.

1.7.1.1 Bloom' s Taxonomy

Bloom' s taxonomy refers to " a classification of the different objectives that educators set for students" (Chelli, 2010, p. 74). She added that this taxonomy tries to give a good classification of both levels and forms of learning. Bloom's taxonomy is "based on behavioristic learning theories" (McMillan, 2007, p. 50). As mentioned in the Algerian educational syllabus *At the Crossroads* (2005), Bloom stated that all the teacher's objectives can be divided into three main domains cognitive, affective and psychomotor (p. 12). According to Bloom's Taxonomy the learning is a kind of gradation from the lower level of learning to achieve the higher level. It aims to motivate teachers to focus on the three domains by creating a kind of harmony between them (Chelli, opicit, p. 74). McMillan (2007) pointed out that the cognitive domain encompasses six levels:

Knowledge: the learner recalls previous knowledge.

Comprehension: the ability to recognize and to understand the meaning.

Application: the ability to exploit new knowledge in order to solve problems so the learner implements new knowledge in new situation.

Analysis: the ability to divide information into parts and to examine them in order to achieve a good understanding.

Synthesis: the ability to construct new knowledge from collecting several parts of information.

Evaluation: the ability to judge new information. (p. 44)

The CBA is related to this taxonomy since it supports the idea of mobilization of knowledge and skills in gradual integration from level 1 (knowledge) to level 6 (evaluation) (Chelli, opicit, pp. 75-76). Within the Algerian educational syllabus, *At the Crossroads* (2005), the affective domain is also important in the development of

competencies'' (p. 12). This domain explains the people's emotional reaction to built awareness, attitudes, emotions and feelings. This domain is divided into five levels:

Receiving: student interests to attend in the class.

Responding: students respond to the learning process.

Valuing: students give value to what they are learning.

Organization: student collects information, values, and ideas and accommodate them according to his schema.

Characterizing: the student individualize his own behavior. (Chelli, opicit, p. 77).

The third domain treated by Bloom's Taxonomy is psychomotor which describes the physical ability to manipulate things.

According to Bloom's Taxonomy the three domains reflect the three component of the learner personality and the activities found in the course book intend to promote all the sides of the learner personality, thus the teacher, in his task of teaching , cannot neglect some activities because this can affect the learner personality in negative way (Ohida, 2007, p. 11). In order to realize Bloom's Taxonomy in the educational scope Farrell (2002) describes the purpose from setting the objectives as follow: written objectives is effective step in the lesson plan, since it is fruitful to both the teacher and the student .The written objectives describe the aim we want to achieve. That is, we identify what we want from our students to learn; this helps us to select the appropriate activities. Also the written objectives help teacher to state effective evaluation to the student at the end of the lesson. Finally, written objectives help student to focus on what must to do (p. 32). He suggested some action verbs that fit each level, and which can be used by the teacher in stating the objectives which represent the cognitive domain. For example, in the knowledge level the teacher can use these actions verb: tell, list, name define, identify, state, remember, and repeat. In the comprehension level the teacher can use these verbs: transform, change, restate, describe, explain review, paraphrase, relate, generalize, and infer. In the application level the verbs needed are: apply, practice, employ, use, demonstrate, illustrate, show, and report. In the analysis level the verbs are: analyze, dissect, distinguish, examine, compare, contrast, survey investigate, separate, categorize, classify, and organize. In the synthesis level the verbs are: create, invent, compose, construct, design, modify imagine, produce, and propose (p. 38). In the evaluation level the verbs are: judge, decide, select, justify, evaluate, critique, debate, verify recommended, assess.

1.7.2 Constructivism

Mahoney states that the term constructivism has emerged at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century (cited in Pitchards & Woollard, 2010, p. 2). This theory focuses on both the way of teaching and learning a language. Likewise, Kroll (2004, p. 200) points out that "Constructivism, or constructivist theories, represent a multiplicity of ways to think about learning and development, and consequently about teaching".

According to Westwood (2008), the learning process considers more the learner who can construct and invent his own interpretation and understanding of the world around him. Also he claims that " Since the 1990s, constructivism has spread as a strong influential force, shaping education reform across many areas of the school curriculum and spawning many new learner-centered approaches to teaching."(ibid, 2008, p. 3). The CBA is based on the constructivist theory since it focuses on the learners and their own development of the learning process. At this level, Pitchards and Woollard (2010, p. 8) stated that the constructivist is a theory which focuses more on the learner who creates his own understanding and chooses or transforms information into new knowledge. Indeed, constructivism as a new theory emerged in the last part of the twentieth century and it encompasses two main branches the cognitive and the social one, the former developed by Piaget and the later by Vygotsky .

1.7.2.1 Cognitive Constructivism

Cognitive constructivism is also called Piagetian cognitive theory. According to Williams and Burden (1997), this theory " is based on learners passing through a series of stages" (p. 16). For Elaoubida's book, *The Competency Based Approach Manual*, cognitive constructivism considers the learner during his learning process who may encounter some problems in his environment. This lead him to understand and acquire a new information (assimilation). Then he will develop this new information and his ways of thinking into another new information (accommodation) (p. 16).

Before we move to the three main concepts in Piaget's theory (assimilation, accommodation, equilibration), we should know firstly the meaning of the concept a schemas. This term is defined as "a collection of organized and interrelated ideas, concepts and prior knowledge structures that are abstract representations of objects,

events and relationships in the real world" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 468). It means that a schema are prior knowledge that used to interpret our everyday surrounding.

Pitchards and woollard (2010) explain more the three concepts of the cognitive theory. For them the term assimilation means collecting and classifying of new information (p. 12). Likewise, it is the stage of adapting new knowledge. Accommodation is "the alteration of schema in order for new and contradictory information to be allowed" (p. 12). This means that the prior information are adjusted to grasp the new one. Finally, equilibration is "the state of having no contradictions present in our mental representations of our environment. The linked process of assimilation and accommodation are the means by which a state of equilibration is sought"(p. 13). Certainly, these three terms represent the basic stages which we move through when we acquire a new knowledge.

In this situation, Williams and Burden (1997) indicate that for Piaget, the young infant moves toward four stages named sensori-motor, pre-operational, concrete operation and finally formal operation stage (p. 16). Indeed, the child or the learner for him is an active person who can construct his own understanding through the process of assimilation, accommodation and equilibration without the help of the others (the society). These stages are considered as very important for learners as knowledge is constructed progressively.

1.7.2.2 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is the second trend of the constructivist theory which was developed by Vygotsky (1978). His theory complete the piagetian one that adds the effect of society or the external factors on the learning process. Therefore, this theory focuses on the importance of social interaction and peer learning to promote learners' competencies. In fact, the competency-based approach is based on social constructivist theory since it gives the importance to the learner who can learn better through the process of social interaction with other people.

Pitchards and Woollard state that "Vygotsky considers that social interaction is a fundamental aspect of successful cognitive and intellectual growth" (Pitchards &

Woollard, 2010, p. 14). One of the most concept in Vygotsky's theory is ZPD. Zone of Proximal Development clarified in Pitchards and Woollard's book (2010, p. 15) as :

The ZPD is the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers...what children can do with the assistance of others might be in some sense even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone.

The term ZPD means that learners can do a new activity just with the help of the environment such as the teacher's or peer's assistance. In other words, learners need the teacher who should facilitate their tasks which can then do it individually or in groups.

1.8 Types of Teaching and Learning Activities

Learning and teaching activities differ from one method to another. According to the CBT, learning tasks are similar to those of communicative language teaching. As Richard & Rodgers (2002) said that the CBLT shares some concepts of the communicative competence which considers the important elements to promote functional communicative skill of the learner (p. 143). Indeed, the CBLT has much in common with the previous approach of the communicative language teaching. In this respect, Harmer (2001) claims that " The best lessons offer a variety of activities within a class period"(Harmer, 2001, p. 309). This means the CBA is eclectic in that it requires the use of different methods and techniques.

According to Biolobrzaska (2006) the learning approach is a series of activities that learners are expected to do it in order to be competent in their life tasks. For him "the learning cycle is some new activities which learners should respond to it (discussion of issues raised in the activity) and should give the reflection that lead them to do another new activity and so on (p. 96).

Nowadays, the Algerian textbooks contains a variety of the learner's tasks in or outside the classroom and all of them aim to develop his competence in the real life situation. The following types of activities mentioned by Richards (2006, pp. 19-20):

- a) **Information-gap activities:** this refers to that students in the classroom go beyond practice of language forms and they use their linguistic and communicative skills in order to obtain information.

- b) **Task-completion activities:** it is also called warm-ups tasks. This kind of activities motivate and push the learner to interact during a lecture e.g. games, puzzles, and songs.
- c) **Information gathering activities:** the role of the students is to conduct surveys, interviews and search to collect information they needed.
- d) **information -transfer activities:** it focus on mental use of language. Learners are expected to transfer information from text to graphic or putting sentence elements in sequence.

All the Algerian Educational syllabuses aim to promote the learner through doing a series of activities. Some of these activities can do it in the classroom and the other should do it outside the school and it can be do it individually or in groups. For example, a project work represents the practical part of a syllabus which should be prepared outside the class and then presented to the teacher.

1.9 The Teacher's Role

The common role of the teacher under the Competency Based Approach is the role of facilitator. In this context Dobson (2003) claims that Facilitator he is “a person who helps learners learn by discovering things for themselves” (p. 64).

According to Harmer (2001) the role of the teacher changes according to the task ,and an effective teacher knows how to choose the relevant role in the appropriate position, and he further said that the role of facilitator is wide in meaning .Thus, he suggested a set of precise roles that go in harmony with the term facilitator (p. 57).

Controller, When teacher act as controller he expected act in different way in comparison to his role in the state where students are working in group (ibid, 2001, p. 58).

Davies and Pearse (2000) add some explanations about this role. He said that he transmits information, controls occurrence of activities from the front, motivates to participate in the class with the correction of errors (p. 127).

Organizer, "The teacher has to initiate students to collaboration through pair and group work " (Bader, 2007, p. 47). The teacher has to organize students in pair or in group .He has to initiate, to explain the content of activities, and end tasks when time is finished (Harmer, 2001, p. 58).

Assessor, Dobson (2003) thinks that "the Assessor A person qualified to carry out assessment" (p. 62). Therefore, his role is to give feedback, correction, and grading to their students (Harmer, 2001, p. 59). He also informs the learners about their progress, trying to combine encouragement with honest evaluation and useful feedback (Davies & Pearse, 2000, p. 127).

Prompter, "Prompter could refer to the teacher's role in helping a student to remember and formulate a point" (Hedge, 2000, p. 29). Prompter supply students with a clarification question or information when they could no longer follow what are doing (Harmer, 2001, p. 60).

Participant Sometime the teacher chooses sharing his students some activities.

When it goes well, students feel satisfied (ibid, 2001, p. 61).

Resource "Person who provides students with materials beyond the textbook" (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986, p. 48). According to Harmer (2001) Teacher source guides his students to look for information instead of providing them with the desired information (p. 61).

Tutor Teacher behave as tutor when he approach from his students in more personal contact ,thus the student feel supported and helped from their teacher. This usually occurs when students organized in group and the teacher work with individuals and small group (ibid, 2001, p. 62).

Observer The teacher expects to use his ability to observe and listen to his students (Chelli, 2010, p. 26). In order to help the teacher to respect the learning styles of his students and to select to them the appropriate activities (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986, p. 48). We can infer that this entire role fit the application of competency based approach in teaching writing, since it help learner in realize autonomy learning ,and the teacher in this state only help the ongoing of the learning process.

1.10 The learner's Role

The competency-based approach focuses on the learner's role rather than on the teacher's role. The learner plays the central element inside the classroom who learns through a series of activities that are proposed by the teacher. Therefore, learners in the CBA are characterized as active persons who can search to develop themselves and make self assessment in order to be successful learners. Thus, they will be able to face problems in their daily life.

According to the Algerian Partnership Schools Programs (2005) learners obtain and retain language best when the topic accumulates their interests and when they are active participants in their learning; for example, finding personal meaning, learning cooperatively with peers, and making connections to life outside of class (p. 4). At this level, Chelli (2010, p. 80) argues that this program is developed according to socio-constructivism and learners are responsible in their learning. She states that :

the learner should go through a process of personal appropriation, questioning his own convictions. This leads the learner 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.

1.11 Assessment in the Competency-Based Approach

Any novice teacher should have background knowledge about the competency-based approach and how it can be applied. Assessment is one of the important elements in this approach and the teacher knows how to assess students' production.

1.11.1 Definition of assessment

Any one might think of evaluating, assessing, and testing as synonymous terms but they are not exactly the same. Evaluation'' designates the judgments we make about students and their progress toward achieving learning outcomes on the basis of assessment information'' (Williams, 2003, p. 297). However, according to Longman Dictionary (2002) the term assessment is defined as "A systematic approach to collecting information and making inferences about the ability of a student or the quality or success of a teaching course on the basis of various sources of evidence"(p. 35). On the other hand, a test,'' is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain'' (Brown, 2004, p. 3). A test is prepared in administrative way that occurs at determined time in a curriculum when learner finishes specific term of learning, and it is expected that student gets some competencies, and know that his answers are being scored and evaluated. However, Assessment is a continuing process that includes a set of domains. While a student responds to his

teacher through the learning process, in this time the teacher makes an assessment of the student's performance (ibid, 2004, p. 4).

1.11.2 Forms of Assessment

There are some forms of assessment which are important in teaching. Among them, we can present diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment.

1.11.2.1 Diagnostic Assessment

Dobson (2003) claimed that this kind of assessment aims to stand on the points of strength and weakness of students by collecting evidences about the needs of the students (p. 19). In the Algerian Educational syllabus this kind of evaluation happen at the beginning of the year, and at the beginning of certain session, in order to get good insight about the student's previous level. For the teacher this kind of evaluation allows him to design remedial activities as solution.

1.11.2.2 Formative Assessment

McMillan (2007) defines this kind of assessment as " what teacher do when they obtain information about student understanding during instruction and provide feedback that includes correctives to help students learn" (p. 17). It means that it occurs during teaching process by giving direct evaluation on the student's work to facilitate and motivate the learning process. In addition, Dobson (2003) stated that formative assessment help and motivate the learners by giving them feedback about their performance and development (p. 19). Indeed, formative assessment is an ongoing assessment that aimed to motivate students during their progress of learning.

1.11.2.3 Summative Assessment

As pointed out by Brown (2004) summative assessment aims to measure the amount of knowledge assimilated by the students at the end of an instructional unit (p. 6). However, the Algerian Educational syllabus focuses on the time devoted to this kind of assessment that occurs at the end of the both the trimester and the year. McMillan (2007) claims that this kind of evaluation is more formal (p. 17). It means that students get marks after measureable test in a given time.

1.11.3 Principles of assessment

Successful assessment should consider some principles. Among these principles, we select tackling the following principles: reliability, fairness, practicality, and validity.

1.11.3.1 Reliability

According to *Assessment in Competency based Education* (2007) reliability defined as " The assessment produce the same results on different occasions and with different assessors" (p. 11). In other words, the learner can get the same mark but at different periods of time. Furthermore, McMillan (2007) stated that reliability is related to three main concepts: consistency, stability, and dependability of the score (p. 69). Dobson (2003, p. 21) claimed that reliable assessment can be improved by:

- Relying on more than one method to collect assessment evidence.
- Gathering evidence in different situations.
- Using more than one assessor.

1.11.3.2 Fairness

This principle gives the importance to all the students not only a group of them. McMillan (2007) stated that a fair assessment is one which gives all students the same opportunity to learn in order to show their achievement. Also he claimed that " A fair assessment is one in which it is clear what will and will not be tested" (p. 77). According to Dobson (2003, p. 21), fairness is the assessment where the learner:

- Has a very clear understanding of what is expected and what form the assessment will take .
- Is treated equitably.
- Knows the criteria that will be used to judge performance.
- Has opportunities for the assessment decision to be reviewed or to appeal the assessment outcome.

1.11.3.3 Practicality

Brown (2004) argued that "an effective test is practical" (p. 19). He summarized the underlying points that make the assessment practical as follow:

- The assessment should not be expensive.
- The assessment do not need much of time.

- It is easy to administer .
- Has specific scoring or evaluation way.

From this explanation we can deduce some examples from the real life. It will be expensive to prepare test with computers to many students. It is even not logical to spend large amount of time testing students because the students have limit abilities as human beings they cannot support more than their abilities. Also we cannot give test to large number of students in small classroom.

1.11.3.4 Validity

“Writing assessment—like all other forms of assessment—*should measure what was taught* ” (White, 1986, cited in Williams, 2003, p. 302). So, assessment validity is joining between what is being taught and what is being measured (Williams, 2003, p. 301). Brown (2004) from his part, believes that it is not easy to measure the validity of assessment, however there are evidences that describe this idea:

- The content validity which refers to each extent the assessment reflects the content has been taught.
- Consequential validity that refers the effects of assessment on the students.
- Face validity means to which extent the assessment seem to be appropriate to the students (pp. 22-27).

1.11. 4 Portfolio

The portfolio is one of the most used means in teaching writing under the Competency based approach.

1.11.4.1 Definition

In education, a portfolio defined as" purposeful collection of work that provides information about some one's efforts, progress or achievement in a given area. It is a learning as well as assessment tool” (Richards &Schmidt, 2002, p. 407). Brown (2004) cited the components of portfolio in the list below:

- Essays and compositions in draft and final forms.
- Reports, projects, outline.
- Poetry and creative prose.
- Arts works, photos, newspapers or magazine clipping.

- Audio and video recording of presentation, demonstration.
- Journal, diaries and other personal reflection.
- Tests, test scores and written home works exercises.
- Notes on lectures.
- Self and peer assessment or comment, evaluation and Checklist (p. 256).

1.11.4.2 Characteristics

There are several elements that characterize good portfolio. According to Brown (2004, p. 256) there are eight features:

- Cite clearly learning objectives.
- Systematic way of gathering students' products.
- State preliminary outline for what will be involved.
- Students have opportunities to select the included products.
- Represents students' self reflection and self evaluation.
- Records students' development.
- Put specific criteria for evaluation.
- Conference between the teacher and the students.

From discussion with English teachers the portfolio is implemented in our secondary school but each teacher select his personal way in implementing this tool of assessment for instance, one teacher in the secondary school of Si Elhaouass at Biskra asks her students to specify folders to their pieces of written and their grammar rules taught in the term, in addition, two sheets of papers that represent self evaluation to each unit must be accomplished by the student (see appendix II). But this way lack the final evaluation at the end of the terms to get reliability among students.

1.11.4.3 Advantages of Portfolio

Weigle (2002, p. 199) gives some benefits of using a portfolio which are:

- A portfolio is a collection of writing product.
- It is an opportunity for students to show his writing performance in various genres and for diversity of readers and purposes.
- The portfolio is a reflection to the learning situation since it describes what the student has done in the class.

- The evaluation of the portfolio is usually in the end of the term this enable the students to enrich and enhance his piece of writing till the time of evaluation:
- Portfolio includes pieces of writing selected from the student with guidance of the teacher.
- It gives sense of responsibility of the student.
- It contains reflective essays that represent kind of self assessment.
- It is a tool to enhance student's ability, organization, and developing arguments.

Conclusion

Approaches and methods of language teaching have been changing over time. Today the educational movement used in is learner-centered, learners who play the central elements of an ongoing instruction. The approach adapted by some countries is the CBA, an outcome based approach. This new approach emphasizes the learner 's role in the learning process and his output rather than on teacher's input. Therefore, the learner should construct and create his own knowledge and understanding in order to be successful in his daily life.

In Algeria the Competency-Based Approach was adopted in the educational system to give the learners a chance to develop their competencies by creating new knowledge and skills necessary for them in everyday life.

Chapter Two : Theoretical Issues on Teaching Writing

Introduction

Fifty years ago writing was considered as a part of grammar which focuses on applying a set of rules for reinforcing grammatical and lexical characteristics of language. Nowadays writing is perceived as skill which should be taught relying on steps. We also recognize the difficulty to learn writing in any language even in our native language. Consequently, every educational system in all countries devotes efforts to teach their students how to write but few of them learn how to express themselves clearly. Writing well is also the purpose for many learners of foreign languages. Therefore many experts in foreign language writing focus their attention in their papers, dissertations, books about teaching writing.

In this chapter, we will treat the nature of writing, and we will show the relationship between writing, speaking and reading. Then, we will discuss the approaches used for teaching writing: the product approach, the process approach and the genre approach. Next we shed light on some techniques of teaching writing under the competency based approach. Finally, we will tackle how to assess writing.

2.1 The Nature of Writing

Writing as one of the four skills plays a vital role in the teaching and learning process because of the several advantages it provides. Like the other skills, it may be considered as a skill that can help learners to achieve proficiency in the foreign language. Many researchers as Rogers (2005) and Sperling & Freedman (2001) are interested tackling the issue of writing. Rogers (2005) claimed in his book entitled *'Writing System: a linguistic approach'* that writing can be defined as " the use of graphic marks to represent specific linguistic utterances "(p. 1). In other words, when we write, we use letters, signs, or symbols to express what we intend to say. Moreover, Spratt, Pulvernes and Melanie (2005) stated that writing is a productive skill as speaking which involves the production of a language rather than the reception of it, so we can say that writing is about "communicating a message by making signs on a page

"(p. 6). Likewise, Dornan & Dawe (2005, p. 1) claimed that "Writing is a concentrated form of thinking". This means that the writer requires a full concentration during his writing in order to produce a readable and meaningful text. Coulmas (2003, p. 1) added that writing involved six meanings :

- A system of noting language by means of observable and tangible signs.
 - A task of setting such a system to use.
 - The product of such task, a text.
 - The particular structure of such product, as block letter writing.
 - Creative composition.
 - Proficient work.

From these definitions we can say that writing effectively is not an easy task for both native and non-native learners to master. In addition, any learners who intend to master it should start firstly by mastering listening and reading which are considered as receptive skills, then they should carry on mastering the productive ones. Consequently, to write effectively depends on the progress of the previous skills which are the accurate training and preparation to produce and facilitate writing proficiency.

2. 2 Mechanics of Writing

There are three main components of writing which can help the reader to judge correctly the writer's intention. The three mechanics are: Handwriting, Spelling and Punctuation and Layout. Those components are integrated to form well structured texts. Therefore, any foreign learners should know it in order to write a good readable text.

2.2.1 Handwriting

Any person has a specific handwriting. Some of them are understandable by all readers but the others are not. Harmer (2001) defines handwriting as " it is a personal issues" (p. 255). It means that anyone in the world has his own style of handwriting even if we teach primary school pupils the same activity of imitating the writing mode, but each one of them writes differently. Harmer added that although computers are used in the world developed, handwriting is still used in order to write some personal letters, written assignment and most exams (p. 255). All in all, handwriting is still the important in our lives.

2.2.2 Spelling

According to Harmer's (2001) book *'The Practice of English Language Teaching'* some spelling may affect on evaluating a text by a reader and repeating the use of bad spelling is considered as lacking education or care. Also he claimed that " an issue that makes spelling difficult for some students is the fact that not all varieties of English spell the same words in the same way" (p. 256). He added that to promote student's spelling, we should advise them to read extensively.

2.2.3 Punctuation and Layout

Punctuation and layout are considered as the important components of writing since punctuation provides the text with a comprehensible meaning. In addition, without punctuating a text we cannot understand the exact intention of the writer. Grellet (1996) claimed that the role of using punctuation is " to make the text you write clear and easy to read. Defective punctuation can make a text very difficult to understand, and even leads to misunderstanding" (p. 8). Harmer (2004) claimed that if capital letters, full stops, commas, sentence and paragraph margins are not used in the right way, they can come a negative comprehension and difficulty of trying to understand a text (p. 255). He also stated that writing genres differ from one to another; for example, writing business letters or personnel letters as well as e-mails have a specific format of writing.

2.3 Difference between Writing and Speaking

Language skills are divided into two types: receptive skills, listening and reading and productive skills, writing and speaking. Although the latter involved in the same type (productive skills), but there are some differences between them. Some authors as Gardener (2003), Rogers (2005), Brooks and Grundy (1998), Hedge (2005), Sperling & Freedman (2001) share the same idea about the difference between writing and speaking. These differences are classified into:

2.3.1 Status of Speech and Writing

Children automatically start speaking and then move to learn how to write a piece of writing. For Gardener (2003, p. 1) learning to speak comes before learning to write and speaking is an acquired skill from birth; in contrast, writing is required to learn it. For this reason, linguistics gives the primacy to speech.

- Distance

it means that the time and space between the speaker and the listener are limited (face to face conversation) but between the writer and his audience there is no limitation in both time and space. Rogers (2005, p. 1) stated that "writing allows to communicate at a distance, either at a distant place or at a distant time". In addition, Gardener added that writing is less restricted by time and space and it can be left to read in the next day or sent to someone in another place (p. 1). Sperling & Freedman (2001) clearly stated that both writing and speaking can be a form of communication, and speakers communicate with each other; in contrast, writers work in relative physical isolation" (p. 8). According to Brown (1994) "writers generally have more time to plan, review, and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers must plan, formulate, and deliver their utterances within a few moments if they are to maintain a conversation "(cited in Weigle, 2002, pp. 15-16).

- Permanence

written language is characterized by stability which can be read in one time or reread in another one. Gardener pointed out that writing is more permanent than speaking and it can be protected for years or even centuries (p. 1).

- Structure and Style

A written text is more structured and formal than speech. According to Brookes & Grundy (1998) writing has specific types of text which is different from speaking; for example, organizing what we have to say is different from organizing of what we have to write such as the form of a letter or e-mail messages (p. 2). Hedge (2005) claimed that an effective writing requires a well organization of the information, ideas or arguments; an understanding meaning; the use of complex grammatical devices and a good choice of vocabulary, grammatical items, and sentence structures to achieve a style that is appropriate to the topic (p. 7). Certainly, written forms are more complex than spoken ones because they involve complex sentences and long clauses, and are characterized as a more structured forms of communication than speech.

2.4 Connection between Writing and Reading

Although writing and reading are not of the same type of skills, one is a receptive skill and the other one is a productive skill, there is a strong relationship between them. The first apparent connection between them is the term 'literacy'. Richards & Schmidt (2002) defines this term as the ability of both writing and reading (p. 313). Similarly, in order to achieve the level of literacy we should not only be interested just in reading but also in writing. Williams (2003, p. 166) stated that for Krashen writing is acquired through reading but not relatively through listening and he confirmed that the way of achieving competence in writing is the same way of achieving competence in speaking but firstly by understanding written discourses (reading). Moreover, Krashen (1985) said that "if second language acquisition and the development of writing ability occur in the same way, writing ability is not learned but is acquired via extensive reading in which the focus of the reader is on the message, i.e., reading for genuine interest and/or pleasure"(cited in Williams, 2003, p. 166). Furthermore, Eisterhold (1999, p. 88) claimed that there is a connection between writing and reading since the latter represents the appropriate input to acquire the writing skill. He added that for Krashen (1984) the progress of the writing ability and proficiency in second language occur through comprehensible input and he said that "It is reading that gives the writer the 'feel' for the look and texture of reader-based prose"(Krashen, 1984, cited in Eiterhold, 1990, p. 88). Stosky (1983, cited in Kroll, 1990, p. 89) gives evidence that a relationship between reading and writing exists and he stated that these studies confirmed that they are connected:

- 1-There are correlations between reading achievement and writing ability. Better writers tend to be better readers.
- 2- There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience as reported through questionnaire. Better writers read more than poorer writers.
- 3- There seem to be correlations between reading ability and measures of syntactic complexity in writing. Better readers tend to produce more syntactically writing than poorer readers.

Summing up, reading plays a vital role in improving the writing skill. Therefore, both of them complete each other, and gaining proficiency in one skill depends on the other one which can help the construction of both forms and functions of language.

2.5 Writing Approaches

Because of the hard nature of writing skill, engaging learners in writing in the target language is too difficult. As a result, different theories have emerged to provide teachers with a relevant way of teaching writing which are the product approach, the process approach, and genre approach.

2.5.1 The Product Approach

Until 1970 the teaching of second language writing focused on the sentence structure which was proposed by Behaviorism (Matsuda, 2003, p. 19). This approach is known as the product approach or the text based approach which emphasizes the form, so great deal effort is given to the description of structural rules of texts. Developing writing in this view focuses on the formal features of texts. From this perspective the piece of writing is independent from their context and writer's personal experience can be understood by any one, since all writers and readers share the same practice, so they have the same interpretations and understanding (Hyland, 2002, pp. 6-7).

In writing instruction training is vital to achieve explicitly and accuracy structure (ibid, 2002, p. 7). Teachers in this perspective focus on form and usually present authoritative texts for students to imitate or adapt using textbooks which offer many models. They see errors must be corrected or eliminated (Tribble, 1996, 5).

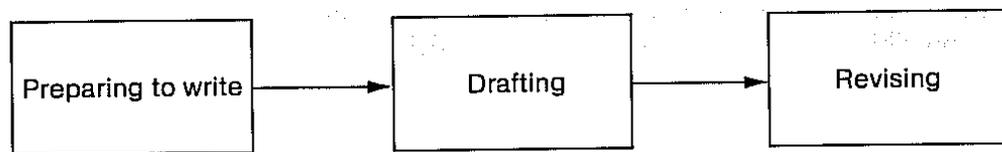
Hyland, 2002, point out that " Guided composition is the main method of teaching writing in this approach" (p. 7). (Pinca, 1982, cited in Matsuda, 2003, p. 19) Describes guided composition as set of combining and substitution activities to help student learn about sentence structure. In addition, he gives more details about guided composition by saying that guided composition encompasses any writing for which students are given help such as " a model to follow, a plan or outline to expand from a partly written version with indication of how to complete it, or pictures that show a new subject to write about in the same way as something that has been read" (Pinca, 1982 cited in Matsuda, 2003, p. 20).

Despite the benefits provided by this approach for the accuracy structure of the sentence, it arouse deficiency in its application, since it forms students who can produce grammatically correct sentences, but in the same time they cannot realize good piece of

writing. (Matsuda, 2003, p. 20). From study this we sense the dominated role of behaviourism school on teaching and learning before 1970s.

2.5.2 The Process Approach

In the 1980, changes happened in both second language acquisition and composition. Thus, writing researchers and teachers shifted their concern from textual features to the process of writing itself (Matsuda, 2003, p. 21). This led to the emergence of the process approach which "emphasized the view of writing as a process of developing organization as well as meaning" (ibid, 2003, p. 21). According to Brown & Hood (1989) the basic stages of writing process are: planning, drafting, and revising.



but in practice the process is often more like this:

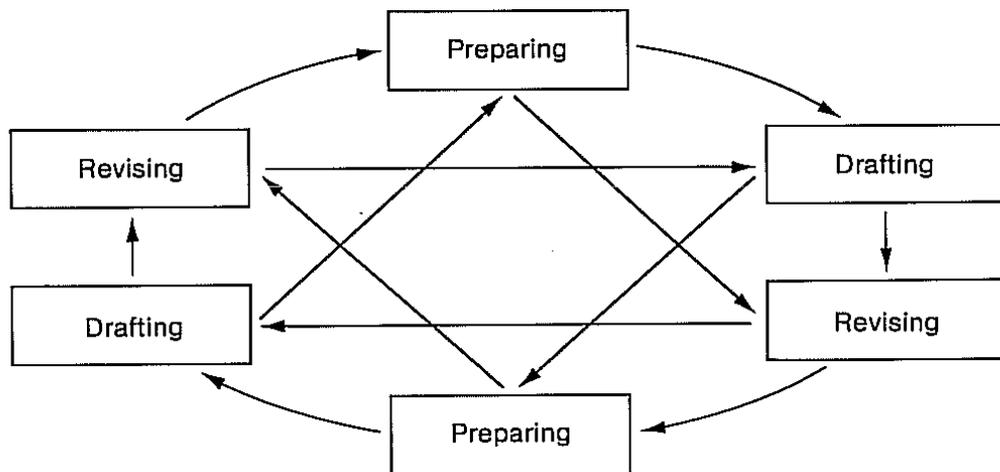


Figure 2.1 (Brown & Hood, 1989, p.6).The three stages of prewriting

The following graph refers to the nature of relationship between the stages during the practice. Thus, we can change direction forward any stage in any time, therefore there is no obliged sequence to follow, but the writer has freedom to shift from one stage to another in his composition.

Seow, from his side, gives other classification which contains the following stages: planning, drafting, revising, and editing. In addition to other additional stages

that considered important after the draft stage, these are responding, evaluating, and post writing (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p.304).we saw the importance of all stages in teaching writing ,so we try to investigate all the stages.

2.5.2.1 Planning (pre-writing)

Pre-writing is any activity in the classroom that prompt students to write (Seow, 2002, p. 316). In addition, Harmer (2004) pointed out to some important matter that must be considered in this stage. The writer, before starting writing, would take into account three elements. First of all, the purpose of his writing which affect both his language to convey meaning, and the kind of information selected. Second the audience, who are affected by both the choice of language, formal or informal, and the layout of the page. Finally, the content structure which means the way the writer builds his piece of writing (p. 4). The following activities help students in this stage:

-Brain storming

Brown & Hood, (1989) define Brain storming as ‘‘This means, 'storm' your brain for ideas" (p. 7). In this activity the student jots his ideas speedily in his paper without regards to the language used, the usefulness of his ideas, and the correction matter (Brown & Hood, 1989, p. 7).

-Clustering

Proal and Grill (1986) comment about this way as follow. "Its visual character seems to stimulate the flow of association. It is particularly good for students who know what they want to say but just can't say it" (Proal & Grill, 1986 cited in Seow, 2002, p. 316). The student uses forms like circles, arrows, lines to constitute cluster form; for example, he circle the main idea then he draw the subtitles in other circles related with arrow or line to the main idea.

-Rapid free writing

This strategy gives student the opportunity to write freely. In this way, the student limits his time; for example, two minutes, and he is asked to write as much as possible (single words, phrase...) without care about the mistakes (Brown &Hood, 1989, p. 7).

-Asking questions

This strategy is helpful more in the longer composition. The student cites set of questions in relation to the topic: Who, When, Where, What, etc. (Brown & Hood, 1989, p. 8). This activities can considered as warm up activities that stimulate students to engage in the topic chosen, and construct amount of knowledge about it as the basis for further creations.

We can use each activity alone and it seems be useful way if the teacher mixtures between them with the help of the students. For example, he circles the main idea in the board, and then he asks his students to generate some basis questions related to the topic.

2.5.2.2 Drafting

When the student is convinced that the amount of information gathered is enough. He starts to write his first version called first draft. The student records his words that reflect his ideas in the paper without paying attention to the mistakes committed but he gives importance to fluency and tries to keep himself continuing writing to conserve the flow of ideas, since when he stops, he disturbs himself. So, the student keeps writing even he is not sure about punctuation, grammar till the end. He can mention any problem he faces it or he leaves space or dash to revise it later. To find what you have written clear you have to double space and this helps you to correct later your mistake and add your comments (Brown & Hood, 1989, p. 9).

2.5.2.3 Responding

Responding by (teacher and peers) has a vital role in the writing process. It is preliminary correction from the teacher to student's draft. This response can be oral written, or in form of observations. This helpful proposition helps students to discover their mistakes and revise them easily. They can be mentioned in the margin of the sheet or between lines.

Peers' responses also can be effective when students respond to each other's text in an organized way using for example of the checklist bellow which refers to selected questions the students have to respond to. Seow (2002) suggests useful checklist to this position.

Table 1	peer responding checklist
When responding to your peer's draft, ask yourself these question:	
What is the greatest strength of this composition?	
What are its greatest weaknesses?	
What is the central idea of this composition?	
Where more details or examples should be added? Why?	
What are some of the questions that the writer has not answered?	
At which point does this composition fail to hold the reader's interest? Why?	
Where is the organization confusing?	
Where is the writing unclear or vague?	

Table 2.1. Peer Responding Checklist. (Seow, 2002, p. 318)

This checklist can guide students to know their real roles during the responding stage. So, it is a way of organizing the behaviors of students, since there is task they have to do in the class. Another kind of activities can help students to revise their copies by working in pairs and reading each other's draft. When the student hears his written production, he will discover his mistakes.

2.5.2.4 Editing

According to Ferris editing refers to the process of detecting and correcting grammatical, lexical, and other mechanical errors before publishing a final written product (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 304). At this stage the student checks his gaps and organizes his work in order to submit it to his teacher for evaluation. He takes in to their consideration the previous responses of his teacher and his peers. He may add parts or edits grammar, spelling, and punctuation (Brown & Hood, 1989, p. 10). Harmer (2004) comments that the skillful writer revises his piece of writing from general to specific which means first he focus on the general meaning then, he focus on the accuracy of grammar and spelling (P. 5).

2.5.2.5 Evaluating

Evaluating the student scoring must be based on some criteria for example scoring as Seow (2002) said may be "analytical (i.e. based on specific aspect of writing ability) or holistic (i.e. based on a global interpretation of the effectiveness of the piece of writing)" (p. 119). He adds that this kind of criteria must be known by the student before he starts writing. Moreover, these criteria should encompass all sides of the task. For example, "sense of audience, relevance, development and organization of ideas, format layout, grammar and structure, spelling and punctuation, range and appropriateness of vocabulary, and clarity of communication" (ibid, 2002, p. 119). This evaluation can be graded or not depending on the purpose of it.

2.5.2.6 Post writing

This stage represents any activity assigned from the teacher to his students when they finish their piece of writing. It can be "publishing, sharing, reading aloud, transforming text for stage performances, or display." (ibid, 2002, p. 199). This stage aims to make the task of writing significant for the students. So, they work on it seriously, since the result will be presented.

2.5.3 The Genre Approach

The genre approach has a pragmatic origins rather than a cognitive one. Thus, this approach goes back to Grice's (1975) principles of conversational inference (Hyland, 2002, p. 13). Hyland, 2002, defines Genres as follow "Genres are abstract socially recognized ways of using language" (p. 16). This approach has social orientation and emphasizes the interaction between the writer and the text to get comprehensible message for the reader. In this perspective the words do things and if the reader understands the meaning; therefore, the communication is successful (Tribble, 1996, p. 5). This means that when we produce a piece of writing we first follow organized samples based on some conventions, so that the reader grasp the meaning (Hyland, 2002, p. 16).

According (Hyland, 2002) teaching genres writing facilitates and helps students in their composition of well formed pieces of writing which are relevant to the reader (p. 16). This useful pedagogy supplies students with enough opportunities to recognize the different purposes of written texts and various structure texts (Richards & Renandya,

2002, p. 304). In the classroom, students are exposed to various types of text within the appropriate genre in addition to more explanation about the relation between the purpose of the text, its structure, and its lexicon-grammar. Hyland (2002) consider the teacher in this orientation as a guide who directs student's work through the collection of typical rhetorical samples (pp. 16-21). As a result, genre is an organized way of doing activities in which the teacher exposes his students to typical samples in order to grasp its form and meaning which can be transmitted, then he ask them to shape their production according to this sample.

Sawyer and Waston saw teaching the genres as formula limit the creativity of the students (cited in Hyland, 2002, p. 22). Similarly, Hyland (2002) said that since there is a great emphasize on this patterns of texts, there is a danger of relying on genre, so students will see them as a set of rules which should imitate .Freedom (1994) comments about the genre pedagogy as 'a recipe theory of genres'. In his critics he argues that "an exclusive focus on rhetorical surface features can lead to genres being taught as moulds into which meanings are poured, rather than a ways of making meanings" (p. 22). So the criticism directed to this approach is that it minimize the creativity of the student, since there is typical models are exposed to the students for imitation.

2.6 Teaching a Writing Course in the CBA

All the four skills of language (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) are an important elements to develop the English language syllabus. Although writing is one of a vital integrated part, foreign learners face problems when they start writing. So, the teacher should be aware of how he can help his students to develop their writing proficiency.

2.6.1 The Teacher's Role in Writing

To improve students' writing, teacher should has three main roles before, during, and after his students submit their works. Harmer (2004) stated that the teacher during a writing course as a:

- Motivator

The teacher is the central element in motivating the student to become better writers. A motivator teacher is a teacher who " motivates students, creating the right conditions for the generation of ideas, persuading them of the usefulness of the activity, and encouraging them to make as much effort as possible for maximum benefit"

(Harmer, 2001, p. 261). Indeed, a good teacher should not always criticize students' work but he should motivate them to write better in future.

- Resource provider

The teacher may facilitate the writing activities by providing some information to help students to write with concise and precise content.

- Feedback provider

Giving feedback is the appropriate way to increase students' self-confidence. It is some comments about students' pieces of writing and it can be orally or can take the form of writing language. According to Harmer (2001, p. 262) the teacher should "respond positively and encouragingly to the content of what the students have written. When offering correction teachers should choose what and how much to focus on".

2.6.2 Steps of Planning a Writing Course

Teaching writing is not an easy task for both the teacher and the student. For some teachers, especially the novice ones, when they start planning a writing course, they feel that it is a difficult and a daunting task because of the students' level and the amount of time to teach and to learn it at the same time. There are ten steps suggested by Raimes (2002) of planning writing courses that can help the teacher to successes in his task:

- Step 1: Ascertaining goals: for any writing activity should include a clear purpose. This purpose facilitates students' writing and they will know what they are expected to do.

- Step 2: Deciding on theoretical principles: Raimes claimed that " teachers should recognize their perceptions of the relationship between the type of writing they teach and the roles are preparing students for academia and the wider world of work" (cited in Ritchards & Renandya, 2002, p. 307). This means that the teacher should ask himself about the theoretical issues of teaching writing courses; for instance, what is the effective approach should I teach? Or what are the best topics that are appropriate to the level of my students?

- Step 3: Planning content: planning content helps the teacher to produce a comprehensible input as well as help the learner to write easily because he knows exactly what his task is.

- **Step 4: Weighing the elements:** Raimes said that writing includes of many parts and the teacher requires considering which ones will be more essential for his course: content, organization, style, and fluency. (p. 309).

- **Step 5: Drawing up a syllabus:** after selecting the content and weighing the elements, the teacher should draw up a syllabus that is appropriate to his writing course.

- **Step 6: Selecting materials:** selecting an appropriate material helps students to understand more his tasks; for example, imitating a letter in a book. The teacher can vary using of the materials inside the classroom which can be: pictures, videos, and books.

- **Step 7: Preparing activities and roles:** the teacher should not only prepare his role of the writing course but also he should state clearly the student's role. Besides, the teacher must prepare some activities for their students to do it in the classroom otherwise at home. Thus, the teacher must think about promoting students' competencies to apply it in their real lives and the learning progress not only the amount of information should students have.

-**Step 8: Choosing types and methods of feedback:** Harmer (2001) stated that the type of feedback is depending on the type of writing activity. He added that when students do work book exercises, the teacher can mark just right or wrong works. However, when he gives feedback on good creative writing as a poem, he can clearly demonstrate his interest in the student's piece of writing (p. 109). So, giving an appropriate feedback can push the student to write more and more.

-**Step 9: Evaluating the course:** the teacher can evaluate the writing course according to the content of students' work and then he can say that the course is successful or not. When students achieve to what they are expected to do, the teacher can evaluate his own success of teaching writing.

- **Step 10: Reflecting the teacher's experience:** all the previous nine steps, goal, theories, content, weighing, syllabus, materials, activities, feedback, and course evaluation can reflect and promote the teacher's experience in teaching writing. In addition, the above steps help the teacher to get experience and success during his teaching process.

2.7 Techniques of Teaching Writing under the CBA

As we know the CBA based on learner autonomy that is the learner constructs his own knowledge. In order to form this kind of learners there are some techniques in teaching that can help to realize this purpose which are: group work, problem solving, and project work.

2.7.1 Group work

A group work is the important type of activities in teaching writing with the competency-based approach. It allows learners to interact and communicate in order to enhance their learning process. In the group work students are organized in such way in order to help them work better. Choosing relevant grouping organization go parallel with the kinds of learning tasks selected. According to Richards & Schmidt (2002, p. 234) different group arrangements for teaching include:

- **Whole-group instruction:** all number of the students is taught as one group, i.e. there is only one group (class as a whole).
- **Small-group discussion:** the classroom divided into small groups. Each group involves between six and eight students working together on a discussion topic.
- **Tutorial discussion group:** A small group involved of less than five students. This kind of grouping aims to facilitate real communication and naturalistic language Use and to help these students solving their learning difficulties.

2.7.1.1 Advantages of Group Work

Harmer (2002, p. 117) proposed in his book, *The Practice of English Language*, five advantages of using this kind of tasks:

- It increases the amount of talking for individual students.
- There is a greater chance of different opinions and varied contributions.
- It encourages broader skills of co-operation and negotiation.
- It promotes learner autonomy.
- Some students can choose their level of participation more readily than in a whole class or pair work situation.

As a conclusion, applying a group work can help both the teacher and the learner to do their tasks effectively. This technique creates interaction atmosphere, and allows the learner to overcome some psychological problems like shyness.

2.7.1.2 Problems of Using a Group Work

Although the importance of this technique in teaching writing under the CBA, its implementation in the Algerian schools is impractical because of some problems.

- The work in group is noisy, yet students enjoyed this situation and they are not disturbed.

-The teacher cannot join all the students to help them and it is a difficult task for him to correct each student alone

-The teacher cannot control all the members of the group; he only can give instruction and determine the starting and ending of the task. Also he can guide them and increase their strength and decrease their weaknesses.

2.7.2 The Project Work

One of the most important elements in applying the competency-based approach is the project work.

2.7.2.1 Definition

The project work is defined in the Algerian Educational syllabus '*At the Crossroads*' (2005) as "a carefully planned long term undertaking" (p. 17). According to *Assessment in Competency Based Education* (2007) a project work is "any exercise or investigation in which the time constraints have been relaxed" (p. 33). According to Richards & Schmidt (2002, p. 30) a project in the teaching process is "an activity which centers around the completion of a task, and which usually requires an extended amount of independent work either by individual student or by a group of students" (p. 17). Indeed, in the Algerian educational syllabuses we find the project at the end of each unit. The teacher asks his students to search outside the classroom about some topics related to what they have learned. Before starting the next unit, the students should complete their project and discuss it with the teacher and their peers.

2.7.2.2 Characteristics of the Project Work

The project works as an important integrated part in the learning process have some basic features that distinguished from other learning materials. In *Assessment in competency Based Education* (2007, p. 33) the characteristics of the project work are:

- The project should be practical and useful.
- It is understandable than the other tasks.
- It is related to what students learned.
- It collects a wide range of competencies and knowledge that will be assessed.

2.7.2.3 Stages of the Project Work

In order to have a good project works, teachers should follow specific stages. Roumadi (p. 6) claimed that the process of the project work follows three main stages:

a - The preparation stage

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

b- The realization stage

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

c- The presentation stage

- Pupils write the final draft.
- Pupils 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)

According to our study we consider the project work as the best activity in implementing the Competency-Based Approach since the learners' competencies improved and become more measurable and observable. Also the learner during his preparation of the project work, he will face some problems that lead him to create an appropriate solutions.

2.7.3 Problem Solving

According to Richards & Schmidt (2002, p. 420) problem solving is a task used to motivate interaction among pairs or groups. Barker and Gaut (2002, p. 160) defined problem solving as follow:

A problem-solving group is a group of people who work together to solve a problem by collecting information about the problem, reviewing that information, and making a decision based on their findings

This means that the teacher identify the topic interested to their students. This topic should state problems with different solution. Moreover, “Students analyze, make suggestions, give reasons, accept, modify or reject suggestions and reasons given by others” (Boussiada, 2010, p. 21). The problem underlying and inquiring solutions through interaction. Then, Students generate vocabularies that teachers record them on the board. Therefore, the information recorded consider as a basis for the rest of the lesson and the practice.

Problem solving can be classified into two types : short -term task and long-term task or project. Teachers can realize short term task in one class session; whereas, in long-term task the teacher devote much time that may take many sessions. For instance, a short -term problem-solving task can involve setting items in categories while long term task can be project work (Boussiada, 2010, p. 21).

2.8 Scoring, Correcting, and Responding

The teacher has some effective ways in assessing his students to know their real levels. This ways can be scoring by giving marks, responding by providing comments and valuable advices, and correcting the student's product.

2.8.1 Types of rating scales

The first step in scoring process is to choose the type of rating scale. In the literature of writing the common rating scales are holistic scoring and analytic scoring.

2.8.1.1 Holistic scoring

Holistic scoring used in many programs. This kind of scoring scale is defined as "the assigning of single score to script based on overall impression of the script" (Weigle, 2002, p. 112). It means that when the teacher read the text or script for the first time, he can evaluate it since this kind of rating scale depends on first impression about the text. As a result, the process of scoring under the holistic scoring depends on quick reading of the text and the criteria are never stated (ibid, 2002, p. 112).

2.8.1.1.1 Advantages of holistic scoring

The advantages of holistic scoring are:

- This kind of scoring scale facilitates the evaluation, because the teacher needs to read the script only one time.
- In this type of scoring scale the reader looks the points of strength in the piece of writing instead it weakness (ibid, 2002, p. 112).
- Holistic scoring more valid since it reflects the authentic reaction of the reader against the text (White cited in Weigle, 2002, pp. 112-114).

2.8.1.1.2 Disadvantages of holistic scoring

- This type of scoring scale depends on single score which does not explain the all sides related to the persons' writing abilities.
- It Does not give importance to all aspects of writing ability such as: syntax, vocabulary, organization...etc, because each aspect developed in isolation to the other aspects for example, we can find person who has wide range of vocabulary but he lack knowledge in grammar (Weigle, 2002, p. 114).
- Holistic scoring emphasizes on superficial features as length and handwriting (Markhan, 1976, Sloan and McGinnis, 1982, cited in Weigle, 2002, p. 114).

2.8.1.2 Analytic scoring

"Analytic scoring scripts are rated on several aspects of writing or criteria rather than given single score "(Weigle, 2002, p. 114). In this kind of scoring scale the rater sets group of criteria according to his objective of evaluation for example (content; organization, and vocabulary). This type is considered the useful one. The well known analytic scale in ESL was created by Jacobs et al (1981) who sets the following criteria: content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics, then, the text is

evaluated through these criteria. Indeed, analytical scoring is a relevant way in scoring the students because it allows the teacher to assess effectively and to know the weakness and the strength of his students.

2.8.1.2.1 Advantages of analytic scoring

There are some advantages of analytical scoring which are:

- It gives us diagnostic view about the writing abilities of the students.
- It is more useful especially to the novice teachers, because they can recognize its application.
- It is useful for second language learners who differentiate in their language aspects level.
- It is considered reliable then holistic scoring (Weigle, 2002, p. 120).

2.8.1.2.2 Disadvantages of analytic scoring

Despite its effectiveness in assessing students, there are some drawbacks of this kind of scoring:

- It is very long type of scoring and need much of time.
- The analytic scoring scale is subjective way of scoring. It relies on teacher's selection of the criteria necessary for evaluation. (ibid, 2002 p. 120).

2.8.2 Ways of correcting student's work

According to Harmer (2004) there are some efficient ways of correcting student's piece of writing instead of the known way which refers to underlining, crossing out, and question mark which are:

- Selective correction

This way occur when the teacher selects one criterion and correct students' product according to it. For example, from series of criteria can be corrected (punctuation; spelling, grammar...). The teacher agrees with his students about one criterion in order to get beneficial result. Because students when they focus in one criterion, they do their best to elaborate it. Harmer consider this way of correction as good tool of enhancing learning (p. 110).

- Using marking scale

In this point Harmer advice teachers when they score students to divide the mark into parts correspond to set of criteria. This way helps students to not get bad marks (p. 110).

- Using correction symbols

In order to avoid messy cheat of paper and in order to the student recognizes his mistakes and their kinds. Harmer gives us another effective way to correct writing production of the students. This way depends on least of correction symbols differ from teacher to another such as: the symbol (T) for wrong verb tense or the symbol (WW) for wrong word. The teacher writes these symbols above or next the mistake committed from the students. Whensoever the students used to use this kind of symbols, he will be able to recognize his faults and he also will be able to correct them easily (Harmer, 2004, p. 110). In order to this way gets its result the teacher should teach his students these symbols or make them in the classroom wall as poster.

- Reformulating

It is another way which has good result. The teacher shares his student the way of reformulating his draft product instead of asking him only to correct his single mistakes by himself , so the students get the opportunity to compare the incorrect sentences with the correct one (ibid, 2004, p. 111).

- Asking the Teacher

In some cases the teacher cannot correct the errors in the paper in that time, he asks his student to go back to more explanation in face to face setting.

- Remedial teaching

There is times when the teacher frequency faces some errors among many of his students; in this case he has to give remedial correction to the whole class by displaying the wrong sentences and share his students their correction (ibid, 2004, p. 111). After a discussion with some teachers and students we are deduced that the correction of writing papers is neglected in our schools, since the shortage of time devoted to teaching writing.

2.8.3 Ways of Responding to the student' work

Responding, to the students' piece of writing, create a spirit of competition among students and help them to work well and to do this there are two ways:

2.8.3.1 Responding to work –in- progress by oral comments

Through the sequence work, the teacher usually turns around his students to control students' works. He may ask them or gives suggestions. Harmer pays our attention to the ways of giving advices or suggestion, he said that instead of using command it will be useful to ask questions such as why have you done it in this way? Therefore you let your students free in their decision about the revision; however, not all students enjoy the intervention of the teacher (ibid, 2004, pp. 112-113).

2.8.3.2 Responding by written comment

Sometimes the response can be recorded on the student's drafts if he gives his copy to his teacher. In this case it is helpful that the teacher writes down suggestions about the work of the student or maybe he gives encouragement to his student. This way of comment help student to correct his draft in order to prepare the final version. Even in this state, Harmer prefers the use of questions instead of commands in order to do not heart his students (Harmer, 2004, p. 113). We advise ourselves and other teachers to use the positive comments, since they motivate the students to do better.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, the principles outlined in this chapter incorporate elements of teaching well writing. Since for any learner to master English language, he should first master the four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). But all learners both natives and non-natives face some difficulties in learning to write effectively. These difficulties lead the teacher to encounter many problems during the teaching process. Hence, he should set the basic steps of this course in order to be successful. These steps help him to produce a comprehensible input as well as help the learner to write better in the future. Finally, we should not assessing students' production also requires from the teacher to use the appropriate tool to help them develop in writing.

Field Work: Analysis and Interpretation

Introduction

We designed a questionnaire for secondary school teachers to know their views about the application of the CBA in teaching the writing skill. We submitted this questionnaire on 22 April 2012 to twenty (20) teachers at Batna. Only ten (10) teachers among twenty (20) answered all the four sections and returned it on time. However, the others did not answer it because they were preparing the final exam. This fact reveals most of our teachers' refusal to take part and help us in our research study.

3.1 Aim of the Questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to investigate the main problems that face secondary school teachers in teaching writing under the Competency-Based Approach. It also aims to know how to implement this new approach in order to enhance students' written competencies to use them in real life. This questionnaire; therefore, helps the teacher to find out whether teaching writing under the CBA is really used in achieving learners' progress in learning English as a foreign language.

3.2 Description of the Questionnaire

"The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straight-forward to analyze"(Wilson & McLean, 1994, cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005, p. 245). The questionnaire was distributed to twenty (20) teachers at secondary schools at Batna. Ten (10) questionnaire were returned, a percentage of about (50 %). The questionnaire was answered anonymously. It was a mixture of closed and open questions. It consists of four main sections.

Section one: this section contains questions from 1 to 4. Those questions are seek to collect general information about teachers such as gender, their experience in teaching English at secondary school and the number of students in each class.

Section two: it consists of questions from 5 to 13. This section is about teaching writing under the Competency-Based Approach. Those items seek for teaching and learning writing considered as a difficult and a complex task for both teachers and students.

Section three: this section is about teachers' problems in teaching writing using the CBA. It contains 11 questions that examine the ways teachers' use to teach writing, the use of helping materials, learners' ability in writing activities, the time allotted in teaching this skill, and the role of the teacher. In addition, it investigates the main problems in implementing the CBA in secondary school classes.

Section Four: the last section is about teachers' suggestions. We gave teachers a chance to give their opinions and their suggestions about some solutions to these problems.

3.3 Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire Results

A- Section One : General Information

Item 01: Specify your Gender :

Gender	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Male	02	20
Female	08	80
Total	10	100

Table 3.1: Teachers' Gender

From teachers' responses, we observe that the percentage of female teachers is 80% whereas the percentage of male teachers is 20%. So, we find that the number of female teachers in secondary schools is higher than male teachers.

Item 02: How long have you been teaching?

Teacher's experience	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Less than 5 years	04	40
Between 5 and 15 years	03	30
More than 15 years	03	30
Total	10	100

Table 3.2: Teaching experience

Within this item, we received equal percentage from the teachers who have between 5 and 15 years and more than 15 years represent the rate of 30 %. Therefore, the majority of secondary school teachers are experienced teachers. This result show that most of them are familiar more with teaching by objectives and they are unable to implement exactly the competency based approach since they are obliged to change their method of teaching. The others about 40% are novice teachers who are well informed about the new approach.

Item o3: The number of pupils in each class is

Level	Less than 25	Between 30 and 40	More than 40
N°	0	06	04
%	0	60	40

Table 3.3: The Number of Students

Concerning the number of students in secondary classrooms, the result shows that the majority of the teachers confess about the number of the students which is between 30 and 40 students so the percentage is 60 % and a few of them select the third choice that represent 40 %. This leads us to conclude that classes are crowded in normal situation and there are cases where are overcrowded. This situation hinders the application of the competency based approach. As we know that this approach supports

group work but in such classes it is impossible. Also this approach considers the learner as an active participant and the teacher as facilitator, however, crowded classes do not help neither the student nor the teacher to enhance their task.

B- Section Tow: Teaching Writing Under the CBA

Item 04: Are you implementing the Competency-Based Approach in teaching writing ?

Implementing the CBA	Yes	No
N°	06	04
%	60	40

Table 3. 4: Implementing The CBA

Within this question, we wanted to know if secondary school teacher really are applying the competency based approach. 60 % of the teacher are implementing this approach. In their opinion the implementation of this approach arose in their lessons by letting their students construct their own knowledge and the teacher is just a guide to help them. Others argue that applying that CBA emerge in the project workshop and activities and they said that their role is only to motivate and create a problematic situation. Around 40 % of them claim that they are not implement this approach because their students are not motivated and they do not work seriously.

Item 05 : Are you teaching writing as :

Teaching Writing	As a Lesson	As an Activity or a Project Work
N°	04	06
%	40	60

Table 3.5: Teaching Writing

This item aims to know if teachers are really interested in teaching writing. We asked them whether they teach writing as a full lesson or as an activity or project work. The answers is high in the second choice which is around 60% . This reveals that although writing is a difficult and an important task to achieve proficiency in English as a foreign language most of them consider it only as an activity or a project work. In

contrast, the minority or 40% regarded and teach writing as separate lesson requiring a lesson plan.

Item 06: Which of the following approach is effective and more used in teaching writing for secondary school students?

Teaching Approach	The product approach	The process approach	The Genre approach
N°	03	04	0
%	30	40	0

Table 3.6: The most effective approach in teaching writing

Now and more precisely we ask about the effective approach of teaching the writing skill. The answer was that 40 % of them agree on the process approach. In their opinions, both the teacher and the students follow some specific steps during the writing courses and the students have to produce or write on the basis of what they have seen in the previous lessons. Whereas 30% of them think that the product approach is the effective one because they check exactly students' understanding. While 40% of the teachers refused to answer this question and they think that this question is ambiguous. As a conclusion, we can say that the majority of secondary school teachers ignore the three writing approaches.

Item 07: Does the text book help you develop the writing skill ?

The Text book	Yes	No
N°	08	02
%	80	20

Table 3.7: The Textbook and the Writing Skill

Tackling another element and generally speaking, we asked the teachers about the textbook and its impact on developing the writing skill. Eighty 80% of them replied that it is a helpful supporting material to improve their students writing proficiency because the textbook represents the only reference in the Algerian education system so they have to adopt it according to the needs of their students. Moreover, others insist the importance of the text book since it contains a set of activities that help the learner

in their writing. In addition, some of them said that it represents a source for sequenced lessons which help both the teacher and students. Others consider it important in developing writing because after each lesson of reading and listing there is a writing activity. The remained number of the respondents regard it an important tool to enhance students writing because it supplies them with vocabulary, grammar rules and models of texts. However, 20% neglect its role and they claim that it does not fit the age, interest, and the real level of the students.

Item 08 : Does the text book help the learner to work in pairs or groups in writing ?

Working in pairs or groups	Yes	No
N°	09	01
%	90	10

Table 3.8: The Textbook and the Learners' Work

After asking them about the textbook and its role in the progress of the students' writing product, then we asked them about its assistance in a group work. 90 % answered positively. This reveals that it contains activities that help learners to work in groups. For instance, at the end of each unit the teachers asked their students to make groups and work on a specific topic. But 10% of the respondents found that the textbook does not suit group work. They claim that most of the activities do not require group work except some of them.

Item 09 : Do you use extra materials to support and motivate your students?

Using extra materials	Yes	No
N°	10	00
%	00	00

Table 3.9 : Using Extra Material to Motivate Students

All the teachers (100 %) support the use of extra material to motivate their students to write better. They insist that they are really effective since they want their students to become competent writers to use what they have learned in real life situations. In our opinion, these extra material break the routine of teaching writing by

creating interest among learners; therefore, we consider this element as a positive point which helps applying the competency based approach.

Item 10: From the list of materials cited bellow which do you think is the most appreciated by your students?

Materials	N	%
The board	00	00
Pictures or images	03	30
Teachers' mime. gestures	02	20
The computer	05	50
The tape recorder	00	00

Table 3.10: The Appreciated Materials

According to the answers provided(50%) of the teachers said that the computer is the most appreciated material by all students because of its advantages. They said that it motivates students and creates a good learning atmosphere better than other materials. While 30 % of them found that pictures or images are the appreciated ones since they attract students and are a good means to interpret matters rather than the use of the target language. The others about 20 % support the use of gestures and they claim that it available all the time but the others depends on some circumstances.

Item 11: students' level in writing

Students' level	Good	Average	Bad
N°	00	07	03
%	00	70	30

Table 3.11: Students' Level in Writing

Most of the answers 70% revealed that the level of students in writing is average because all classes contain between 5 to 10 excellent students but the others are interested on learning languages but they lack background knowledge. Others around 30 % insist that they are bad writers because they did not read at all, also the classroom

climate(number of the students and the activities) hinder their progress of learning , and they really did not have a background knowledge previously acquired in middle school.

Item 12: What do you consider most when evaluating your students writing composition ?

Evaluation	Form	Content	Form and Content
N°	02	03	05
%	20	30	50

Table 3.12: Evaluating Students' Writing Composition

From the table above, we can conclude that 50 % of teachers consider both form and content in evaluating students' writing since they are important to convey a message and the students in this level should not only focus on the form but also on the content. The others, around 30%, claim that the content is more important than the form because it show us the level of the students and what can be achieved by mean of this language. 20% of them consider most the form because the program emphasizes the types of writing (different form of texts as poems, paragraph, letter, essays) also the learner has to respect first the form then the content.

C- Problems of Implementing the CBA in Teaching Writing

Item 13: Do you set the objectives of your writing lessons?

Setting the objectives	Yes	No
N°	10	0
%	100	0

Table 3.13: Setting The Objectives of Writing Lessons

The previous table shows that teachers set the objectives of their writing lessons. All of them 100% agree that a teacher has to set objectives of their writing lessons before teaching. This may refer that all teachers want their students to know exactly what they will do. They said that they set these objectives to assess their success, to know where to go and what to practice and to let the students understand what they will do.

Item 14: Do you find problems in facilitating the topic to your students before they start writing?

Problems of facilitating the topic	Yes	No
N°	03	07
%	30	70

Table 3.14: Problems of Facilitating the Topic of Written Activities

This item is about the fact of facilitating the writing tasks. The majority (70%) of the respondents said that there is no problem since they have experience in teaching and facilitating these activities and the all the lessons were taught in middle school. Whereas, the minority 30 % claim that there are problems in the writing tasks in the textbook. In their point of view, attracting students' interest is not an easy task because they have low level. They also said that students are not motivated to work in this period (adolescence period).

Item 15: Do you feel that the teacher's book meets your requirements?

Teacher's book	Yes	No
N°	05	05
%	50	50

Table 3.15: The Importance of Teachers' Books

Fifty 50% of the respondents answered affirmatively because most of the activities were designed with its objectives and it is useful for fresh teachers. 50% argue that the book should be adapted to the real students' level because it explains everything but sometimes there are mistakes. In addition, others claim that teachers should be a creative.

Item 16: Would you prefer more detailed instructions on how to use the textbook in class?

More instruction	Yes	No
N°	03	07
%	30	70

Table 3.16: More Instruction on Using the Textbook

Again we move to another point which has a relation with the use of the textbook . we found that (70 %) of them did not prefer more instruction about using the textbook. In their opinion, because of their experience in teaching, they did not really require more instruction except at the beginning of the a new program. In addition, some of them insist on the teachers' creativity and they comment that they should not be slaves of books since they can adapt or add something else. Also they state that the textbook is found to realize the learners' needs and includes all updated subjects so there is no need of detailed instruction. About (30 %) support providing additional instruction especially for novice teachers since they lack experience.

Item 17: Do you find that the activities of the text book are relevant to the students' level?

The activities	Yes	No
N°	04	06
%	40	60

Table 3.17: The Activities of the Textbook and the Students' Level

As it is indicated above, we asked teachers whether the activities were relevant to the students' level. The (60%) answered negatively. They think that they were not relevant at all because in their point of view, a high level is required for such book and the type of texts are authentic English so the students are not used to certain themes. Others argue that there is a redundancy in some tasks. While only (40%) of them answered positively, they think that they have seen these texts in the middle school.

Item 18: Are your students able to construct their own knowledge in writing?

Ability of writing	yes	No
N°	04	06
%	40	60

Table 3.18: Students' Ability of Writing

In this item we asked whether students are able to construct their own understanding. The majority (60 %) answered negatively. Some of them argued that the level of the students is low and they are not well formed and well informed. The others relate the inability to the type of the stream, for example, scientific streams provide students with good feedback. And the others said that they will be able if we implement the CBA. Whereas only (40%) think that the students are able to construct their own knowledge.

Item 19: While writing used in the classroom , your learners are :

The learner	Motivated	Reluctant	Motivated and Reluctant
N°	03	02	05
%	30	20	50

Table 3.19: the Learners 'Reaction in writing Tasks

In this item, we asked about the students and their reaction to writing activities. Around 50 % of the teachers think that their students are influenced by the type of the topic. The others 30 % said that they obliged them to write, to think, and to perform inside the classroom. Some students want to say something, to improve their writing and they want to get a good marks. Whereas the rest around 20 % argued that their students lack vocabulary, they rely on translation from Arabic and they are not motivated to learn. They just come to school because they are pushed by their parents. They also ignore how to begin writing (introduction) and they are afraid to make mistakes.

Item 20: How much do you let your students work together?

Student work together	Always	Sometimes	Rarely
N°	01	08	01
%	10	80	10

Table 3.20: Students' Group Work

In this item, we focused on group work to see whether the teachers feel comfortable teaching in groups. The majority, about 80 %, are in favor of working in small groups since it is beneficial for both the teacher and the students. They agree on making such groups but not always according to the type of the activity which must be done in pairs or in groups. There also are some topics which need different points of views to be shared between students so, it is used only when it is easy to control the activity. While 10 % said that they always use it because they try to create a good and friendly atmosphere to encourage learners. The remaining ones around 10 % neglect the use of the group work to avoid disciplinary problems.

Item 21: Do you think the time allotted to teach writing is sufficient for your students to improve their competencies?

The time of teaching	Yes	No
N°	01	09
%	10	90

Table 21: The Time Allotted of Teaching Writing

The table above is about whether the allotted time is sufficient to improve students' competencies of writing. For 90 % of them, the time allotted to teach writing is not sufficient to enhance students' writing. They think that there are good learners and slow ones and they need a lot of time for interaction and listening to their peers' ideas and choosing the most relevant ones, in addition to the time needed for the correction.

Item 22: What kind of teacher do you consider yourself when you teach writing under the CBA?

Teacher's Role	Facilitator	Conventional information-provider
N°	09	01
%	90	10

Table 3.22: Teachers' Role

This question aims at highlighting the teacher's role in the competency based approach. Teachers were to some extent unified in expressing their opinions about the role they play in implementing the CBA. Statistically, 90% of the teachers said that their principle role is that of facilitator; that is, they help, check, and correct spelling mistakes addition to guide students and help them to form sentences, paragraphs by correcting their mistakes and giving them freedom to learn and work collaboratively to achieve goals. Teachers are not spoon feeders. Only 10% of the respondents (only one teacher) said that his role is just information provider.

Item 23: Are you facing problems in implementing the CBA?

Problems of CBA	Yes	No
N°	09	01
%	90	10

Table 3.23: Problems in Implementing the CBA

As the above table indicates, the highest rate of the respondents (90%) agree on that there are a lot of problems in implementing the CBA. Some of these problems are: the reform is not suitable for low learners and most of them do not work and research to construct their own ideas and they want everything ready without effort. Crowded classes are the main problems in addition to the lack of materials and long programs with limited time.

D – Section Four: Teacher’s Suggestions.

Item 24: Please suggest some solutions to these problems.

The last question in the last section aims at providing some solutions to the problems of implementing the competency based approach . The proposed suggestions vary enormously from one teacher to another, but we have noticed that the majority of the teachers who answered this questionnaire agreed on reducing the number of the students in each class to give the opportunity to look at what each student is doing with the purpose of guiding and advising them. In general, their suggestions were organized into a framework that serves as a reminder and which underlies the main solution of these problems:

To adapt the time by giving more teaching time.

To adapt the lessons and units according to the real level of the students.

The teacher must be competent.

Preparation of the matter before present it.

The teacher must be friendly sometimes but not always.

To give maximum 4 classes per teacher.

To bring data show at least tow for language teachers.

To create a site for language teachers English where they could exchange ideas coordinate together.

Intensive collaborative efforts from teachers and inspectors to implement the CBA in teaching language process successfully.

To motivate and encourage students for learning English language.

Specific training to the teacher.

Use technological tools during teaching.

Table 3.24: Teachers’ suggestion framework for enhancing the application of the CBA

Conclusion

After having analyzed the questionnaire addressed to EFL secondary school teachers at Batna, we conclude that participants were helpful through their contributions. Therefore, 50% of them responded all the questions given to them. They also agreed with us that there are difficulties in teaching writing under the CBA. So, there are problems which should be solved. The participants argued that teaching writing under the CBA is a hard task. In addition, the teachers confessed that these problems touched them and they fell unable to overcome them because they lack sufficient information related to the CBA.

General Conclusion

The present study aims at investigating the main problems that face teachers when they teach writing courses under the Competency-Based Approach. In other words, our purpose was to investigate exactly why secondary English teachers are unable to apply the Competency-based approach. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to find whether these problems can be reduced in secondary school classes.

The dissertation includes a theoretical part which devoted into two chapters. The first chapter is about an overview of the Competency-Based Approach and the second one is about theoretical issues in teaching writing under this approach. In addition, the practical part represents secondary school teachers' questionnaire. This questionnaire plays a vital role in this research study since it shed light exactly on the main problems of teaching writing according to this a new approach.

The analysis of the teachers' questionnaire helped us to know the main problems of applying the CBA in Algeria. The findings show that teachers are really facing problems which affect the development of competencies of both the teacher and the students. Some of these problems are crowded classes, lack of time allotted to teaching writing, and the ignorance of some teachers of how they can implement the CBA.

From the theoretical part of this research study which is about teaching writing under the CBA and from the result of the teachers' questionnaire, we suggest the following pedagogical recommendations to improve teaching and learning writing according to this approach:

Time: the time allotted to teach writing in secondary school classes is not sufficient for improving students' competencies. Like the other languages (Arabic and French), teaching English language should be take an available time which is more than four hours per week. Available time helps students to write effectively and achieve proficiency of this difficult skill.

Students' self learning: the competency-based approach aims to build and develop learners' abilities in order to use it in real life. To realize this aim teachers should be aware of how he can help his learners to construct and to enhance their own knowledge

and understanding of the world around them. Therefore, the teacher in this approach plays the facilitator role inside the classroom by motivating and helping his students in their learning process.

Teachers' seminars: the inspector can organize more than four or five conferences in one year. Moreover, he should shed light on the issue of teaching and learning writing since it is the difficult task in each unit. Planning for such seminars provides the teacher more detailed instructions about teaching writing.

Teaching Portfolio: portfolio is the vital integrated part in implementing the competency-based approach. It is also help both the teacher to assess students' work and help the learner to improve his task (self assessment). Despite its importance, some secondary school teachers do not know what is portfolio and how it can be used. Hence, teaching portfolio should apply it in order to reduce some problems in implementing this approach in the Algerian secondary schools.

Students' number : according to the questionnaire's result, we observe that most of the classroom includes more than 30 students in each class. However, applying the competency-based approach entailed classes that involve between 23 and 25 students. The crowded classroom is one of a major problem which unable the teacher to apply exactly the competency-based approach. Moreover, group works in such classes are impossible since they give the chance for the students to increase noise, carelessness, and irresponsibility of doing their tasks.

Selection of the topic: teachers should select topics that treat contemporary teenagers' life and interests which encourage them to express their own views and motivate them in the class.

Collaborative Learning: the teacher must focus on activities which encourage collaborative learning since it helps students to generate more ideas and interact with each other. In addition, it help them to overcome shyness especially those who never participate to share the whole class because they feel secure and ready to take their role.

Creativity of the teacher : syllabus is too long and detailed . Sometimes appears over the level of the learners abilities. The teachers must be creative by selecting the appropriate activities and adapting the course book activities.

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Appendix I

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is an important part of our research study. It aims at investigating the main problems that face secondary school teachers in implementing the Competency-Based Approach in teaching writing. Therefore, your answers and suggestions will be very helpful and useful in our research project.

Please tick the appropriate box or write full statements when necessary.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Boudouda Samia

Khelkhal Nadia

SECTION ONE : General Information

1- Specify your Gender :

Male

Female

2- How long have you been teaching?

Less than 5 years

Between 5 and 15 years

More than 15 years

3- The number of pupils in each class is :

Less than 25 students

Between 30 and 40 students

More than 40 students

Section Two: Teaching Writing Under the CBA

4- Are you implementing the Competency-Based Approach in teaching writing ?

Yes No

If yes, how ?

.....
.....
.....

5- Are you teaching writing as :

- Lesson
- Activity
- Project work

6-Which of the following approach is effective and more used in teaching writing for secondary school students ?

- The product approach
- The process approach
- The genre approach

Explain.....
.....

7- Does the text book help you develop the writing skill ?

Yes No

Explain.....
.....

8 -Does the text book help the learner to work in pairs or groups ?

Yes No

If no , please explain why ?

.....
.....
.....

9-Do you use extra materials to support and motivate your students?

Yes

No

14 -If yes, are they really effective ?

Yes

No

10-From the list of materials cited bellow which do you think is the most appreciated by your students?

The board

Pictures or images

Teachers' mime, gestures

The computer

The tape recorder

Justify your answer.....
.....
.....

11-Your students' level in writing is :

Good

Average

Bad

Please state your reasons.....
.....
.....

12-What do you consider most when evaluating your students writing composition ?

Form

Content

Why.....
.....
.....

Section Three: Problems of Implementing the CBA in Teaching Writing.

13 -Do you set the objectives of your writing lessons?

Yes

No

Explain why?

.....
.....
.....

14 -Do you find problems in facilitating the topic to your students before they start writing?

Yes

No

Explain why?

.....
.....
.....

15- Do you feel that the teacher's book meets your requirements?

Yes

No

Explain?.....

.....
.....

16 -Would you prefer more detailed instructions on how to use the textbook in class?

Yes

No

Please

comment.....

.....

17 -Do you find that the activities of the text book are relevant to the students' level?

Yes

No

Justify.....

.....
.....

18 -Are your students able to construct their own knowledge in writing?

Yes

No

If no why

?.....

.....
.....

19- While writing used in the classroom , your learners are :

Motivated

Reluctant

Whatever your answer please explain why ?

.....
.....
.....
.....

20 -How much do you let your students work together ?

Always

Sometimes

Rarely

Explain.....

.....
.....

21 -Do you think the time allotted to teach writing is sufficient for your students to improve their competencies?

Yes

No

Explain.....

.....
.....

22 - What kind of teacher do you consider yourself when you teach writing under the CBA?

Facilitator

Conventional information-provider

Others.....

Explain your choice

.....
.....
.....

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بحث و تحليل أهم الأسباب التي تعيق أساتذة التعليم الثانوي في تدريس نشاط التعبير الكتابي في اللغة الانجليزية بالاعتماد على منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات .

الفرضية المتبناة لهذه الدراسة هي معرفة مدى تمكن أساتذة التعليم الثانوي من تطبيق منهج الكفاءات في تدريس نشاط التعبير الكتابي لتطوير أداء طلبة التعليم الثانوي.

أما المنهج المعتمد في هذه الدراسة هو المنهج الوصفي لأنه مناسب لطبيعة الموضوع الذي يدرس المتغيرات الخاصة لهذا البحث و هما المتغير المستقل "تدريس التعبير الكتابي في اللغة الانجليزية " و المتغير المتصل " تطبيق منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات". و للوصول إلى النتائج المرجوة قمنا بتوزيع استمارات على عشرون أستاذا يدرسون مادة اللغة الانجليزية من أربعة ثانويات في ولاية باتنة .

و الهدف الرئيسي من هذا الاستبيان هو معرفة أهم المشاكل و العراقيل التي تواجه الأساتذة في تطبيق منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات في تنمية قدرات طلبة التعليم الثانوي في نشاط التعبير الكتابي .

و من خلال تحليل الاستبيان اتضح لنا أن الوقت المخصص لتدريس نشاط التعبير الكتابي غير كافي، مشكل الاكتظاظ في الأقسام، بالإضافة إلى المستوى المنخفض للطلبة، إلى جانب مشاكل أخرى تعيق هذا المنهج.

DEDICATION

Boudouda Samia

*To my **PARENTS** (Salah and Rachida) for their never ending love,
patience, and support me to complete this
dissertation,*

*To my beloved **SISTERS** and **BROTHERS**: Djamila and her husband
(Dagaa Seddik), Hocine, Kawther, Sabah, Wassila, Abdelraouf, Fatma
zohra, and Seif eddine,*

*To all my **COUSINS** without exception,*

*To all my **FRIENDS***

*To all my **FAMILY**, Boudouda and Oubira,*

*To all **PEOPLE** who know me,*

I dictate this work and I say

I Love you so much

DEDICATION

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

*All the praise is due to God alone, the Sustainers of all the
worlds.*

For all hearts that bear mercy, and love of others.

*For all, who work hardly to satisfy Allah, himself and to
benefit this world.*

I dedicate this modest work.

Khalkhel Nadia

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Lastly, we would like to thank everybody who was important to the successful realization of this dissertation, as well as expressing our apology that we could not mention them personally one by one.

Abstract

The Competency-Based Approach is a new approach which was adopted by the Algerian Educational system in 2003. It aims to enhance the learners' competencies in order to use them in their real lives. Despite its importance, some Algerian secondary school teachers fail to absorb the real implementation of this new approach especially in teaching writing since it is the most difficult skill for both teachers and foreign learners. Hence, Why are teachers unable to adopt this approach in their written courses? The present study aims at investigating and analyzing the main problems that face EFL Secondary school teachers in teaching writing under the Competency-Based Approach. We hypothesized in this study that if Algerian teachers of secondary schools knew how to apply the Competency-Based Approach; they would promote students' writing proficiency. The method of this research work is descriptive. To achieve the above aim, a questionnaire was administered to twenty teachers of English in four Secondary Schools in Batna. The questionnaire aims to know how to implement this new approach in order to enhance students' competencies to use it in their real life. The data analysis showed that the time devoted to teaching writing is not sufficient. In addition, most classes are overcrowded and lack of technological equipments, and the students' low level at writing are the main problem that hinder teaching writing under the Competency- Based Approach.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

CLT: Communicative language teaching

CBA: Competency-Based Approach

CBE: Competency-Based Education

CBI: Content-Based Instruction

CBT: Competency-Based Teaching

CBLT: Competency-Based Language Teaching

DeSeCo: Definition and Selection of Competencies

EFL: English Foreign Language

TBI: Task-Based Instruction

UG: Universal Grammar

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

N° : Number

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