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**Investigating the Role of Pre-Writing Techniques in Improving  
EFL learners Essay Writing**

A Case Study of Third Year Students of English at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as a  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master Degree in Sciences of Language**

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## *Dedication*

*I would like to dedicate this work to:*

*To my parents, my late father “may his soul rest in peace” and my mother, who gave me endless encouragement to carry on this work.*

*To my two and only brothers who have supported me since the beginning of my research.*

*To my extended family.*

*To all my teachers and friends at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra.*

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## **Abstract**

Writing is one of the basic skills in language learning. However, students always find it difficult to develop it. This study deals with the role of pre writing techniques in improving EFL learners essays writing, it aims at developing EFL learners' awareness of essays writing by demonstrating the role and importance of pre writing activities. We hypothesized that if learners use the pre writing techniques in their essay's writing it will improve, its main goal is to investigate to improve essays' writing of Third year students at the University of Mohamed Khieder of Biskra. We opted for the descriptive method, a student's questionnaire and teacher's interviews were designed in order to help us to either confirm or reject the hypothesis. The tools aims at collecting both students and teachers point of views on the subject. So, the total population of the study is (307) students and we selected our sample randomly that consist of (50) students from this population, the final results analysed qualitatively. Thus, the finding showed that the role of pre writing techniques as an effective way in improving EFL learners essay writing. Also, the students were more aware of the role of using the pre writing activities in their essay. So through the obtained results, we suggested some recommendations for students and teachers.

**Key terms:** writing, skill, essays, pre-writing, techniques, activities

## **List of acronyms**

**EFL:** English as foreign language

**LMD:** license Master Doctorate

**MKU:** Mohamed Khieder University

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ملخص

## **Introduction**

Writing is one of the four macro-skills which needs special attention, especially in foreign language classes because it is the most difficult skill to master or taught. Despite the attention given to writing as a skill in foreign language classes, students still have problems with this skill. We think that the primary cause of these problems in this skill is that students still believe and feel that the only sense of good written production comes from what they have learned about grammar. So, students often rush towards more grammar practice and tend to forget about the specific steps and techniques which they have to go through before reaching their final product.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Learners studying English at Mohamed Khieder University are supposed to learn many skills, which categorized into receptive and productive ones. The latter comprises one of the most difficult and the most demanding skill, which is writing. English students are asked to write at least a paragraph at the beginning then compositions and eventually they will be able to write essays to help them write their final report or dissertation, it is hard to write an academic essay as it is more elaborated and consists of more than two paragraph. In writing an essay students undergo many steps and processes to produce a well unified coherent and ordered essay and for that students find it difficult because it involves a greatdeal of mechanism and strategies also.

### **2. Significance of the study**

The present study would offer assistance to the language-teaching field. Since the method used by the teacher has an impact on teaching, this study tries to show that the implementation of prewriting techniques may contribute in the improvement of students' essays writing in the branch of English at Mohammad Kheider University of Biskra.

### **3. Aims of the study**

This study aims at investigating the role of prewriting techniques in improving English as a foreign language essay writing of learners. It also aims at providing some suggestions and solutions to learners and teachers in order to improve the learning and teaching process in Algeria. In order to arrive at some strategies that may provide a practical and essential guidance for English language learners, this may not be achieved without knowing the nature of this problem and revealing true facts in the university of Biskra on the base of a case study. By the end of this research, it will provide a valuable resource of knowledge to both teachers and learners. In other words, it will provide teachers with enough recommendations and suggestion on how to teach the prewriting techniques and consequently help students overcome the difficulties of writing essays while for students it will assist them through providing them will appropriate understanding of the issue and remedies to better their writing of the essay.

### **5. Research Questions**

The core investigation of this study is the role of prewriting techniques in improving the essay writing of Biskra university students of English so our questions will be as followed:

1. What are the prewriting techniques used by students?
2. How do teachers and students apply them in their writing process?
3. What is the role of prewriting techniques?
4. How can the prewriting techniques improve students/teachers performance in writing?

## **6. Research hypothesis**

Student of English as foreign language in Biskra University encounter many difficulties in writing an essay. In order to overcome this difficulty, we hypothesized that:

If student of Biskra of third year LMD use the pre writing techniques in writing essay their writing will improve.

- **Sub-hypotheses**

If teachers use pre writing techniques in written expression classes, students will:

1. Produce better essays.
2. Overcome their writing difficulties when starting to writing.

## **1. Research methodology**

To carry out this research. The descriptive method was adopted to describe and analyze the findings since it can provide consistent and comprehensive information and valid results. Two research instruments will be used not only to guarantee the hypothesis validity, but to get a deeper insight into writing as a skill and the role of prewriting techniques in improving learners essay writing. The first tool will be a questionnaire devoted to third year students while the second instrument will be an interview with teacher of written expression course.

- **Population and sample**

Our study conducted at Mohamed Khieder University of Biskra. The third year students were our population. As a sample, we will select (50 out of 307 students). In order not to be bias, the selection of the sample is random because we cannot deal with the whole population. While The other sample is teachers ( 2 teachers) of written expressions at the

university to interview them, who supposed to have a more direct contact with students and thus knowledgeable about their needs.

## **Organization of the dissertation**

The current study involves a theoretical and a practical part, Our study is conducted under three chapters, the first chapter will be devoted to writing skill while the second chapter will deal with essays and prewriting techniques and the last chapter will be the fieldwork to the previous two theoretical chapters, Chapter three will provide the analysis and the discussion of the findings of students' questionnaire and teachers' interview

## **Structure of the study**

### **Theoretical partpractical part**

#### **1. Chapter one: writing and the teaching methods** 1. students' questionnaire

Definition of writing

2. Teachers' interview

Components of writing

3. Analysis and discussion

Writing and the other skills

Writing and the teaching methods

#### **2. Chapter two: essays and pre writing techniques**

The essay and its structure, its types

The pre writing techniques and its role

#### **1. Student's questionnaire**

A students questionnaire was administered to 50 students of third year out of 307 in the English department of Biskra University, about 16 % of the whole population are concerned by this questionnaire, where 50 copies were distributed to these students at a random selection, the procedures took place at the amphitheatre and it took about a half hour to distribute and collect the questionnaires to be therefore analysed, note that all the questionnaire were recovered.

Student's questionnaire is made up of four sections, which varied from open-ended and close-ended questions.

## **2. Teachers' interview**

The interview was addressed to third year teachers of written expression at the University of Mohamed Khieder of Biskra. The sample (2teachers) was chosen systematically from the whole population. The interview consists of open-ended questions divided into two sections.

### **Results and analysis**

Results from both students and teacher were different but somehow similar; both students and their teachers acknowledged the difficulties encountered by them when writing essays, both students and their teachers tend to use the process approach which is more methodological and gradual method and which contains the needed steps and stages to undergo while writing like the pre writing stage and techniques, students and teachers said that difficulties in writing differs but most difficulties comes from the problem of generating and organizing ideas. Both students and teachers think that the argumentative essay is the most difficult type among the different types of essays. Teachers and students use different pre writing techniques; for students seemingly like free writing listing brainstorming and clustering, students and their teachers acknowledged the role and importance of pre writing techniques in improving their essays writing

### **Discussion of the results of questionnaire and interview**

So based on the results of both the students questionnaire and the teacher's interview we can conclude that conclude that answers were different but somehow similar, teachers and students use various techniques productively, learner prefer certain activities to others according to their learning style and the nature of the topic which the teacher build on that to teach them essays writing, according to both learner and teachers pre writing techniques indicated improvement in writing skill achievements and attitudes. So pre writing techniques do not only help learners acquire the target language effectively but also build inter-personal thinking and planning skills



that can be utilized in other skills or fields, pre writing techniques and activities help students plan and organize their essays and help the reluctant writers to find their motivation to write, according to students using pre writing techniques is problem solving and beneficial particularly in the argumentative and persuasive essays. Teachers think that students achievements in essays

### **Limitations of the study**

Although the current study is an attempt to investigate the role of pre writing techniques in improving EFL learner essay, the limitations of the research also need to be accredited. This study is limited by time and population as well. For those reasons, the selected sample to answer the questionnaire will consist of only 50 third year students from the English Department at Biskra University. In addition, the sample of teachers that the interview might be held with is 3 third year teachers at the English department of MKU which is selected systematically from the whole population of teachers. However, the interview held only with two teachers since one of them refused and excused to be interviewed. Moreover, the short time provided in conducting this research, do not help to analyse the findings deeply. Moreover, this study was supposed to be conducted using the Quasi-experiment which was a mix of test plus questionnaire and interview, but due to the unavailability of classes and the full schedule of teachers, the method had to be dropped and to carry out our investigation with the descriptive method.

### **Recommendations**

Improving EFL learners essays writing through the use of pre writing techniques is the responsibility of both learners and students. Therefore, the following implications will be recommended:

1. Time allotted to writing is not sufficient, so it should have more time for written expression session and particularly essays writing sessions.

2. Pre writing techniques should be taught from the early stages of English language teaching at high school where learners practise them in their writing.
3. Teachers of third year should teach students the pre writing techniques explicitly and incorporate them implicitly in every lesson.
4. Students should try different pre writing techniques and do not stick to one technique, but also they should find the appropriate technique that could work with their thinking and writing style.
5. Students should be encouraged to write multiple drafts and learn about their own preferred techniques in order to exploit and guide it.
5. Schools and teachers should use technology or multimedia sources in writing as a pre writing activities to improve the quality of learning.

## **Conclusion**

Writing in general is difficult and writing essays is more difficult. For students to write a cohesive, structured, well planned essays they need certain steps called techniques like the pre writing techniques which can help them overcome their difficulties and improve their essays' writing. Through the results of students' questionnaire and teacher interview we concluded that the pre writing techniques play an important role in improving their essays writing.

# **CHAPTER ONE:**

**Writing *and* the**

**Teaching Methods**

## **Introduction**

In learning a foreign language, learners are subjected to the four basic skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The latter is becoming the most important skill that students need to develop. In fact, writing is a means of communication which translates thoughts into a written language. So, writing is a basic and a fundamental skill, it is also the most important and the most difficult skill in language learning, since the learner has to make considerable effort and practice many writing activities to reach an ultimate level of writing.

### **1. Definition of Writing**

many researchers and experts in the field of writing contributed in the definition of what is writing one was Byrne who saw that writing does not only putting words into graphic symbols but its more than that he stated that ;

Writing is clearly much more than graphic symbols, just as speech is more than the production of sounds; the symbols have to be arranged according to a certain convention, to form words, and words have to be arranged to form sentences. (1991: 1)

This view was also seen in brown's point of view, where he saw that considering writing as realization of speech by a graphical symbols is not the case anymore and it is not valid anymore, he explained that the nature of writing in term of written products which :

often the result of thinking drafting and revising procedures that requires a specialized skills ...the compositional nature of writing has produced a writing pedagogy that focuses students on how to generate ideas, how to organize them cohesively into a written text, how to revise texts for clearer meaning, how to edit text for appropriate grammar and how to produce a final product. (2001: 335)

Nancy Arapoff (1967:233) writing "is much more than an orthographic symbolization of speech .it, most importantly, a purposeful selection and organization of experiences". For her "experience" includes all thoughts, facts, opinions, or ideas. Because writing is such a complex

human activity which involves the development of an idea, the capture of mental representation of knowledge and of experience with subjects.

For Grabe and Kaplan(1996) writing is; a process any writer goes through towards the production of meaningful text these two researchers approached writing from three sides also called rhetorical triangle :the writer, the audience, and the text itself or the producer , the reader or recipient of the text , and the written product. this product is the result of cognitive activities, the writers processes, and the meaning of any piece of writing; Li Waishing (2000 :53) supported the claim of the above researchers in that writing is meant to be meaningful and functional he stated that « writers should pay attention to writing as communication of meaning and treat writing as goal-oriented activity » this activity of writing is said to be of an intrinsic value that writers go through for several goals .

Neman 1995 argues that writing is « a craft, an artistic process with techniques and conventions that can be learnt, employing skills that can be improved »(p 4) he stated that writing is a skill that can be learned and improved many other researchers support the notion that writing is of a social nature like Chandler 1995,and Hayes1996 ,Zhu2004,and Johnes 1990 describing it as a social act and that it is carried out in social setting

White and Arndt through their research on writing stated that writing is about producing sequences of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain manner to form a coherent whole which we call a text ;

Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols; it is a thinking process in its own right, it demands conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable effort of time. (1991: 3).

## 2. Components of writing

There are different components proposed by different researchers each with a particular focus, one of those is Harris (1969) who made his contribution and set five general elements to writing:

- › Content, which involves the idea being expressed.
- › Form, that refers to the organization of the content.
- › Grammar, which is the use of different grammatical forms and syntactic patterns.
- › Style, which displays the use of use of structure and lexical items that gives a particular tone to writing.
- › Mechanics, which consist of the use of graphic conventions of language.

Harris recognition was supported by Bell and Burnaby (1984) who explained that:

Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. at the level of the sentence, these includes the control of the content, format ,sentence structure, vocabulary , punctuation, spelling and letters' formation .beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts

(Cited in Nunan , 1989 : 36)

Writing is build up upon for pillars from activity notion to spelling, to writing practice, and from the complex activity of composing where learners use the elements of the language , writing is transforming an abstract notion into a concrete expression with the help of the different parts of speech and language structures and rhetorical devices as Penn expressed it;

....for one thing , in writing we must understand the structure of the language , what the part of speech do, how the words relate to one another, what individual words mean , the rules of grammar and punctuation

Raimas (1983: 6) also made categorization of components of writing. He divided them into nine elements:

- › The content; which have to be relevant, clear original, and logical.
- › The writers process; which involves getting ideas and getting started to write then drafting and finally revising and editing.
- › The audience; which is the target reader or listener.
- › The purpose; that is the reason of writing.
- › Word choice; displayed through vocabulary, idioms, tones.
- › Organization; of paragraphs from the topic to the supporting sentences till the cohesion and writing.
- › Mechanics; represented through handwriting and punctuation and spelling.
- › Grammar; which is all the rules for verbs agreement, articles pronouns etc.
- › Syntax; involves sentence structure sentence boundries and stylistic choice etc.

He points out that. Student who is given the time for process to work, along with appropriate feedback from the reader such as the teacher or other students, will discover, new ideas, new sentences, and new words as he plans, writes a first draft, and revises what he had written for a second draft (10)

Heaten (1994; 138) suggested elements of writing which he called skills;

- › Grammatical skills which refers to the ability of writing a correct sentence.
- › Stylistic skill; the ability to manipulate sentences and use language effectively.
- › Mechanical skills; the ability to use correctly punctuation and spelling.
- › Judgment skill; the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose for a particular audience with the ability of selecting and of organization and order of relevant information.

Applebee (1982) listed three elements whom he called areas of knowledge; the knowledge of the topic, the knowledge of the audience, and the knowledge of the knowledge of the conventions, Collins and Genre stated that in writing learners must consider a number of elements which they called constrains, the structural level, the overall text structure, the paragraph structure and the sentence structure, syntax and word structure ( 1983: 51-52 ).

### **3. Writing and other skills**

#### **3.1 Writing and speaking**

The relationship between writing and the other skills particularly speaking skill has been the core of discussion since both of them are a productive skills and that is stated by Wiegler (2002: 15).

Most linguists believe that the sole reason for the existence of the written form is to present the language in its oral form and it is simply a shadow cast by speech, Wiegler stated that:

Neither oral or written language is inherently superior to the other , but oral and written text vary across a number of dimensions including textual features ,socio cultural norms and patterns of use , and the cognitive processes involved in text production and comprehension.

All the above stated in the table is supported by Weigler(2002) who believed that in educational setting like research the priority is given to writing over speaking in the sense that the former is more correct and therefore it should be more valued in accordance with that is Byrne who stated that writing is more difficult and complex than speaking in term of that” writing is for readers” (1991;P.21) for that the writers are supposed to affect the readers in order to be successful in their writing Parrott(2004) Vygotsky points out to the difference between writing and speech in that “a written speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and mode of functioning (1962;98) Grabe and Kaplin stated that” writing abilities are not naturally acquired ; they must be culturally transmitted in every assisting environment “ which make learning



to write different and difficult from learning to speak , Sperling concluded the difference between writing and speaking when he stated that.

To talk of written and spoken language differences is to consider the range of communicative purposes in which either writing or speaking is put. in this sense , broader characteristics –such as what gets said and what remains implicit , what is fore grounded and what is back grounded and what is stated by whom and under what circumstances – implicates the norms and expectations of the range of context in which both writing and speaking are produced.

(1996: 56)

This means that features like vocabulary and formality differ in both oral and written language depending on the wider social and cultural context in which they are used. Therefore the accuracy in writing is frequently more important than accuracy in speaking (wiegle, 2002:17)

Harmer (2002) said that it is necessary to highlights the difference and similarities between writing and speaking for a better understanding of how people write, he claims that to whom we write referring to audience is of a highly significant importance, which is not the case in speaking where we have the advantages of having co-participants that give the speakers the ability to modify their speech according to the co-participants reactions, but in writing we write for an unknown audience ;for him the process of writing is complex than the process of speaking but not always( p;8). in this respect , Crystal (1994:179) also contributed in setting the difference between writing and speaking he argued that:

Speech is time-bound, dynamic, transient part of interaction in which, typically, both participants are present and the speaker has a specific addressee in mind, writing is space- bound , static ,permanent-the result of

situation in which ,typically, the producer is distant from the recipient-and ,often, may not even know who the recipient is.

Despite the fact that writing and speaking differ in many ways but we can find similarities also that one can agree that it exist in both skills, one of these similarities is the fact that both of them are a productive skills n in addition they are rooted in the same linguistic resources and can be used in many contexts to achieve the same communication goals this shows that the difference between writing and speaking is not absolute and there are several occasions where speech and writing look alike , in both speaking and writing the choice of our words is based on the participants ,writers and speakers can go through the same processes of planning and drafting in mind .

### **3.2 Writing and reading**

It was always claimed that a good writers are simply the result of engaging in a variety of reading activities which are considered as the first input from which writers derive their thoughts therefore reading whether it is intensive or extensive it plays a crucial role in improving writing Byrne (1997;10) argues that ”Reading of course is can be a goal in itself and in any case it likely to be a more important one than writing , but the two skills can and should be developed in close collaboration”. Reading texts and passages can provide learners with new vocabulary and make them familiar with the syntax of the language Whites points out that the writing skill involves the ability to a reader (1981;101) and also claimed that” any communicative writing course must contain a large components of reading comprehension of practice , that is , for writers as readers “ and despite the different characteristics of writing being a productive skill and reading as receptive skill but definitely they complement each others ,this was supported by Stosky who stated that better writers tend to be a better readers and that better writers tend to read more than poorer writers and that better readers tends to produce better systematically mature writing than poorer readers (636) at a deeper level reading can help learners assimilates stylistic choices, tones, structure, norms, grammatical features, rhetorical strategies, markers of cohesion and coherence , besides

providing them with a prior knowledge ,ideas and information which can help them deepen and widen their content in writing Thomas claims that” a significant relationship existed between writing achievement and the amount of variety of reading experiences “(1976; cited in Flippo and coverly 2000:15) in this respect, Celce-Muria (2001:224-225) argues that “At the very last readings provide models of what English language texts look like and even if not used for the purpose of imitation that helps students develop awareness of English language prose style.”

Ferral (1977) stated that in order to develop communicative skills, one needs both reading and writing abilities, so that to make sure his message is clear and understood

Reading and writing affect how people communicate, what they think is involved in communicating, and what they think is involved in thinking.

(cited in Flippo and Caverly 2000:166).

For Tierny and person (1983) both reading and writing involve the same cognitive processes claiming that

Reading and writing involve similar, shared, linguistic and cognitive elements. As readers read and writers compose, both plan, draft, align, revise, and monitor as they read and write. (In flippo and caverly 2000:151) another advocate of the role of reading in writing and that writing is strongly close to reading is Krashen who saw that who strongly argued that reading is “ the only way we develop a good writing style , an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammatical competence , and the only way we become a good spellers ” , in his input theory he believed that reading as an input is one way learners can improve their output(2004:37) .Ferris and Hadgook (2009:215) are another researchers who saw that reading plays a significant foundation for enhancing the writing skill , but they disagree with Krashen on the point that reading is the only to acquire writing competence they confirmed that

The act of writing can improve one's thinking ....., if students think on a daily basis about what to write (ideas), in what order to present those ideas, (rhetoric), and what linguistic or extra-linguistic tools to utilize (using new lexical items, applying a punctuation rule learned in class or observed through reading) these regular decision-making processes will surely benefit their long-term development as 12 writers.

So for them reading alone is not sufficient to develop writing skill, despite the fact that effective writers are usually taken for granted to be good readers, but there are some who read for extreme yet they are considered poor writers. So to sum up , we can simply say that these two skills have a strong close and complementary relationship whether if it was through differences or through similarities , be they receptive or productive since they both contribute in the learning of language.

### **3.3 Writing and grammar**

Grammar is very fundamental to language learning, and since writing is one of the language skills, the focus on grammar in teaching writing is very important, since writers need to learn the appropriate grammatical structures to be able to write correct and accurate pieces of writing

.Raimes (1981:15) stated that:

Certain methods of developments require certain structures. eg, a comparison -contrast task will make the use of comparative and superlative forms necessary, likewise in chronological narration, past tenses ,and in spatial order ,prepositions of place will be used.

He explained that integrating grammar in writing process should be emphasized as it is important in particular methods of development for different topics, grammar in writing is important, necessary, desirable part of classroom language learning, Raimes further explain that grammar is considered the primary importance in learning and teaching writing, for Marquez (1981:17) grammar has many advantages when been integrated with writing, he put it as follow

Specific grammatical structures lend themselves to certain development and these ought to be explained to full advantage, development by comparison and contrast for instance lends itself for the teaching of (er/more than – est /most , as...as, such as that so+ adjective +that, etc.....) , spatial development is a good place to teach troublesome prepositions and adverbs of place, just as chronological development is a good section in which to teach adverbs of time, both single forms and prepositional phrases.....an important characteristic of the teaching of selected paragraph structures is that it is inseparable from the teaching of specific grammatical structures , and practice in one should not proceed without conscious awareness of the other.

Teaching the different parts of speech, the sentence and its parts, sentence errors and grammatical rules is very crucial in writing, all this helps students to be more aware on the importance of grammar when it comes to writing grammatical accuracy has been always the emphasis of teaching when correcting learners papers, consider and rely on to a larger extent to decide the marks students get.

#### **4. Approaches to teaching foreign language writing:**

Because there are so many teachers with so many different teaching styles and so many learners with different learning styles the question on how to teach writing remains without a clear cut-answer , for a long period of time a particular approach dominated the teaching of writing but soon it fades but did not completely disappear instead it emerged in a shapes of different approaches, the product approach, the process approach, the genre approach and the process-genre approaches which are now the most prominent and worked with approaches in teaching writing.

##### **1.1 The Product Approach**

This approach is originally derived from the Behaviourist theory which sees language as habit formation and so according to that writing is seen as a second concern which aims at enhancing students oral performance and to test their grammatical accuracy (Silva.1999: in

Carol;12) this approach focuses on the production of well produced composition “.... a product oriented approach, as the title indicates focuses on the end result of the learning processes, what is that the learner is expected to be able to do as fluent and component user of the language”(Nunan.1991;86) the emphasis is to lead learners to achieve pre-determined objectives this was seen also by white who put it as follow “... learners needs are carefully specified and the work of the materials designers and the teacher is to provide the means to enabling these needs to be realized”(1988:18) students according to this approach should internalize fixed patterns of smaller units in sentence before proceeding to larger units of composition and this was clearly stated by Picas (1962:185-186)

The learner is not allowed to “create” in t-he target language at all.....the use of language is the manipulation of fixed patterns .....these patterns are learned by imitation ,and ....not until they have been learned can originally occur.

The most common activity to occur is copying and imitation where learners study a model then attempt a various exercises aiming at copying the relevant features of the text: punctuation, spelling, vocabulary and rhetorical conventions, students carry out sentence expansions from cue words and develop sentences and paragraphs from models of various sorts, learners are asked to check comprehension by completing sets and adding logical connectors in which they produce a parallel texts, teachers rely on three criteria found in the produced text ; clarity, originality and correctness

For Flowers and Hays (1977) the product approach is made according to three main aspects which are:

- Learners are exposed to the formal descriptive categories of rhetoric
- Learners are offered good example and bad example of texts
- The learners are encouraged to absorb the features of socially approved style which focuses on grammar and usage

For that Silva (1999:3) points out that this approach is deemed to be a mere grammar exercise rather than composing:

- The writer is simply a manipulator of previously learned language structure
- The reader which is in this case the teacher in the role of editor is not interested on quality of ideas or expressions but primarily interested in the formal linguistic features
- The text becomes a collection of sentence patterns and vocabulary items

So for the teacher the final product must contain some elements which according to Hedge involve the following aspect:

- Getting the grammar right
- Having a range of vocabulary
- Punctuating meaningful using the convention of lay out correctly.
- Spelling accurately using a range of vocabulary.
- Linking ideas and information across to develop a topic.
- Developing and organizing the content clearly and convincingly (8)

This approach is also called a teacher centred approach where the role of learners is lessened and the teacher is the one who do all the work and all students are asked to do is imitate and copy texts to produce parallel texts, so in teaching writing using the product approach learners they go three different stages

1-familiarization; where learners are taught certain grammar and vocabulary usually through a text

2-controlled writing; learners manipulate fixed patterns often through substitution table

3-guided writing: in which learners imitate model text

4-free writing: learners use the patterns they have developed to write an essay, letters and so forth.

(Richards .2003:3-4)

#### 4.2. The process approach

This approach is derived from many philosophical and methodological orientations led by different pioneers such as Janet Emig (1971), Peter Elbow(1973),Linda Flower and John.R Hayes (1981), those researchers have questioned the the view that saw writing bas a linear process instead it advocate the idea that “writing is a recursive process” (Perl.1980:364) this approach emphasises on “writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas..... to the “publication” of a finished text” (Tribble;37) the focus of this approach is on the process that leads to the final product not the product itself as emphasised in the product approach, this represented a shift from seeing writing a final product to the stages that writers goes through in order to create this product, for Zamel “writing involves much more than studying a particular grammar, analysing and imitating rhetorical models, or outlining what is one plans to say” (1982:196-9), this means that writing is as weir stated “.....A process of writing where the main interest is in what writers do when they write, this approach sees writing as an explanatory generative collaboration process rather than a linear route to a pre-determinate product” (130) so according to Weir teaching writing with the process approach presented a shift from the text to the writers and the stages they go through , this shift lead to another understanding and made use of writing “ as a process of creating, discovering, and extending meaning rather than a process of purring down preconceived and well formed meaning” (Raimas,1985;Shaughnessy,1977;Silva,1990;Zamel,1983,1987;inTsui; cited in Freeman and Richards, p.97) so the main concern of this approach is to discover what writers do when they write, White and Arndt (1991) set six steps in the process writing :generating ideas, focusing in , structuring, drafting n evaluating and reviewing generally these stages involves brainstorming, selection and ordering of ideas planning and drafting redrafting and revising according to Harris(1993) the process writing involves three stages: prewriting, planning and revising



- › Prewriting: involves choosing and narrowing the topic and to generate ideas through brainstorming
- › Planning: organising ideas into an outline, this outline involves making sub-lists of main ideas, writing down topic sentence, and then to follow the outline and write paragraphs
- › Revising: which consist of making drafts to produce a final copy, during the first revision the writer is concerned with the content and organization, the paragraphs could be checked for topic sentences and sufficient supporting details stated purpose, logic, coherence and unity and a concluding sentence. The other step is to check for grammar, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation

Hyland (2003) also gave a summary of the writing stages in the process approach as follow: selection of the topic, prewriting, composing, response to draft, revising, response to revising, proofreading, and editing, evaluation, publishing, and follow up task

Free writing and writing extended narrative through cyclic process is a common practice of this approach which can contribute to help students at different stages of the writing act the teachers in the process approach can predict the difficulties learners encounter at a particular phase which make students aware of the interaction that exist between them and the readers in order to convey ideas clearly.

There are several differences between the product approach and the process approach since the last came as a reaction to the principle of the first which can be concluded in this table

**Table 1: Major dichotomies in writing approaches (adopted from Newfields: 1999)**

| The process approach   | The product approach                                   |
|--|--|
| Emphasis on learning processes   | Emphasis on finished product                           |
| Focus on students experiences  | Focuses on objectives outcomes                         |
| Regard for form and structure  | Regard for global meaning                              |
| Priority on students interaction                                       | Priority on formal course design                       |
| Concerns for immediate tasks, activities, brainstorming genre analysis | Concerns for long term objectives                      |
|  | Classroom writing, error analysis, and stylistic focus |

#### **4.3. The genre approach**

The genre based approach can be regarded as an extension of the product approach like the product approach, genre approach sees writing as free dominantly linguistic unlike the product approach which emphasises that writing varies with social contexts in which it is produced in fact there is a range of kinds of writing such as sales letters, research articles, law reports, this approach is known to be an approach for students of English for specific purposes that is why it has been called English for academic purposes approach

This approach attempts to get learners aware of the different elements of writing like the topic, conventions, style of genre, and the context in which their writing will be read and by whom, it proposes deconstructing dominant genres, analysing them from the linguistic point of view, and reproduce them from the analysis of their linguistic and structural features, and eventually generate their own texts which conform to the conventions of each genre for Harmer “in genre approach to writing, learners study texts in the genre they are going to be writing before they embark on their own writing”.(2001;258)

Learners are asked to write various kinds of writing like business letters and newspapers articles provided by the real example or a typical model of such genre which they will study to find out the structure of the language used before they start composing, genre is "a term for grouping text together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations" (Hyland, 2006:46) the writer's choices depend on the context, the writer-reader relationship, and the communicative purposes this later is a major difference that differentiates a given genre such as a business letter to another genre (Dudley-Evans, 1994:219)

#### **4.4. The process-genre approach**

Indeed the three approaches have been criticised and no single approach fits all kinds of learners, the three approaches are largely complementary as (Badger and White: 2000) stated, it is possible to identify an approach which is composed of the three approaches that is the process genre approach

Hyland (2003) asserted that the writers need realistic strategies for drafting and revising but they also must have a clear understanding of genre to structure their writing experiences according to the demands and constraints of a particular context

Lee et al (2009) suggested that the process genre approach to teaching writing aims to help students to cope with writing in academic settings through the use of this approach

Learners learn how to plan, organize, research and produce different genres through a variety of relevant and challenging tasks. Moreover; researchers such as Boger and White (2000), Kim and Kim (2005), Lee et al (2009) suggested that the genre process approach with the belief that it develops the students' cognitive abilities as well as the linguistic competence in using different genres

This approach has emerged from the coupling of two parent theories: cognitive and expressive view, adopting from the first the attention to the cognitive and mental processes involved in writing while from the last the emphasis on student abilities

## **Conclusion**

Summing up, writing is not an easy task for both teachers and learners. Therefore, developing essay writing requires many strategies, and the teachers should know the needs of their students in order to motivate them by using different techniques, that can facilitate the way of developing essay writing. Thus, writing requires reading, learning, acquiring languages, and then writes. In the next chapter, we will demonstrate the pre writing techniques as a tool for developing essay writing in order to help learners to overcome their difficulties.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**THE ESSAY AND**

**THE PRE-WRITING**

**TECHNIQUES**

## **Introduction**

Learners at the level of collage are asked to write reports and research papers all the time and the learners of English as a foreign language are not all different, students are taught different types of writing among these are essays, in order to write effective essays they are introduced to different strategies and techniques so, In this chapter we dealt with the essays and the pre-writing techniques, first we tackled the part of essays, its definition, its structure and its types then we dealt with the pre-writing techniques starting by what they refer to then the different used techniques and finally their importance in improving essays writing.

### **I. Essay Writing**

In the writing skill, learners need to communicate between each other, but in a written way. There are a number of different types of writing such: letters, paragraphs, essays ...Among the different types of writing, there is essay, in which EFL learners face many difficulties to write and to develop.

#### **I.1. Definition of Essay**

The essay is one kind of writing where students express their ideas or other things. In fact, it is a long paragraph and defined by many scholars. According to Zemach & Ruimsk (2005, p.56), An essay is a group of paragraphs written about a single topic and a central main idea. It must have at least three paragraphs. In addition, Kane (2000, p.45) defines it as a —relatively short composition ...essay can be speculative or factual or emotional; they can be personal or objective, serious or humorous. Moreover, Starkey (2004, p.1) came to describe it as —rarely that tortuous. However, it is important to

recognize that in order to do it well, you must commit yourself to a process.¶ Whereas Grenville (2001, p.4-5) said that essay generally ask you to do one of four things:

1. They might ask you for straight information.
2. They might ask you to discuss different points of view.
3. They might ask you to argue for a particular point of view.
4. They might ask you to compare or contrast several different things.

Writers and researchers have proposed different definitions about what an essay is, how it takes place. Nourse (2001:16) states: “An essay is an analytic or interpretive literary composition usually dealing with its subject from a limited or personal point of view.” Whereas, Anker (2010: 38-39) suggests the following definition:

An essay is a piece of writing that examines a topic in more depth than a paragraph. A short essay may have four or five paragraphs, totalling three hundred to six hundred words. A long essay is six paragraphs or more, depending on what the essay needs to accomplish-persuading someone to do something, using research to make a point, or explaining a complex concept.

When topics are too complex or too broad to be developed in a one paragraph, there is a great need to write an essay that is a group of paragraphs that develop one central idea.

An essay is not just one or two paragraphs, but it is a part of whole of writing several long paragraphs, the topic of an essay is too difficult to talk about in one paragraph, it is written about a unify topic. As a result, you have to divide the topic into different paragraphs, one for each main point .After that you have to attach all of the independent paragraphs with one another by putting or combining an introduction and a conclusion. It is lengthy in writing than a paragraph, but it is no harder than writing a paragraph. If you are able to write a good paragraph, you are able to write a good essay because the principles of organization are similar for both.

In general terms, an essay has three main parts:

**A. Introduction:** as can say is one paragraph (sometimes two or more) that come in the topic to be discussed and the major idea (the thesis statement) of the essay.

**B. Developmental paragraphs** .these paragraphs gathers various aspects of the Topic and the main idea .They may talk causes, effects, reasons, examples, processes, classifications, or points of comparison and contrast. They may also narrate or describe.

**C. Conclusion** .this paragraph outlines ideas and the thoughts developed in the essay. It is the shutting word. (Smalle. Ruetten; Rishel Kozyrev, 200, p105)

## **I.2. The Structure of Essay**

The essay consists of three main parts (introduction, body, and conclusion) where the most EFL learners face many difficulties to develop and each part has many features.

### **I.2.1 The introduction (An introductory paragraph)**

It is the first part of essay to introduce the general idea. According to Zemach & Ruimsk (2005, p.56), "Introduction is the first paragraph of an essay. It explains the topic with general ideas. It also has a thesis statement."

The first paragraph of your essay will talk about your topic and direct the reader to the entire essay, also determines the tone for your essay The introduction should discuss your major thought, or what the essay is talk about, then declare your thesis and points or arguments that support your thesis. When your introduction well organized it may grab the reader's attention with interest and clearness.

There are two parts in the introductory paragraph; define a general statements about your subject to attract your reader `s attention and a thesis statement as a topic sentence for a paragraph: it gives a name to the specific and the controlling ideas or major subdivisions of



the topics. A thesis statement is to set the ``the plan `` to your paper or a particular subdivision to your topic. An introduction has four aims:

1. It presents the topic of the essay.
2. It gives a general information and background knowledge of the topic.
3. It often shows the total ``plan`` of the essay.
4. It should grow the reader`s interest in the topic.

### **A. The functions of the introduction**

The introductory paragraph has an important function in the essay.

According to Blanchard & Root (2004), the function of the introduction is to capture the reader`s interest, and to provide background information, then to state the main idea of the essay in a thesis statement (p.63).

### **B. Features of introductory paragraph**

1. The introductory paragraph is the first thing that a reader take notice that should introduce the topic .Obviously, this paragraph should inform the reader of the topic being discussed. In other senses, it shows the main information about the topic.
2. Generally, an introductory paragraph should mention how the topic is going to be grown. A completed introductory paragraph show whether the essay is going to discuss reasons, causes, effects, or examples; whether the essay is going to classify, describe, narrate, or explain a process.
3. In short, an introductory paragraphs should contain the thesis statement .This is a general rule ,of course .In more advanced writing, the thesis statement sometimes seems later in the essay ,sometimes even at the end .In some cases ,too ,the thesis is just implied .for college essays, however ,it is good idea to put the thesis clearly in the introduction.
4. Perfectly, an introductory paragraph should be tempting; that is, it should be concerning enough to make the reader want to continue reading .In other word, mentioning it to attract

reader about your topic. Since the introductory paragraph roles to give the topic and since the introductory paragraph should be inviting, it makes good sense not to put the thesis statement right at the beginning of the introductory paragraph .(Smalle;.Ruetten Rishel Kozyrev 200,p108).The introduction has two parts:

- ❖ General statements
- ❖ A thesis statement

### **C. General statements**

- ❖ Introduces the topic of the essay
- ❖ Give background information on the topic. (Oshima, Hogue,1998.p103) General remark about the subject, Its goal is to attract the reader`s attention and to give background information on the topic. Each subsequent sentence should become more specific than the previous one and finally lead into the thesis statement

### **D. Thesis statement**

In the essay, the thesis statement is the sentence containing the main idea .it is similar to the topic sentence in that it consist of an expression of an attitude, opinion, or idea about a topic ;unlike the topic sentence ,however, the thesis statement is broader and expresses the controlling idea for the entire essay .it it should be expressed in complete sentence.

- Define and put the main topic
- Sometimes, making a list for the subdivisions of the topic or subtopics
- May show and reveal the method of organization of the entire paper.
- Is usually the list sentence in the introductory paragraph?

(Oshima, Hogue,1998.p103)

In more explanation, the thesis statement is essential sentence part in the introduction .It puts the specific topic and often under the major subtopics that will be

discussed in the body of the essay .Further; it may reveal the method of organizations such as chronological order of importance.

In fact, the introduction contains an important element that called thesis statement, is defined by Zemach & Ruimsk (2005) is, —The sentence that tells the main idea of the whole essay.¶ It can be compared to a topic sentence. This gives the main idea of paragraph. It usually comes at or near the end of the introductory paragraph (p. 58).

### **1.2.2 The importance of the thesis statement**

Thesis statement is the most effective part of essay, because it demonstrates the main idea, and it represents the core of the whole essay. Thesis statement plays an effective role and the writers cannot avoid it. Zemach & Ruimsk (2005) stated that thesis statement offers the author’s opinion or states the main idea about the subject (p.59). They added it should not be a sentence, which only gives a fact about the topic. Third, it should not state two sides of an argument equally (ibid).can say the thesis statement gives the readers directly the whole of the theme. Whereas, Galko (2001, p.35) point out a good thesis statement will:

- Tell something attract both you and the readers.
- Be precise and limit.
- focus and narrow your subject.
- Explain the general idea.
- Show your readers what is coming up.
- Guide you to examine your thoughts about your subject.
- Help you organize what you want to say in your draft.

- Give you and your readers the conclusion of the topic
- Give respondents to questions.

### **1.1.2 The body (Developmental paragraphs)**

It is the second paragraph. According to Zemach & Ruimsk (2005), the main body that explains and supports the thesis statement, it comes between the introduction and conclusion (p.56).

The body of your essay is where you develop your ideas on that topic. In the body of the essay, all the preparation up to this point comes to fruition and fulfilment. The topic you have picked must be explained, described, or argued each main idea that you wrote down in your diagram or outline will become one of the body paragraphs. If you had three or four main ideas, you will have three or four body paragraphs. Write a paragraph about each of these key points, using the information you've pulled from your notes.

In other In other definition , the body is the extended and longest part of the essay and can conclude as many paragraphs as sensible to support the controlling ideas of your thesis statement .it has one or more paragraphs, each paragraph develops a subdivision of your topic, so the number of paragraphs in the body will differ with the number of subdivisions or subtopics .The paragraphs of the body of the essay are then the main supporting points in a single paragraph .moreover , you are able to order the paragraphs in an essay just as you organize the ideas in paragraph ,by chronological order, logical division of ideas comparison and contrast ,etc.( Oshima, Hogue,1998.p108)

#### **1.2.2.1 Parts of the body paragraphs**

Since the body is the longest part of an essay, it contains various parts that compose two, three and more paragraphs. The different parts of the body paragraphs are similar, for they are repeated in each paragraph

#### **A .Topic sentence in academic essay**

If a thesis statement is a nucleus of an academic essay, the topic sentence is the guide of a paragraph. In an academic essay, topic sentence is a sub-thesis statement that organizes and requires development in each body paragraph. It pictures the organization and the content of the paragraph; it previews the main idea and its method of development. Accordingly, EFL students write their topic sentences using a certain specific language and avoid generalization that broadens the topic rather than narrows it. The topic sentence is a linking sentence that relates the paragraph to the thesis statement. “Each topic sentence connects the material in that paragraph to the essay thesis” (Hamilton, 2011: 101). It supports the essays thesis statement and guides the reader to a developed series of arguments that support the whole essay topic. It also unifies the content of the paragraph and demonstrates a sense of organization. It further presents the topic to be discussed to the reader. Moreover, it establishes the pattern of organization in a maximum of one and a half line sentence.

#### **B. Supporting details and developing sentences**

Supporting details and developing sentences are facts, examples and even statistics that lead to complete understanding the main idea that is expressed in the topic sentence. They are details that clarify, illustrate, explain, describe and expand the main idea. Moreover, they answer the indirect question raised in the topic sentence like who, what, when, why and how. The concise writing is measured by the relevance of its details; the concise paragraph does not contain irrelevant details that do not support the main

idea. Hence, EFL students must be aware of selecting the details that fit and support their ideas.

Pattern of organizing the supporting details differs from one paragraph to another according to the details themselves and the nature of the topic being discussed. Scarry and Scarry (2013) declare that

The quality and number of these details will largely determine the effectiveness of the writing. You can hold your readers' attention with your choice of details or you can lose your readers' interest because your details are not compelling. (p. 317)

### **C. Concluding sentence**

A concluding sentence is important in a paragraph especially in academic essay. It shows the end of the paragraph. Griswold (2002) claims that "a concluding sentence retells the content of the paragraphs and closes the paragraph... students should create a fresh, newly-worded sentence for their concluding sentence" (p. 34). It also leaves a final statement of the main idea of the whole paragraph. A concluding sentence summarizes the main idea in a single sentence. It also provides a definite ending point for paragraphs. Moreover, it can give an opinion, and it is usually noticed by its transition signals such as finally, in short and in conclusion.

#### **1.2.3 The conclusion (The concluding paragraph)**

This is the last paragraph of an essay; it summarizes or restates the thesis and the supporting ideas of the essay (Zemach & Ruimsk, 2005, p.56).

The conclusion summarizes the essay and gives the reader closure. A conclusion is looked as a review or the summary of the main points which were discussed in the body .The conclusion in an essay, like the concluding sentence in a paragraph

The final paragraph in an essay is the conclusion, which tells the reader that you have completed an essay. First, you write a summary of the main points discussed in the body of

the essay or rewrite the thesis statement in different words, Then you add your final comments on the subject-food for thought .Take this opportunity to make a strong, effective message that the reader will remember.

The conclusion brings closure to the reader, summing up your points or providing a final perspective on your topic. The entire conclusion requires is three or four keen sentences which do not require following any set formula. Simply review the main points (being careful not to restate them exactly) or briefly describe your feelings about the topic. Even a tale can determine your essay in beneficial way.

The concluding paragraph consists of

1. A summary of the main points, or a restatement of your thesis in different words.
2. Your final comment on the subject, based on the information you have provided.

Be sure to introduce the concluding paragraph with a conclusion transition signal.

**Table1: Reprinted from Essay Writing: Teaching The Basics From The Ground Up (13), by J. Mackenzie,2007, Ontario, Canada: Pembroke Publishers.**

### Essay Outline

#### TITLE

#### I. Introductory paragraph

- A. Gets the readers attention (capture his/her interest)
- B. Tells the reader what to expect in the essay
- C. Is usually shorter than the body paragraphs

#### II. Body Paragraph #1

- A. Often begins with a topic sentence
- B. Explains one of three major points about the topic
- C. Might contain reasons and examples
- D. Is linked to the following paragraph

#### III. Body Paragraph #2

- A. Might have the topic sentence as the second sentence
- B. Discusses a second major point about the topic
- C. Might contain quotations and statistics
- D. Is linked to the following paragraph

#### IV. Body Paragraph #3

- A. Might have the topic sentences as the last sentence
- B. Discusses the last major point about the topic
  - 1. The last point is often the most important point.
  - 2. The other paragraphs may have been building toward this one.
- C. Might contain opinions and personal stories
- D. Is linked to the following paragraph

#### V. Concluding paragraph

- A. Usually begins with a word or phrase that signals the ending
- B. Lets the reader know that the essay is over
  - 1. Like THE END in a children's book, it signals the end



## **1. Transition signals between paragraphs**

To present a clear, not only between paragraphs but also within paragraphs, a transition signal is important. If you write two or more paragraphs, you need to look for the relationship between your first and second paragraph ,between your second and third paragraph, and so on .unified train of thought to your readers, you must make sure each paragraph follows the one before it and guides to the one after it through clear, logical transitions. Keep in mind that adequate transitions cannot simply be added to the essay without planning. Without a good reason for the sequence of your paragraphs, no transition will help you. Transitions can be made with particular words and phrases created for that purpose--conjunctive adverbs and transitional phrases--or they can be implied through a conceptual link.

Thinking of transitions between paragraphs as the links of a chain .The links of a chain connect the chain; they link it together .Similarly, transition signal between two paragraphs links your ideas together. Two paragraphs are linked by adding a transition signal to the topic sentence of the second paragraph. This transition signal may be a signal word, a phrase, or a dependent clause that repeats or summarizes the main idea in the first paragraph. (Oshima, Hogue,1998.p109)

## **2. Coherence and cohesion in essay**

Coherence and cohesion are two terms used mutually to refer to semantic and linguistic flow of sentences and paragraphs in an essay. In the body of an essay, coherence exists on three levels: within a sentence, between sentence and between paragraph. Coherence refers to the proper order of ideas that is presented in space order, time order and logical order. On the other hand, cohesion refers to the use of transitional words and phrases like conjunctions, connectives and adverbial phrases. Cohesion serves to keep coherence in the

text, for the repetition of a key term can keep coherence, and so do the pronouns which can be means of transition between the sentences and the paragraphs. Gelbukh (2012) shows that

Coherence defines the overall structure and meaning of the text -the discourse. In other words, cohesion is the fabric while coherence is the outfit. Obviously, same fabric could lead to very different outfits, and some are more „coherent“ than others. (p. 450)

### **3. Unity in essay**

Paragraph unity refers to the harmony between the topic sentence and supporting details and developing sentences in a paragraph, and so does the essay as a whole. Lepionka (2008) states that

Unity is the quality of centrality and relevance, or the belongings. That is all the paragraphs in a section relate to the purpose of that section, and all the sentences in a paragraph relate to the point set out in the paragraph's topic sentence or thesis statement. (p. 118)

### **4. The Major Types of Essay**

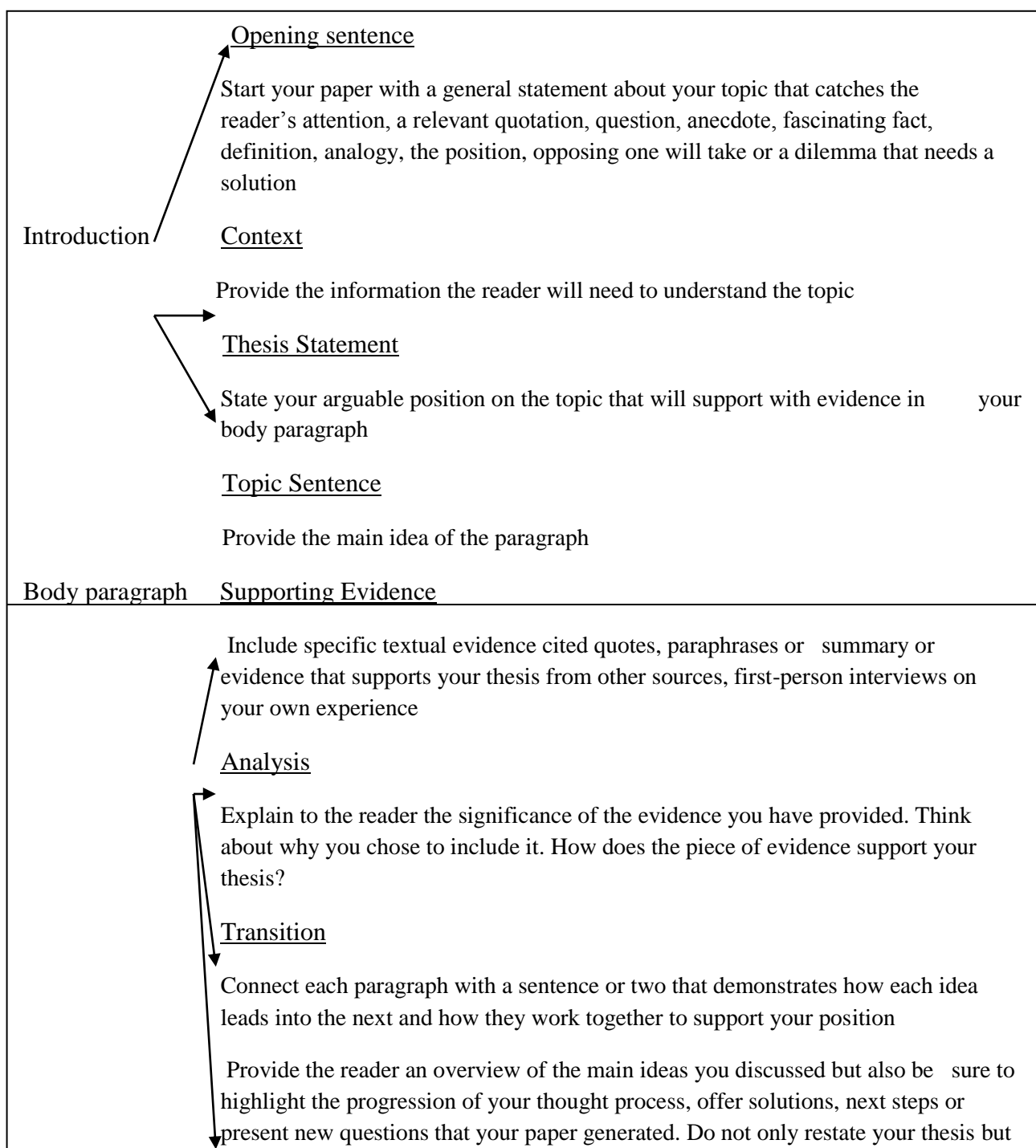
There are several different kinds of essays; the following are some of the most common ones: the descriptive essay, the argumentative essay, the narrative essay, the comparison and contrast essay and the process essay.

#### **5.1 The Argumentative Essay**

According to Evans (1998), an argumentative essay or as also known a persuasive essay is a formal piece of writing which deals with opposing points of view “for and against”. This type of essay tries to convince the reader to the writer's point of view. A good essay

of this type consists of: an introductory paragraph in which you clearly state the topic to be discussed without giving your opinion, and a main body in which the points for and against along with your reasons, justifications or examples are offered in separate paragraphs. A closing paragraph; in which you give a balanced consideration of the topic or illustrate your viewpoint.

**Table2: Structure of Argumentative Essay Reprinted from CLRC Writing Centre. Santa Barbara City College**



Exposition varies because it informs, clarifies, explains, defines and even instructs a

## **5.2 The expository essay**

It presents ideas clearly using examples and definitions, so the reader can understand the writer's message. It also aims at explaining and analyzing information using relevant evidence and suitable discussion. In his introduction, Summers (2000) states that "expository writing is writing for real purposes and real audiences. These compositions must be experienced and descriptive while they are also being informative and instructive" (p. 5). Its forms are reports, scientific papers, term papers and textbooks.

Roy and Laney (2012) state that it "it explains things, the word „expository“ comes from expose". When you expose something, you show what it really is... Different types of expository essays expose different things" (p. 14). Although it is distinctively different from other types of essays, it may use the methods of writing such as cause and effect, classification and division, comparison and contrast, definition and process analysis. The expository essay further follows the standard format of introduction, body and conclusion. Thus, it provides the readers with a full understanding of a complex process or situation

**Table3: Structure of expository essay Reprinted from *Writing Instruction for English Language Learners: A Focus on Genre (47)*, by E. Mora-Flores, 2008, Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.**

|  |  |                          |                                     |  |
|--|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Introduction                                     |  | Body                     |                                     | Conclusion                                 |
| Presentation of topic                            | Thesis                                     | Supporting paragraphs    | Transitions                         | Restatement                                |
| 1. Introduction of the topic                     | What will be the focus of your paper?      | 1. Maintain topic/thesis | To connect one paragraph to another | Restate the thesis or topic and main ideas |
| 2. define the topic in the context of your paper | What about the topic will you write about? | 2. Factual information   | Maintaining logical sequence        | Do not introduce new material              |
|  |  | 3. Examples              |                                     |  |
|  |  | 4. Quotes                |                                     |  |

**5.3 The Descriptive Essay**

The descriptive essay is one of the kinds of writing in which a writer uses details to tell how a subject looks, smells, tastes, sounds, or makes one feel. This kind of essay has to be written in a way that readers can create images in their minds about what the essay is talking about and getting a good description relies on the effective use of specific detail.

The more specific the writer can be, the more the readers can create images in their minds about what the essay is talking (Connelly, 2013). Evans (1998) suggests that a descriptive composition about an event consist of: an introduction in which the writer mentions the name/type, time/date, place and reason for celebrating the event. A main body in which the writer describes the preparation for the event and the event itself, for example the use of concrete and specific nouns, verbs, descriptive adjectives and adverbs make the description more vivid. A conclusion in which the writer gives final opinion about the description

**Table4: Structure of descriptive essay. Reprinted from CLRC Writing Center. Santa Barbara City College**

### **Introduction**

(Should start with a strong opening which may be a quote that catches the Reader's attention. At the end of the introduction the writer provides a thesis statement related to the depicted object, person, situation, experience, etc. In the thesis statement the writer reveals the reason he describes a certain object, person or situation).

### **Body**

- Paragraph 1- The object itself (here the author reveals everything that he perceived referred to the object, person or situation he is describing. The author lists all the details which are important for making a vivid portrait. Uses metaphors and comparison).
  
- Paragraph 2- The surroundings (The author has basically to show the reader all the surrounding of the described object, person or situation. The reader should feel like he is involved in the experience. Uses metaphors and comparison).
  
- Paragraph 3- Sensual and emotional description (The writer uses his sense of taste, touch smell, sound and sight to make the experience "alive". In other words here the author needs to "replay" the object, person or situation to the reader. Uses metaphors and comparison).

### **Conclusion**

(The conclusion summarizes the physical and emotional attitude

#### **5.4 The Comparison and Contrast Essay**

As asserted by Hamilton (2011), a comparison-contrast essay “so named to suggest that it covers both similarities-comparison-and differences-contrasts”, that is, in this kind of essay the writer examines similarities and differences. Comparison and contrast essay can be used independently, just focus on similarities or differences, or in combination both similarities and differences. In other words, there are three correct ways to write a comparison and contrast essay: focusing only on similarities, focusing only on differences, or writing about both. For example, in a comparison essay the writer discusses the similarities between two things, while in a contrast essay, the writer deals with the differences. In addition, the use of appropriate phrases such as on the other hand, likewise, similarly and but...etc. are indicators for similarities or differences.

#### **5.5 The Cause and Effect Essay**

The interest of the cause and effect type of essay is different from the previous ones, a cause and effect essay focuses on two important purposes. On the one hand, it examines the effects of a thing or an event; on the other hand, it shows the causes of a thing or an event. This type of essay, explains why or how things happen and what their results or consequences are, it deals with an action/result relationship. In other words, it focuses on why things happen, the cause, and what happens as a result, the effects. Like the comparison and contrast essay, the cause and effect essay could also study both causes and effects, or it could simply discuss one or the other. A cause essay suggests the reasons why something happen, and an affect essay addresses what happens after a specific event or thing (Robitaille and Connelly, 2007)

#### **5.6. The Narrative Essay**

Generally, the narrative essay is a conversational style, tells a story and presents a connected series of events, either imaginary or based on the writer's own experience in a vivid description style. It may be written in the first person point of view or third person (he/she...etc.) point of view. In its widest sense, narration involves history, biography, personal experience and any writing that lays out the events of a story in a dramatic and climactic order. The narrative essay entails also an introduction that engages the reader's interest, a body that develops details about the main event or action in the story, and a conclusion that completes the story and describes the outcome. (Davis and Liss, 2006).



**Table5: Structure of Narrative Essay Reprinted from CLRC Writing**

**Centre. Santa Barbara City College**

| <b>Part of the essay</b>   | <b>Purpose</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hook</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting the scene</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Thesis statement</li> </ul> | Catches the reader attention<br>states time and setting of onsets<br>states the significance of the story  |
| <b>Body paragraphs</b><br><br>Para 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Beginning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Action</li> </ul>   | <b>Topic sentence</b><br><br>Detail1 }<br>Detail 2 } First major event<br><br>Detail 3   |
| Para 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Middle</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Action</li> </ul>  | <b>Topic sentence</b><br><br>Detail1 }<br>Detail 2 } Second major event<br><br>Detail 3  |
| Para 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> End</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Action</li> </ul>   | <b>Topic sentence</b><br><br>Detail1 }<br>Detail 2 } Climax<br><br>Detail 3  |
| <b>Conclusion</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Analyses and reflects on the event.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restate the significance of the story</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Use flashback |
|--|--|

**Note. Reprinted from CLRC Writing Center. Santa Barbara City College**

### **5.7 The Process Essay**

The last type of essays is the process essay; in this type of essay the writer shows the necessary steps to complete an event, an operation or a procedure. It describes any writing that proposes systematic instructions on how something happened or how something is done. According to Anker (2010), there are four basic steps of good process analysis:

1. It tells readers what process you want them to know about and makes a point about it
2. It presents the essential steps in the process.
3. It explains the steps in detail.
4. It presents the steps in a logical order (usually time order).

There are many kinds of essays, and each type of them has different objectives.

Blanchard and Root (2004, p.79) classified essay into five main types:

- 1. Process:** the objective of this essay is to inform the readers and to describe the order of steps in a procedure.
- 2. Classification and Division:** its aim is to organize a topic for an essay; by divided a topic into groups of things that share similar characteristics (ibid).
- 3. Cause and Effect:** the aim here is to analyze the reasons (causes /factors) or the result (effect, disadvantages, benefits) of something (ibid).

**4. Comparison/contrast:** its aim is to show how ideas, people, or things are similar or different (ibid).

**5. Problem/Solution:** this type is to describe a problem and evaluate possible solutions and it is very useful in academic writing (ibid).

On the other hand, Starkey (2004, p.87) presents two types of essay:

**1. Expository:** this type gives directions, instructions, or explanations. It informs by showing the writer's knowledge about the topic to the reader. You might be asked to define, compare and or contrast, or explain cause and effect.

**2. Persuasive:** it also called argument essay, where you select one idea and present why it is more legitimate or worthy than another.

The different types of essay writing are classified according to the different subjects; it means when we need to discuss a scientific topics or literature topics, we need to choose the appropriate type of essay.

### **III. Pre writing techniques**

#### **Introduction**

Starting writing is a problem for many, especially young writers. Tompkins (2001) noted that the most neglected stage is the prewriting stage. Blackburn-Brockman (2001) adds that many pre-service teacher education students in a composition methods course confess they did not pre write seriously in middle and high school, and that many did not pre-write at all. However, it is an important stage in the writing process frequently overlooked by beginning writers. Thorne (1993) argues that prewriting is the most important skill to emphasize and practice extensively in basic writing classes. She describes basic writers as

universally neglecting prewriting activities. She suggests some guidelines for teaching prewriting effectively.

## **1. Definition of pre writing**

The term "pre-writing" has two different meanings. It can mean the stage before children learn writing, which referred to as hand skills. The other meaning; which is the concern of this research Points to the first stage of the writing process followed by drafting, revision, editing and publishing.

Prewriting is the crucial stage in the composing process, where the writer generates and explores ideas and information about the topic he decided on. It is the first stage; which includes all the things the writer does before he gets ready to write out the first version of his text. Richards and Renandya constructed the prewriting stage as:

Pre-writing is in activity in the classroom that encourages students to write It stimulates thoughts for getting started. In fact, it moves students away from having to face a blank page towards generating tentative ideas and gathering information for writing.

(Richards and Renandya 2002: 316)

Prewriting is the stage in which writers spend a good amount of time generating ideas and organizing them into a particular plan before they write. Students need to be clear about the message they want to convey, they should be aware of their purpose (what they want to achieve through their writing ), and they should consider their audience/reader (their knowledge, background, expectations... ), since the choice of ideas, organization and language depends on these factors. According to D'Aoust (1986:94 ) ,prewriting activities are the key to generating ideas and planning what to say :“Prewriting activities generate ideas; they encourage a free flow of thoughts and help students to say it on paper. In other

words, prewriting activities facilitate the planning for both the product and the process” (qtd in Oskourt 2008:94).

Pre-writing is an oral or written activity used to help the writer come up with ideas for longer written assignments. Although we may think of pre writing as a step to be taken only before a longer composition is started, it actually can be used at any time during the process of writing if the writer needs help in generating new ideas, more details or connecting between ideas. It is the phase which prepares the student to approach the writing task with confidence. It is also the phase where the topic is generated and the purpose and form are clarified. Here, teachers are advised to encourage students spend much more time on the pre-writing stage because, we believe, it is the activity that reinforces the different steps of the process and ensures a more acceptable final product.

The writer gathers, generates information and plays with ideas during the prewriting stage. Prewriting techniques may include brainstorming, free writing, clustering, mapping or listing. The writer can also use graphic organizers like charts, story maps, diagrams or clusters. Prewriting is an important phase in the writing process because as stated by Parson have a greater chance for writing achievement than those enjoined to ‘get to work’ on their writing without this kind of preparation.”

According to Murray (1988: 16), prewriting exercises do not only help students to find something to say about a specific topic, they also help them improve their writing skills in that they provide them with opportunities to generate ideas and write with confidence. He states: “practice in writing, no matter how short the exercise is to make yourself confident about your writing and to improve your skills” (ibid).

Usually, the activity of generating ideas ends up by making a plan or an outline. Planning a piece of writing is generally made by reading, organizing and classifying the prewriting notes. An effective plan could guarantee organization, clarity and coherence for the written form since it gives direction to the work by following a logical order in dealing with ideas and information. In emphasizing the importance of planning, Zemach and Rumisek (2003) match the importance of an outline in writing to the importance of skeleton in body. They say that just as the skeleton supports your body without being able to see it, the outline will support your writing by providing its structure.

In the writing class, it is crucial to make students aware of the importance of the prewriting stage. Before getting started to write, it is always helpful that the learner takes a moment and thinks about what he knows about a given topic. The prewriting activity could be practiced in groups or with the whole class participation when it is a group work or individually when the writing assignment is individual. Here, teachers are advised to encourage students spend much more time in the prewriting stage because, we believe, it is the activity that reinforces the different steps of the process and ensures a more acceptable product.

The possible ways of approaching the generation of ideas include: brainstorming, free writing, asking questions, listing, visualizing, etc. After writers have generated ideas about their topic, they focus their ideas on a main point and develop a plan, a framework, for the paragraph or the essay they are going to write.

The pre-writing activity could be done individually or in groups according to the given task. It is worth noting that students should be aware of the importance of this stage in a writing class. Thus, they are advised to spend more time thinking about the given topic, the more they take their time the more they facilitate working on the following stages and at the

end, they will come up with good products. The pre-writing stage usually end with a plan .This outline which is the result of thinking about and organizing ideas might ensure a good.

## **2. The pre writing techniques**

Before you start writing, you should decide what you are going to write about. The pre-writing phase is the planning stage for writing. It is any writing you do before you start writing, Peha states that in pre-writing you can draw, read, scribble random thoughts, and make a web or a story map (2003, p. 5). This stage may include different techniques that help the learner discover ideas: listing, clustering free writing and mind mapping

Pre-writing is “any structural activities- oral, written or experimental- that influence active student participation in thinking, talking, writing and working on the topic under focus is a written lesson, stimulating higher level thinking as well as writing skills” (Oluwadiya, 1992). Pre-writing activities help the students to generate their ideas on paper. Generally, EFL students begin with vague and superficial idea of what they want to write about. Pre-writing exercises help students to remind what they know. Tyner (2007) clearly explains

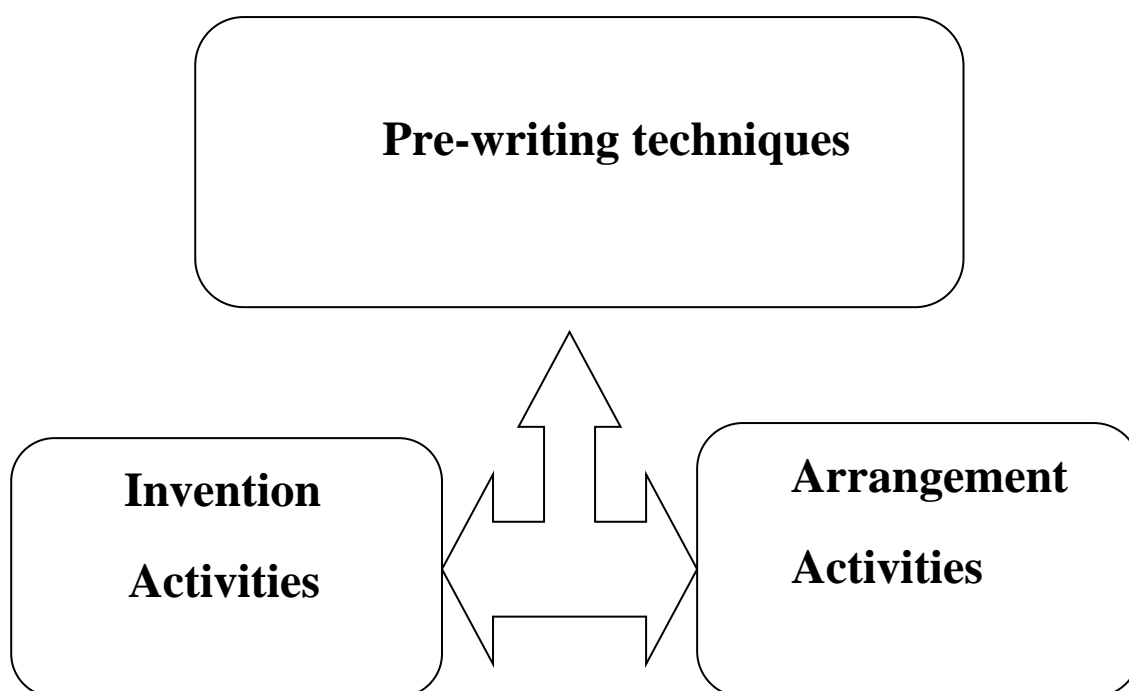
Pre-writing activities differ from writer to writer, and there are a number of different activities presented in the text. You may have also discovered effective prewriting activities in other classes or through your personal writing experience. The more pre-writing options you are familiar with, the better you can tailor your prewriting to the writing task at hand. (p. 36)

Prewriting could be divided into two steps: invention and arrangement. The former is concerned with activities that can be employed in order to come up with good ideas and gain inspiration. The learner should try different invention activities until he finds those that work best for him. He should be open to other options. Sometimes the learner may find the usual activities do not work for a particular piece of writing. Therefore, he should be ready to be

flexible. The latter has to do with arranging those ideas that the learners came up with in the invention stage.

Still, a framework encompassing the pre.-writing stage comprehensively is much needed. This framework divides this stage into two sections and each section has various activities for the writers to choose based on their learning styles and the nature of the topic of writing. Writers should have the freedom to choose among the different pre-writing activities. Based on the previous theoretical background and previous studies, the following framework of pre-writing is suggested.

**Figure1: The suggested framework of the pre-writing stage (academic journal; 2013)**



### **1.1 Invention activities**

There are several invention activities available to the beginning writers to choose what is suitable for them. Out of nonsense and ramblings, something good will come, some idea will



catch fire right there on the page, there will be sparks, and patterns will emerge. The following are some invention activities

## **1. Brainstorming**

Most problems, are not solved automatically by the first idea that comes to mind. To get to the best solution it is important to consider many possible solutions. One of the best ways is brainstorming. Brainstorming is a useful way of getting started or generating new ideas. Once learners are familiar with the process, they can use this activity on their own when they are stuck, revising their work, or moving on to a new phase. Bobb-Wolff (1996) argues that brainstorming can be a useful and enriching tool in the EFL classroom and a means of showing learners that they are collectively capable of generating more ideas to improve their learning process than they believed possible. This, in turn, leads to an increase in their autonomy of learning and self-responsibility. But most importantly, it improves the quality of learner participation and learner production in class.

### **a) Importance of brainstorming**

- It is easier to see the main ideas when “boiled down” in a brainstorm
- It helps you summarize the main concepts in the reading
- It helps you see the main ideas that captured your interest in the reading
- It can make complex reading more accessible
- You can see many choices of paper topics emerging
- It is fast and easy

## **2. Free writing**

Free writing is a technique that helps you generate content for an essay. Free writing is writing continuously letting thoughts unselfconsciously flow (often for about 5 to 10 minutes)

without regard to spelling, grammar, style etc., and no corrections are made. Because there are no restrictions on structure/format or length, free writing allows you the freedom to discover what you want to write about without worrying about rules or expectations.

Obviously, free writing helps the writer gets in touch with the big picture without getting sidetracked with details. It is a non-linear activity, using the right side of the brain, which deals with concepts and abstractions. As soon as you begin to organize, edit and censor your ideas, you have moved over to the left side of the brain, where the linear thinking happens. That is where thoughts get blocked (Mouser, 2000). Additionally, Darling (2004) notes that many writing instructors use a free writing exercise at the beginning of each class as a way of getting the brain in gear. Free writing helps learners to understand that not all writing they do is equally good and not all writing must be kept. Writers must learn to discard. By the end of writing, they may have a different focus on the topic or even a completely new topic and keeping earlier words and phrases might ruin the final product. On the other hand, during free writing learners will often come up with ideas and phrases that lead them to an imaginative new direction. Because learners are not focusing on a product, they take risks in free writing without realizing it. This can result in the discovery of something new, perhaps a new idea, skill, or insight (Saskatchewan Education, 1997).

Williams (2003: 109) defines free writing as:

This technique involves writing nonstop for 5, 10, or 15 Minutes. During this period, students keep generating words, even if they cannot think of anything meaningful to say. The rationale is that, eventually, they will be producing ideas that they can develop later into an effective paper.

### **a) Importance of free writing**

- It provides you with the raw material to help you start writing an essay.

- It helps you to bypass your “internal critic” who can make it difficult for you to explore your thoughts and ideas.
- It gives you confidence in your ability to explore a topic.
- It helps you develop your own unique writing voice and promote a solid flow, or Rhythm to sentences.
- It gives you an easy way to begin any piece of writing and helps you surpass writer’s block.

### **3. Listing**

Listing is prewriting activity writers find useful. It means doing just what its name suggests: listing possible topics and then sub-lists of things the writer could say about each topic. To illustrate, Sloane (2004) points out that a list could consist of the main topic of regional dialects and then sub-lists would be regional dialects you know or have experienced. Additional sub-lists might be particular words of each of those dialects, things you have noticed about those dialects (that is New Yorkers speak fast), what you think those dialects sound like. Scholes (1989) adds that writers may use listing to jot down quickly all ideas they can think of on a particular topic. Later, the writer may group related ideas and write summary statements. The writer may also use items from lists and summary statements as prompts to explore new ideas

Generating ideas on a topic through free writing, brainstorming, and creating questions has a purposeful messiness to it. It is the time to let your creativity run riot and to push your thinking in new and sometimes unexpected directions. Once you have generated a lot of material on your topic, however, it is time to take stock and begin to narrow down and organize your ideas as you move towards writing a focused essay. Listing helps you to select certain ideas and organize them by grouping related concepts together. This is the most informal kind of outline in which you jot down your main supporting points and possible

evidence and analysis. This kind of outline is for you only, and you don't need to worry about making it more comprehensive if it does the job for you. Many students find this kind of outline helpful in taking timed essay exams because it is brief, and it doesn't take much time to produce.

### **a) Importance of listing**

When you are just beginning to write an essay, rather than making a formal outline, you can make a list. A list is a very user-friendly technique because you do not yet need to craft full sentences but instead select your most promising ideas and start to look for connections between them. Listing is important because it takes all the free-form ideas you generated and helps you to see how you could narrow and focus the material to present a convincing, logical argument.

## **4. Questioning / Journalist questions**

The most familiar way of coming up with a topic is to ask questions. Journalism refers to very simple questions: Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why?, How?, Answering these questions initially does not seem very hard. However, it is precisely when the writer has difficulty answering a "why" that a real paper is beginning. Learners focus upon audience as they consider what the reader needs to know. The answers to these questions will form the basis of the composition. Thus, the journalists' questions are a powerful way to develop a great deal of information about a topic very quickly. Learning to ask the appropriate questions about a topic takes practice, however. In addition, Gorrell (1996) makes a case for students' using a focused, carefully phrased question as the basis for prewriting and writing as opposed to a thesis sentence which can more easily lead them astray

“Journalist questions” are the “5Ws and the 1H”—who, what, when, where, and especially why and how. The who, what, when, and where are relevant to summaries while the how and why prompt you to examine the “so what?!” Use ideas from the text, your free write and your

brainstorm and form them into questions. Through answering these questions, you can discover interesting information that you can use for writing

**a) Importance of questioning/ journalist questions**

You may be asked to write about a topic or book, in which case you will need a means to generate the questions that most intrigue you. While who, what, when, and where questions are an effective means of gauging your comprehension, the why and how questions lend themselves to analysis, which is integral to any essay. After generating a list of questions, answer them. You may discover that a question generates multiple answers, some of them contradictory. Such controversy is often ripe for exploration and can lead to thought-provoking interpretations of texts. Answering complex questions is a way to form thesis statements.

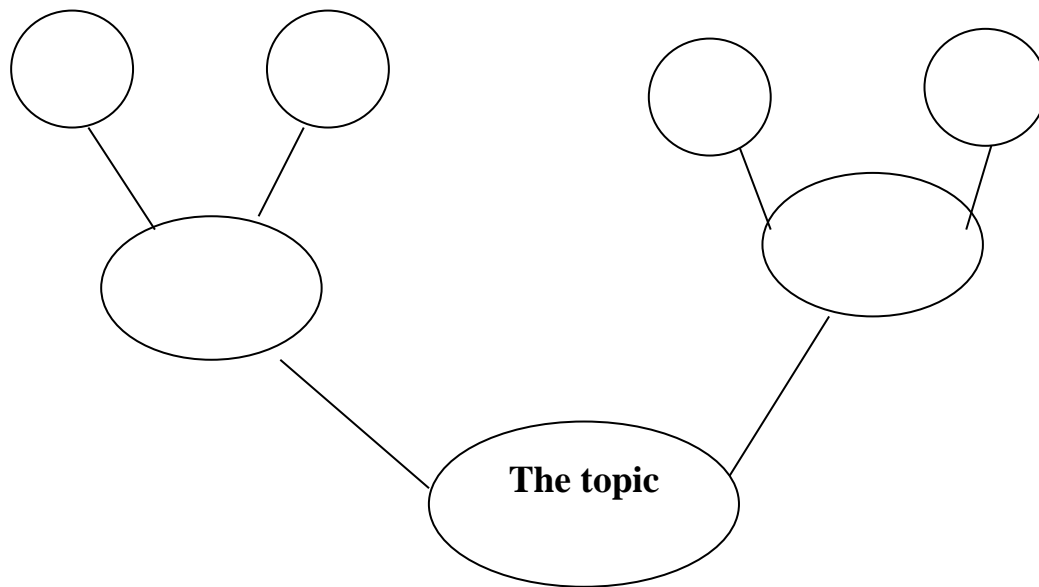
**5. Clustering/mapping**

Clustering is an activity developed and named by Rico (1983) for accessing that state of consciousness often called the right side of the brain in which we pattern, design, connect and deal in complex images. Rico defines clustering as "a generative, open-ended, nonlinear, visual structuring of ideas, events, and feelings. It is a way of mapping an interior landscape as it begins to emerge". Further, according to Tomlinson (1998) clustering is a pre-writing activity in which the writer free associates strings of ideas around a central word or idea. It is a way of tricking the left brain into silence and using the right brain to come up with unique overview of a subject. Scholes (1989) adds that clustering, or grouping ideas is a good way for writers who think spatially. In addition to illustration using circles and lines, writers can also construct clusters with either tree diagrams or balloons and strings.

Clustering, also known as mapping, is like listing in that you narrow down and begin to organize your ideas. Cluster/mapping provides a mental picture of the ideas you generate and how they connect to each other. Where you place ideas on the page shows their relationship to

each other. Ideas placed closer to the middle are the overarching key concepts that unify seemingly disparate ideas and details.

**Figure2: the cluster sample (Retrieved from Skylinecollage.edu)**



#### **a) Importance of clustering/ mapping**

- › It works particularly well for visual learners.
- › It helps you to see the most important ideas.
- › It helps you to see how ideas are related.
- › It helps you organize your ideas.
- › It helps you start to see potential paragraphs forming.

### **6. Interviewing**

Interviewing means talking with people who know something about a certain topic . Learners take on the role of an interviewer as they interview. This experience helps them learn to analyze people and events accurately. The teacher may choose to model and demonstrate the

interview process by "talking aloud" a simulated interview. Consequently, learners as interviewers need to begin thinking of questions to ask (Wood and Fisher, (2001).

## **7. Looping**

Looping is a free writing activity that allows the writer to focus his ideas in trying to discover a writing topic. The writer loops one 5-10 min free writing after another, so he/she has a sequence of free writings, each more specific than the other. The same rules that apply to free writing apply to looping: write quickly, do not edit and do not stop. Looping goes like this: free write on an assignment for 5-10 min. Then, read through your free writing, looking for interesting topics, ideas, phrases, or sentences. Circle those you find interesting. A variation on looping is to have a classmate circle ideas in your free writing that interests him or her. Then free write again for 5-10 min on one of the circled topics. You should end up with a more specific free writing about a particular topic. Loop your free writing again, circling another interesting topic, idea, phrase, or sentence. When you have finished four or five rounds of looping, you will begin to have specific information that indicates what you are thinking about a particular topic (UKWC, 2004)

## **2.2 Arrangement activities**

At this point, the writer needs to consider the organization of content. Arrangements activities build on invention activities developed earlier. Once the writer put forward some ideas during an invention activity, he/she moves to arranging them in certain manner according to the nature of the topic. One of the most widely used ways of arranging ideas is graphic organizers

### **1. Graphic organizers**

Visual thinking can be expressed in many ways. Graphic organizers are many ways for visual thinkers to arrange ideas. There are unlimited ways to express these visual ideas. Actually, graphic organizers have many names including visual maps, mind mapping, and visual

organizers. Graphic organizers can be used in all phases of learning from brainstorming ideas to presenting findings. They can be used individually or in large groups. A study by Robinson and Kiewra (1995) shows that two experiments involving 153 college learners indicated that, given enough time, learners studying graphic organizers learned more hierarchical and coordinate relations. As a result, they were more successful in applying the knowledge and in writing integrated essays than were learners studying outlines or text alone. Graphic organizers can be used in various forms at the teacher's or learner's disposition including charts, tables, webs, venn diagrams and flow charts. Hence, the form of the graphic organizer is chosen according to the nature of the topic the learner is going to write on. Here are the most common examples

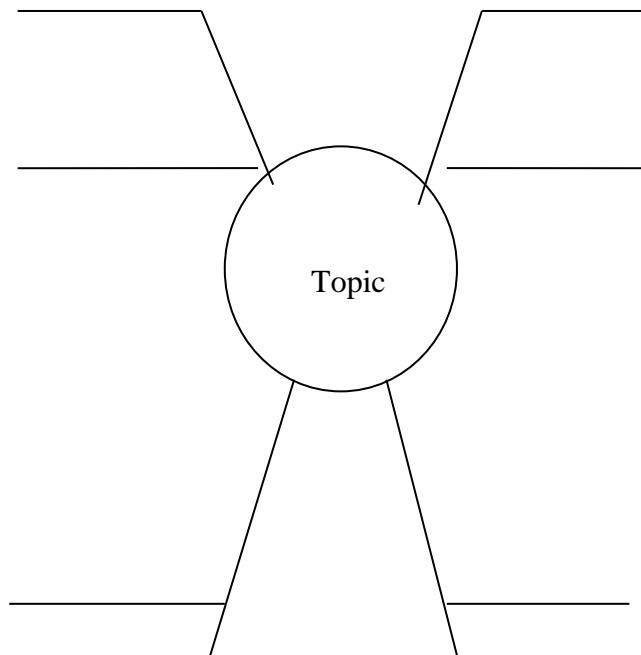
## **2. Spider map:**

Is used to describe a central idea: a thing (a geographic region), a process (meiosis) or a concept (altruism). This activity uses such key questions: What is the central idea? What are its attributes? What are its functions? (NCREL, 2000).

If the topic involves investigating attributes associated with a single topic, and then obtaining more details on each of these ideas, use a spider diagram as your graphic organizer. This is like the star graphic organizer with one more level of detail. Example: Finding methods that help your study skills (like taking notes, reading, memorizing, etc.), and investigating the factors involved in performing each of the methods.



**Figure3: spider map sample ( Retrieved from Enchantedlearning.com)**



### **3. Series of events chain:**

Is used to describe the stages of something (the life cycle of an animal); the steps in a linear procedure (how to neutralize an acid); or a sequence of events (how feudalism led to the formation of nation states). Key questions include: What is the object, procedure, or initiating event? What are the stages or steps? How do they lead to one another? What is the final outcome? (NCREL, 2000). If the topic involves a linear chain of events, with a definite beginning, middle, and end, use a chain of events graphic organizer. Example: Analyzing the plot of a story.

### **4. Fishbone map**

Is used to show the causal interaction of a complex event (an election, a nuclear explosion) or complex phenomenon (juvenile delinquency, learning disabilities). Key questions consist of:

What are the factors that cause X? How do they interrelate? Are the factors that cause X the same as those that cause X to persist? (NCREL, 2000). Sometimes called a herringbone map) is a type of [graphic organizer](#) that is used to explore the many aspects or effects of a complex topic, helping the student to organize their thoughts in a simple, visual way. The use of color helps make a fishbone map clearer and easier to interpret. If the topic at hand involves investigating attributes associated with a single, complex topic, and then obtaining more details on each of these ideas, use a fishbone diagram as your graphic organizer. The fishbone diagram is like a spider map, but it works for more complex topics - topics that require more details to be enumerated.

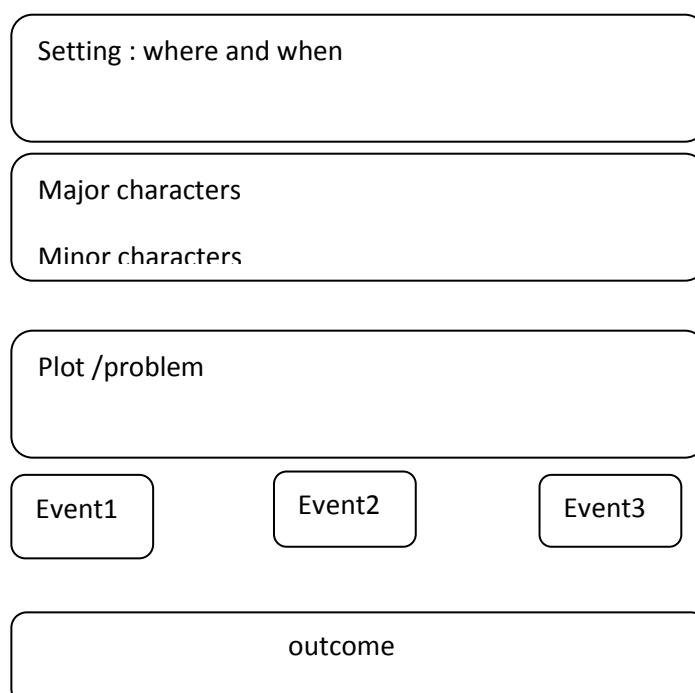
#### 5. **Charts:**

Good for writing directions of how to do something, or for keeping a lot of different ideas categories (The Oracle Education Foundation, 2003).

#### 6. **Story maps:**

Good for retelling books, plays or stories (The Oracle Education Foundation, 2003). Story maps can help a student summarize, analyze and understand a story or event.

**Figure4: sample of story map (Retrived from [www.eduplace.com](http://www.eduplace.com))**



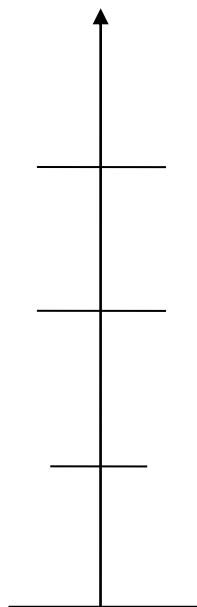
### **7. Cause and effect diagrams:**

Good for explaining how Cause and effect diagrams: Good for explaining how something happened (The Oracle Education Foundation, 2003). If the task is examining possible causes and effects in a process, use a cause and effect graphic organizer. Example: Fill out a cause-and-effect diagram to trace the steps in a feedback loop.

### **8. Timelines:**

Good for telling the order of how things happen in time (The Oracle Education Foundation, 2003).

**Figure5: sample of timelines (Retrived from Educateplace.com)**



### **9. Webbing:**

This activity provides learners with a visual picture of how words or phrases connect to a concept or a topic. The teacher lists the target topic and builds a web-like structure of words,

phrases and verbs that learners offer as being connected with the central topic. Class discussion may follow to argue against or to defend the perceived relationships of the called out words to the topic and eventually a consensus is reached as to what the class believes constitutes a "web" for that concept. Web-centered activities encourage learners to make the bridge from the abstract to the concrete. The use of webbing also provides opportunities for the visual learner to recall the connections for later use (Bada, 1996).

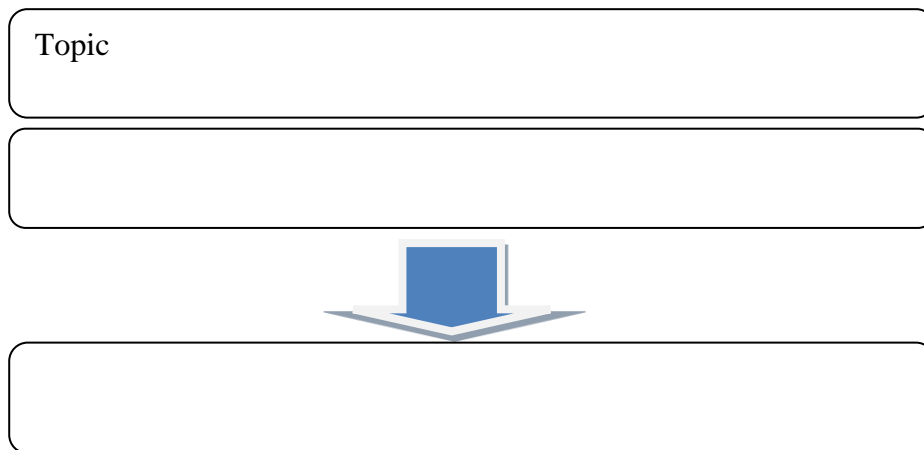
### **10. Concept mapping**

It is a graphic organizer activity that shows the relationships among concepts. Usually the concepts are circled and the relationships are shown by lines with short explanations. To use this activity, the teacher selects a main idea to be focused on during the discussion. The teacher assists the learners in identifying a set of concepts that are associated with the main idea. Related concepts are then connected and the links labelled with verbs or short phrases. The main difference between the concept mapping activity and webbing is that in this activity concepts are ranked in related groups from most general to most specific, whereas in webbing the concepts are not ranked, but only linked. As in webbing, this activity assists learners in visualizing how ideas are connected and how knowledge can be organized (Bada, 1996)

### **11. Flowcharts:**

This activity assists learners in representing position, role and order relationships among group elements. Learners draw a representation of a sequential flow of events, actions, character roles or decisions. Flowcharts foster logical and sequential cognitive development and help the learner to focus on connections, relationships and interdependence of things and events. It can also direct the learner to flesh out details and specific points of reference; it hones learner organizational skills, aids in planning and can be used for writing outlines (Bada, 1996).

**Figure6: flowchart sample (Retrived from [www.educateplace.com](http://www.educateplace.com))**

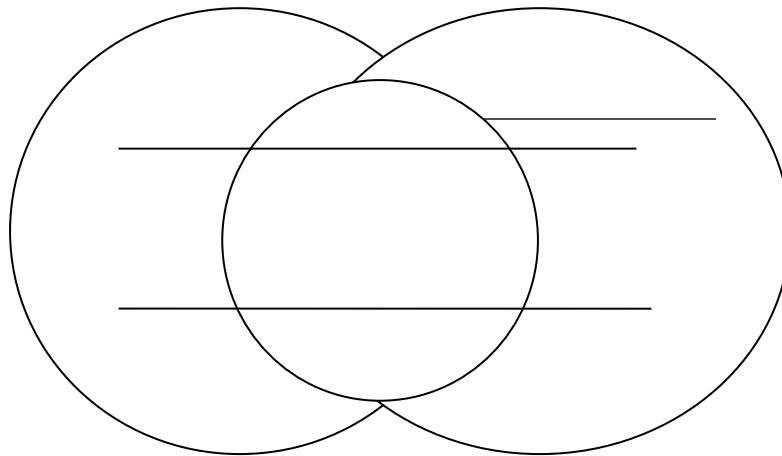


## **12. Venn diagrams:**

They can be used to create a visual analysis of information that represents similarities and differences among concepts, peoples and things. This organizer is constructed by using two or more overlapping geometrical figures (i.e. circles, squares, rectangles) that share an area in common. This style of visual organizer helps learners manage their ideas and plan out a writing assignment. The use of Venn diagrams with learners is specially beneficial, since it offers an alternative non-verbal form to process complex information and at the same time moves the learners' minds to higher cognitive levels (Bada, 1996). If the task involves examining the similarities and differences between two or three items, use a Venn diagram.

Example: Examining the similarities and differences between fish and whales,

**Figure7: Venn diagram sample ( Retrived from [www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com))**



## **2. The role of pre-writing techniques**

Pre-writing exercises not only help students to find something to say but also improve their writing skills in that they provide them with opportunities to generate ideas and write with confidence, "practice in writing, no matter how short the exercise is to make yourself confident about your writing and to improve your skills". (Murray 1988 : 16). According to D'Aoust (1986) pre-writing activities provide students with something to say. He sees that:

Pre-writing activities generate ideas, they encourage a free flow of thoughts and help students to discover both what they want to say and how to say it on paper. In other words, prewriting activities facilitate the planning for both the product and the process. ( p 7).

Here, we advocate that the pre-writing stage is very crucial for our

students to be successful writers in that it is during this stage that they are stimulated and motivated to generate materials to write on by gaining the necessary vocabulary and language structures with which to express their ideas.

The pre-writing stage should be very active, with discussion of the topic area to make sure everyone has something to write about. Students can be encouraged to bring additional reading material (not necessarily in English) to increase their familiarity with a topic area, and to work together exchanging factual information and opinions. (Hamp Lyons.1978:135.)

According to Oshima and Hogue (1999: 04) “Brainstorming for ideas can get you started writing more quickly and save you time in the later stages of the writing process.” So, brainstorming and the other techniques used in the prewriting stages are the key for the biggest hurdle of writing which is to start.

According to Murray (1988: 16), prewriting exercises do not only help students to find something to say about a specific topic, they also help them improve their writing skills in that they provide them with opportunities to generate ideas and write with confidence. He states: “practice in writing, no matter how short the exercise is to make yourself confident about your writing and to improve your skills” (ibid).

Usually, the activity of generating ideas ends up by making a plan or an outline. Planning a piece of writing is generally made by reading, organizing and classifying the prewriting notes. An effective plan could guarantee organization, clarity and coherence for the written form since it gives direction to the work by following a logical order

in dealing with ideas and information .In emphasizing the importance of planning, Zemach and Rumisek (2003) match the importance of an outline in writing to the importance of skeleton in body. They say that just as the skeleton supports your body without being able to see it, the outline will support your writing by providing its structure.

In the writing class, it is crucial to make students aware of the importance of the prewriting stage. Before getting started to write, it is always helpful that the learner takes a moment and thinks about what he knows about a given topic. The prewriting activity could be practiced in groups or with the whole class participation when it is a group work or individually when the writing assignment is individual. Here, teachers are advised to encourage students spend much more time in the prewriting stage because, we believe, it is the activity that reinforces the different steps of the process and ensures a more acceptable product.

So, we insist on the fact that our teachers need not be afraid to help students spend much time on prewriting because it is the activity that strengthens the rest of the writing process stages, i. e, drafting, revising and editing during the prewriting stage. Research shows that learners who are encouraged to engage in an array of prewriting experiences prove greater writing achievement than those enjoined to get to work on their writing without this kind of preparation (Cotton, 1997). Therefore, pre-writing centers on engaging learners in the writing process and helps them discover what is important or true for them about any subject at any time. What is certain is that if learners are to become proficient writers they must develop pre- drafting activities.

For many writers, the difficult part of the writing experience is the very beginning. Prewriting deserves much time and attention as it helps solve a problem called "writer's block". Kozma (1991) found that expert writers spend more time during prewriting than in writers spend more time during prewriting than in experienced writers. Learners



might think that they cannot come up with an idea. They literally have a blank page and keep writing and erasing. They cannot even get started because they have no clue how to start.

It might be some comfort, that even professional writers suffer from writer's block from time to time. Some of the greatest writers in literature — Leo Tolstoy, Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, Joseph Conrad and Ernest Hemingway — were tormented by momentary lapses in their ability to produce text (Capital Community College Foundation, 2006). Therefore, pre-writing activities, especially invention activities, helps writers deal with and overcome writer's block.

It should be noted that the pre-writing stage is rarely discussed in textbooks. Most writing textbooks tackle the writing process beginning with the drafting stage as the first stage of writing. On the other hand, the pre-writing stage is much discussed on various websites, such as ([Retrieved from Owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/673/1/](http://Retrieved%20from%20Owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/673/1/)).

Go (1994) argues that teachers of English as a Second Language can use prewriting activities at the earliest stages of instruction to help their students acquire good language skills. Prewriting involves energizing student participation in thinking, talking, group interaction, and skeletal writing activities that become components of a writing task. Prewriting activities not only help students acquire the target language more effectively, but they build interpersonal, thinking, and planning skills that can be utilized in other fields.

Prewriting is a successful technique to explore and develop the learner's ideas. According to Gallo (2001) who notices that there are many useful strategies included in prewriting that make the learner approach his writing and develop his ideas such as; brainstorming, free writing, asking questions, mapping, journaling and listing. Similarly, Zamel (1982 cited in Nunan, 1995) argues that skilled writers spend much time in planning but unskilled writers do not follow this stage.

Prewriting is an important stage as (Parson ,1985: 115)says” Students who are encouraged to engage in an array of prewriting experiences have a greater chance for writing achievement than those enjoined to ‘get to work’ on their writing without this kind of preparation.” In writing classrooms, it is important to make students aware of the value of the prewriting stage. Before they start to write, learners should select their topics of writing and it is always helpful that the learners take a moment to think about the topic by using prewriting activity including brainstorming reading, drawing, talking, note-taking, and clustering. It could be practiced in groups or with the whole class. In other words, teachers are advised to give more time to students to think about writing the topic in order to make students productive

### **Conclusion**

It can be said that essay writing is an important skill which has different objectives and types. Nevertheless, the structure of these types is nearly the same, because each type has three basic elements: an introduction, body, and a concluding paragraph that should be followed. However, developing a good essay is not an easy task for EFL students; it needs great background and clear understanding of the structure. Therefore, it is vital for learners to plan out prewriting correctly, whether invention activities or arrangement activities within the proposed framework. In such a way, prewriting would become a key stage in the writing process. Besides, learners should try more than one activity until they know what works well for them. It goes without saying that, writing instructors should be fully aware all these activities and how to teach them. There is a need for the suggested framework as beginning writers usually mix the invention section for generating ideas with the arrangement section for organizing these ideas.

**Chapter Three:**

**Analysis of Student  
Questionnaire and  
Teacher's Interview**

## **Introduction**

To investigate the role of pre writing techniques on student's essays writing, we find it necessary to include third year students of English at the English department of Biskra University as well as their teachers of the written expression module point of view about the subject under study, since they represent our population of the study students and teachers viewpoints are gathered and collected in form of questionnaire and interview (each one is designed for each category), in order to determine the difficulties in learning and teaching the essays writing and how the prewriting techniques plays a role in overcoming these difficulties. So, the aim of this chapter is to describe both questionnaire and interview and analyse their results.

### **1. Student's questionnaire**

#### **1.1 Administration and design of the questionnaire**

A students questionnaire was administered to 50 students of third year out of 307 in the English department of Biskra University, about 16 % of the whole population are concerned by this questionnaire, where 50 copies were distributed to these students at a systematic selection, the procedures took place at the amphitheatre and it took about a half hour to distribute and collect the questionnaires to be therefore analysed, note that all the questionnaire were recovered.

Student's questionnaire is made up of four sections, which varied from open-ended and close-ended questions, these sections aims at providing the learners with opportunities to express their point of view on the learning and teaching of essays writing, the obstacles they encounter when dealing with them and the use of pre writing techniques to overcome this issues

The questionnaire is of questions divided into four sections, each one represent a different yet related purpose, the questionnaire is analysed and interpreted below with the comments on students responses.

## **Section one**

Untitled “background information” it contains three questions, namely a general overview on the student’s gender, streaming and the choice of the study of English and the reasons underlying their choice.

## **Section two**

Untitled “writing” this section contains ten questions, it states the students point of view on this skill as well as the difficulties faced by the students and their opinions on the allocate time of the course and also their perspective on integrating writing with other skills such as speaking, reading and grammar.

## **Section three**

Untitled “essays” this section includes the students view on their level of writing essays as well as the difficulties faced by the students when writing essays, it states the students opinion on the different part of the essays and the different types of essays students find it more challenging.

## **Section four**

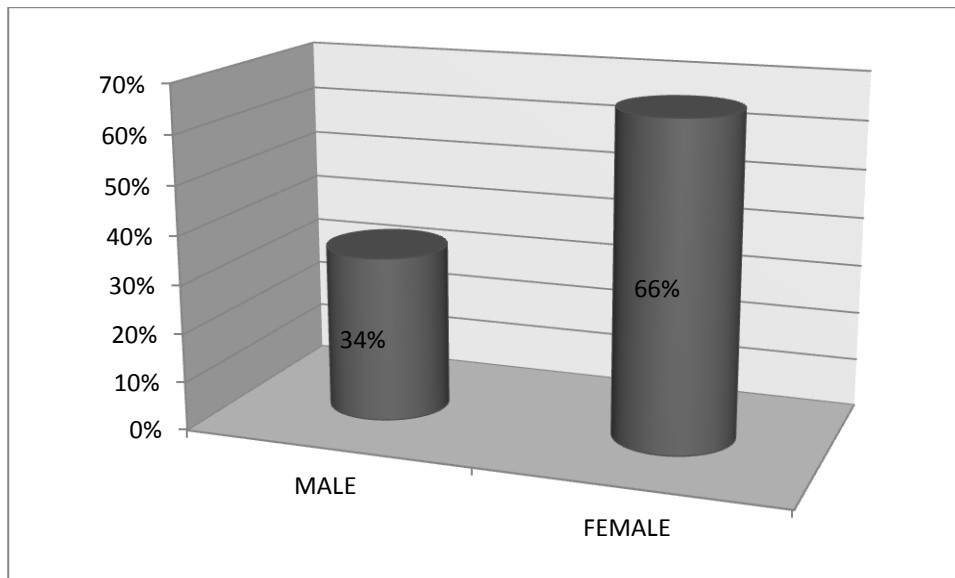
This section untitled “the prewriting techniques” is dedicated to the students these techniques called pre-writing. The student general view on what are they as well as the different techniques used by them in their essays in addition the importance of these techniques in enhancing their essay’s writing.

## 1.2 Results analyses of the students' questionnaire

### Section one: Background information

#### Question 1: gender distribution

**Graph 1: Gender distribution**

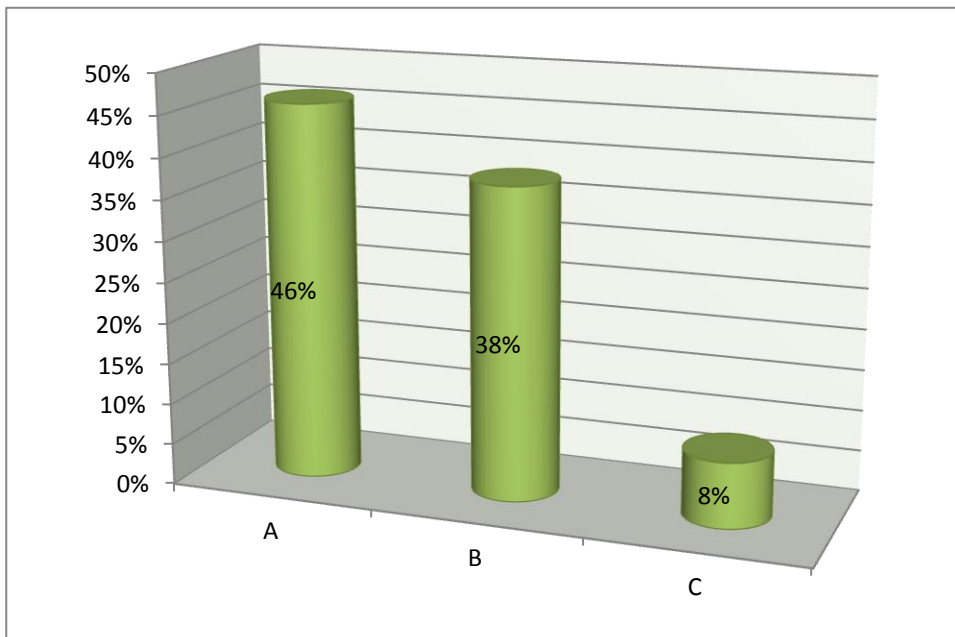


The table above indicate that the students studying English at university are mainly female students represented by (66%) while the male students are of (34%) only the females in our sample outnumbered the male with 33 female students and only 17 male students, which is the case of most Algerian universities where the majority of students are females

#### Question 2: student's Streaming

- i) Literary
- ) Scientific
- ) Technical

**Graph2: students streaming**

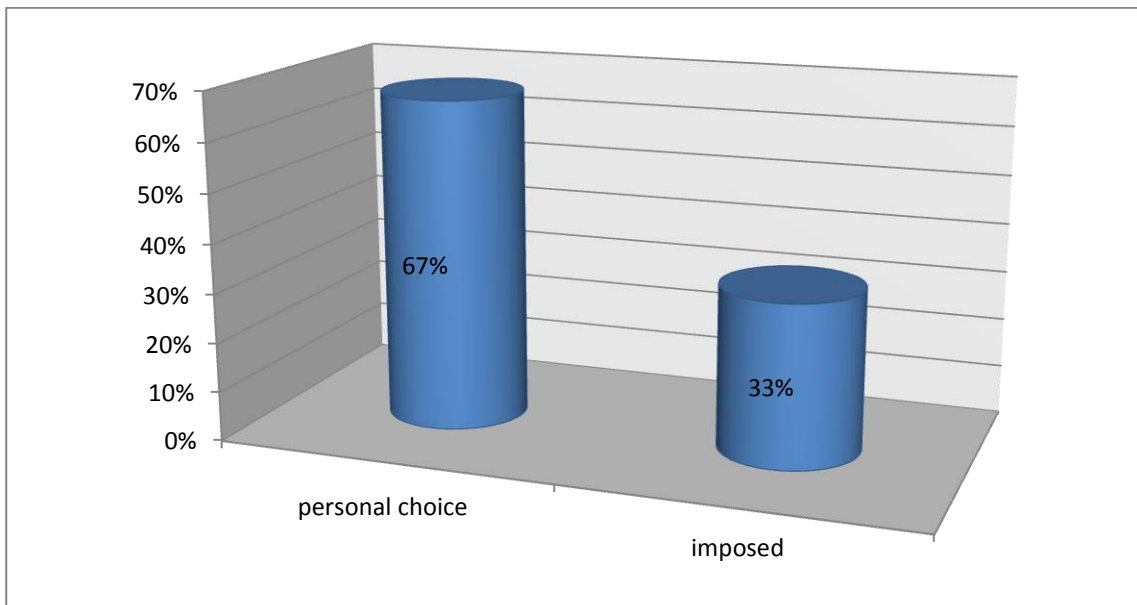


The table shows that students come from different streaming background to study English at university it is noticeable that the majority of students are of literacy streaming with (46%) with a number of 23 students while in second place is students of scientific streaming with 19 students make it (38%), the technical streaming represent (16%) with only 8 students.

**Question 3: the choice of study**

- i) Personal choice
- ›) Imposed on you

**Graph 3: student's choice of the study**



The table above indicate that studying English at university was a matter of personal choice with (67%) represented by 33 students of the sample whereas the imposed on students are only 16 by (33%) this shows that English was the first choice of the students of the sample.

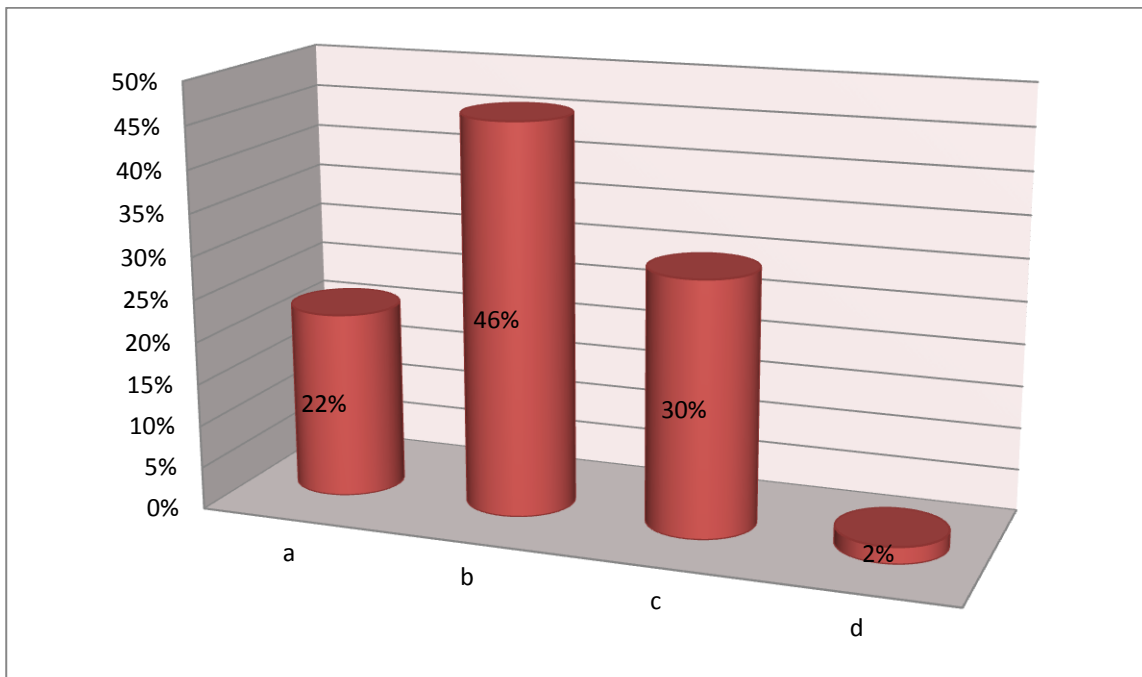
## **Section two: writing**

### **Question 4: students' writing level**

- i) Poor writer
- o) An average writer
- :) Good writer
- l) An excellent writer



**Graph 4: students' writing level**

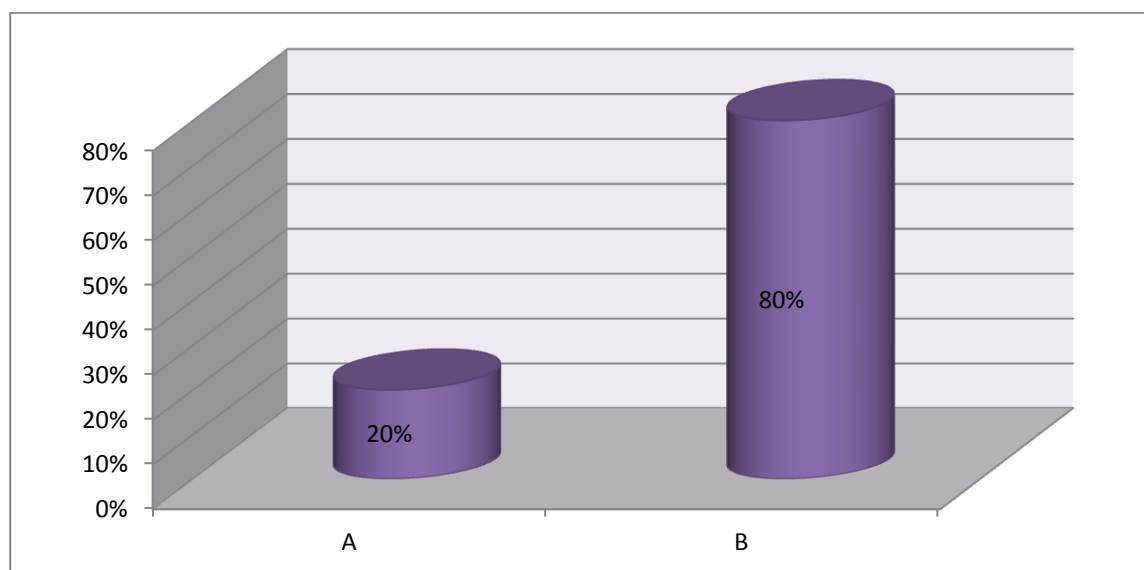


The above table shows that students consider differently their level in writing, 22% of them see that they have a poor level in writing making it 11 students out of 50, while 23 of them see that they are an average writers with a percentage of 46, whereas; 30% consider themselves a good writers precisely 15 students out of 50, only 1 student consider himself an excellent writer with 2%.

**Question 5:** is writing in English for you

- i) Easy?
- ›) Difficult?

**Graph 5: students' perception on writing**



The question aimed at testing student's perception towards writing. The table indicate that 40 students perceive writing as being difficult and it is represented by 80% whereas a few believe that it is easy by only 20% with 10 students, this indicates that the majority of students admit that writing is a difficult task for them while few believe it to be easy. In short, writing is perceived by the majority of students as difficult.

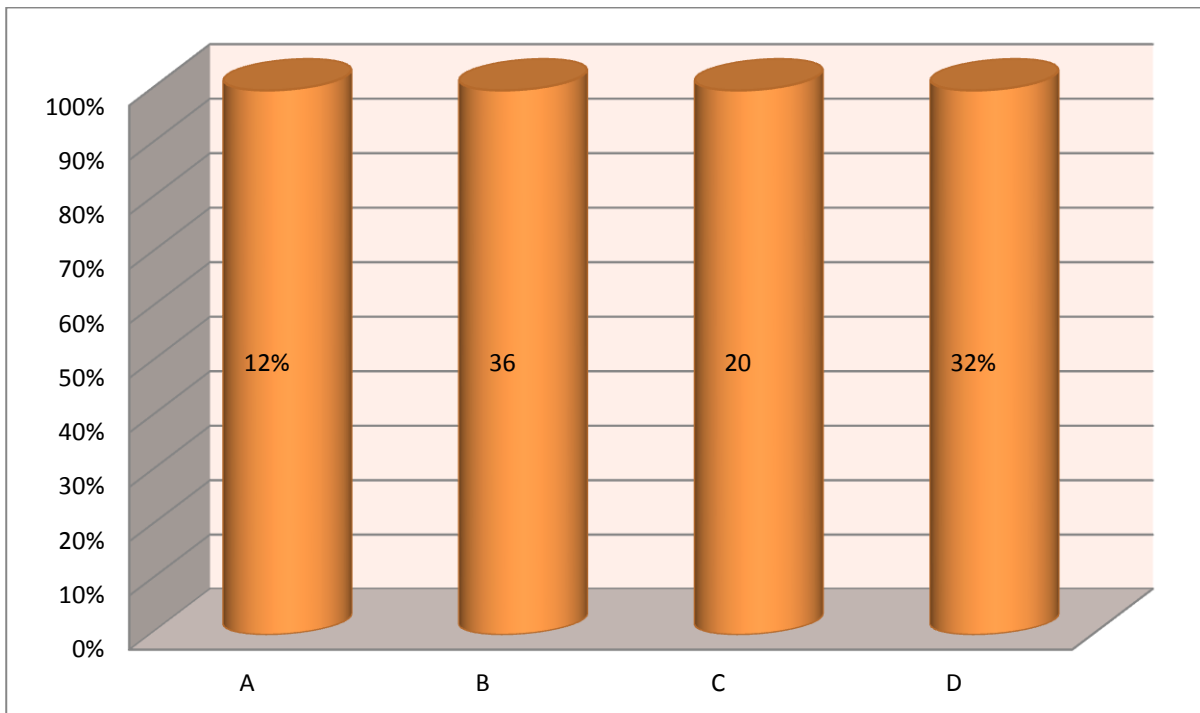
Students who answered with (B) are asked to explain why they think so, only few answered that question and their answers can be summarized as follow:

- › Students think that writing is difficult because they are worry of making mistakes.
- › Students have few ideas or no ideas to write with.
- › Students are afraid of teachers' negative feedback.

**Question 6: Is writing**

- i) Easier than speaking?
- ) Difficult than speaking?
- :) As easy as speaking?
- l) As difficult as speaking?

**Graph 6: students' perception on writing and speaking**

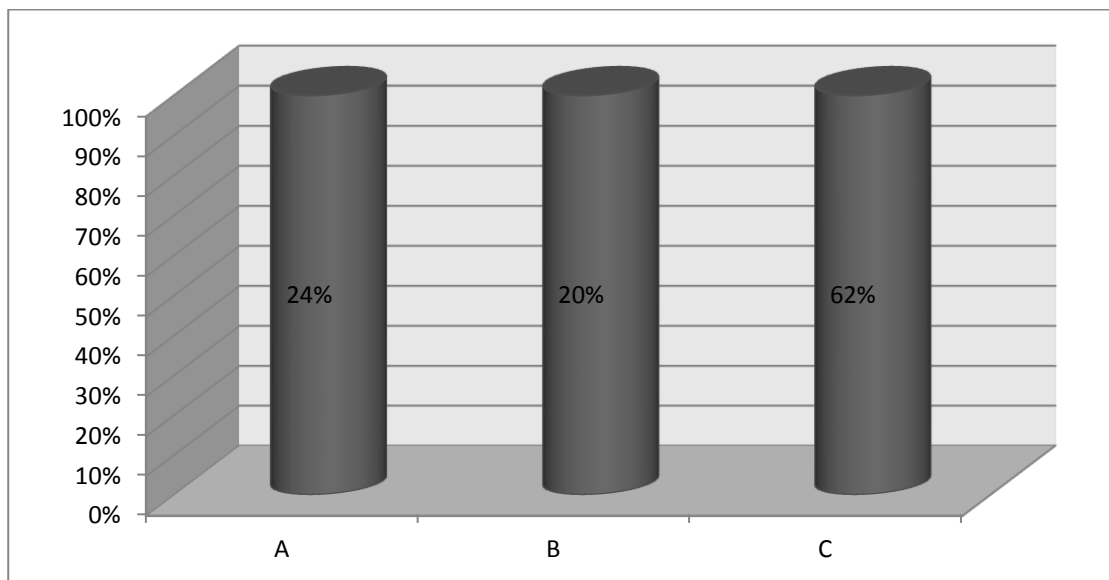


The above table shows that the two skills although they are both productive but are perceived differently by students, among the 50 students responded to the questionnaire only (6) which equals 12% said that writing is easier than speaking, while most students namely 18 of them said that writing is difficult than speaking represented by 36% , students who believe that writing is as easy as speaking were only 10 by 20% , the second highest percentage is for students who said that writing for them is as difficult as speaking represented by 16 students with 32% , this shows that writing is perceived by learners as more difficult than speaking or as hard as speaking .

**Question 7:** the important components in writing

- i) Grammar
- j) Vocabulary
- :) Ideas and organizations

**Graph7: The important component in writing**



The table shows the students perceptions on the important component in writing, out of 50 participants 7 students didn't respond to that question, the remaining respondents who answered the item represented by % , 24% of them by 12 students said that the important component in writing must be grammar since writing is all about writing a grammatically correct sentences; which shows that those students emphasise much more on grammar in their writing and do not either have problems with the other components or grammar is their strong point that they neglect the remaining components, students who went with the second component which is vocabulary are represented by 10 students and 20% said that they think that when writing it is much more important to pay attention to vocabulary as it enrich your writing and make it more readable and acceptable by the reader, the remaining correspondents went for the last option which was that in writing it is highly important to pay attention to the ideas and how to organize and present them 31students represented by 62% believe that writing is all about the ideas and the writers way of first organizing and then presenting them in a way that is pleasant for the readers.

Students were asked to justify their choices of why they chose each component.

The students who went for option A said that in writing they do not care if they do not have many ideas or much vocabulary to express their thoughts and that few ideas with less vocabulary but a correct grammar is the core of writing which makes it simple and understood by the readers.

The others students who chose option B explained that for writing to be good the emphasis must be given to vocabulary as with many words we can express much and therefore convey the ideas quickly and easily.

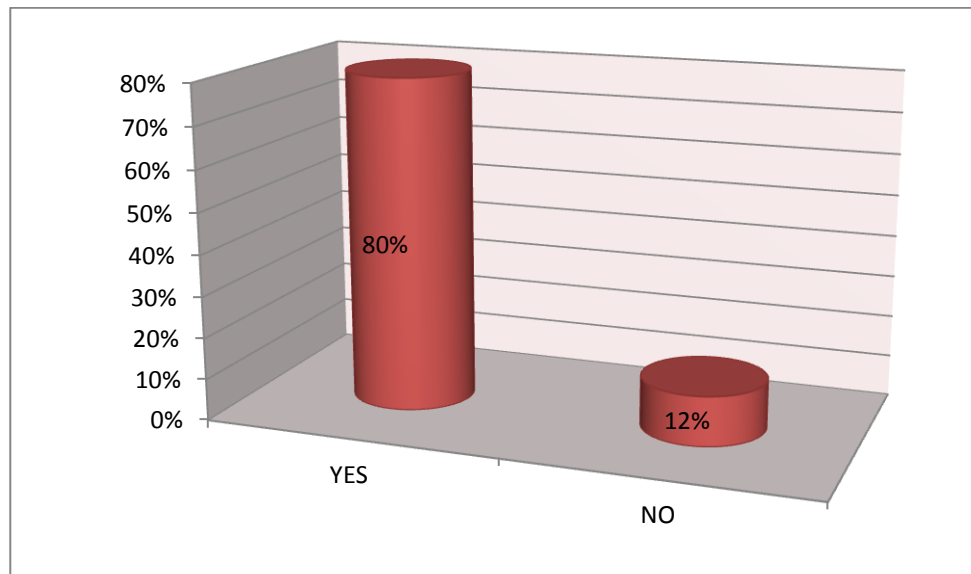
The last option C students went to say that the other components are not as much important as the ideas and their organization and the way of representing them this option was the most chosen one by students as they believe that most students have poor writing because they have few or no ideas to represent and most students go through round circles when they write, they emphasise that even when having a good grammar or many vocabulary it is not sufficient to cover up for their lack of ideas as it is all about the content when writing

**Question 8: Do you do reading for writing?**

A) Yes

B) No

**Graph8: students' attitude on reading for writing**

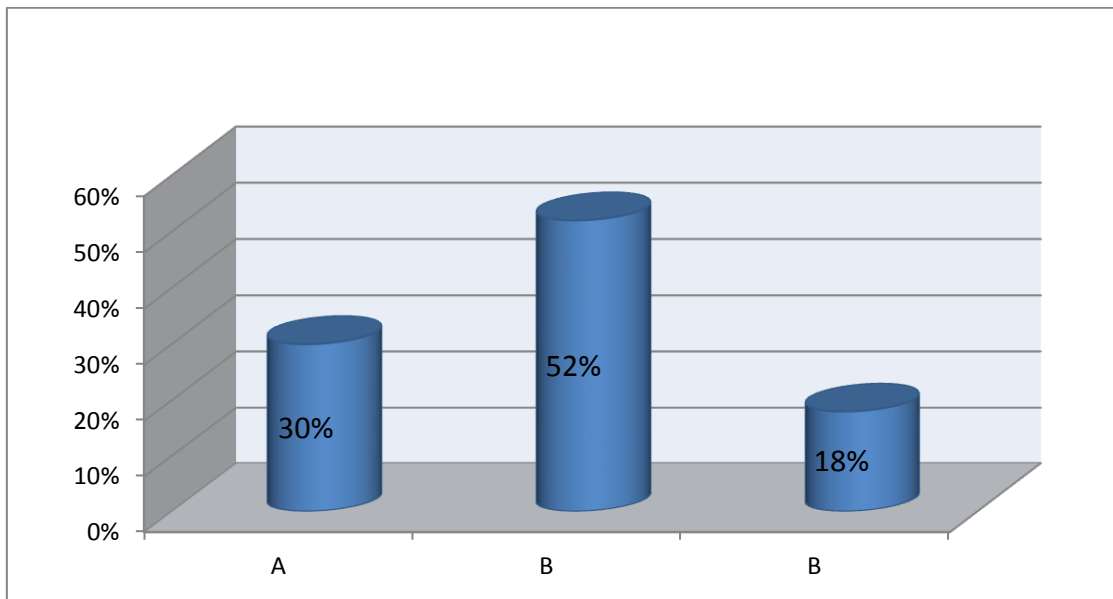


The above table shows that 46 students responded for the question whereas only 4 students did not the one who answered had two choices, an 80% represented by 40 students said that they do reading for writing in order to enrich their writing vocabulary and style and to be more familiar with the structure of the language while the other students who went for option B are represented by 12% with only 6 students who do not do reading for writing they either do not like reading or think it is not necessary to read to be a good writer as long as you practise writing constantly.

**Question 9: When writing, do you focus more on?**

- i) The final product (your focus is on the finished product, the end result of writing)
- o) The process( the steps and stages you go through in writing)
- :) The genre ( the literary type of your writing i.e the type of your essay)

**Graph 9: students focus when writing**



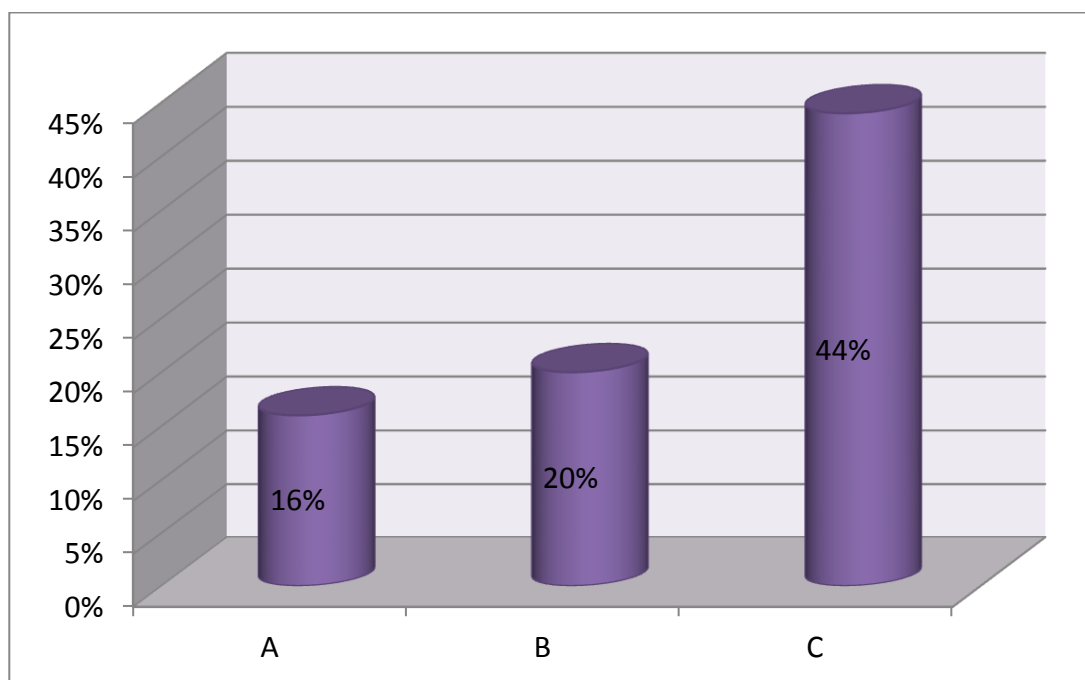
The question attempts to check students focus in writing and implicitly the used approach by them, the above indicates that the majority of students with 52% focus more on the process when writing which means they focus more on the steps and stages they go through in writing, while 30% of students chose the final product which means they focus more on the end result of their writing , while only 18% chose the focus on the genre of writing or the literary type of their writing, so to conclude students have different focus while writing and they mostly focus on the process of their writing which indicates that they mostly use the process approach and followed by the product and genre approaches

### **Section three: essays**

#### **Question 10: Do you consider writing essays?**

- i) Easy
- ) average
- ) Difficult

**Graph10: student's perceptions on writing essays**



The question aims at testing student's perception towards essays writing. In their responses to the question, the majority of students 44% consider writing essays a difficult task, the second proportion of students think that writing essays not easy nor difficult, that is an average task with 20%, while only few students with 16% believe that writing essays is easy, the student who answered that writing essays is difficult are the ones which have writing difficulties in essays while those who said that it is an average task reveals that they struggle some parts and find it easy in other parts which is neither difficult, nor easy task for them, whereas the few students who responded by easy are the ones who probably may not suffer when writing their essays, so in all writing essays for student is mostly difficult.

Students who answered with B, which is essay are difficult are asked to explain why they think so and these are their responses which can be summed up in the following points:

- › Essay writing is difficult because it takes much time to think of ideas.
- › It is difficult because of the type of essays sometimes it needs profs and evidence.

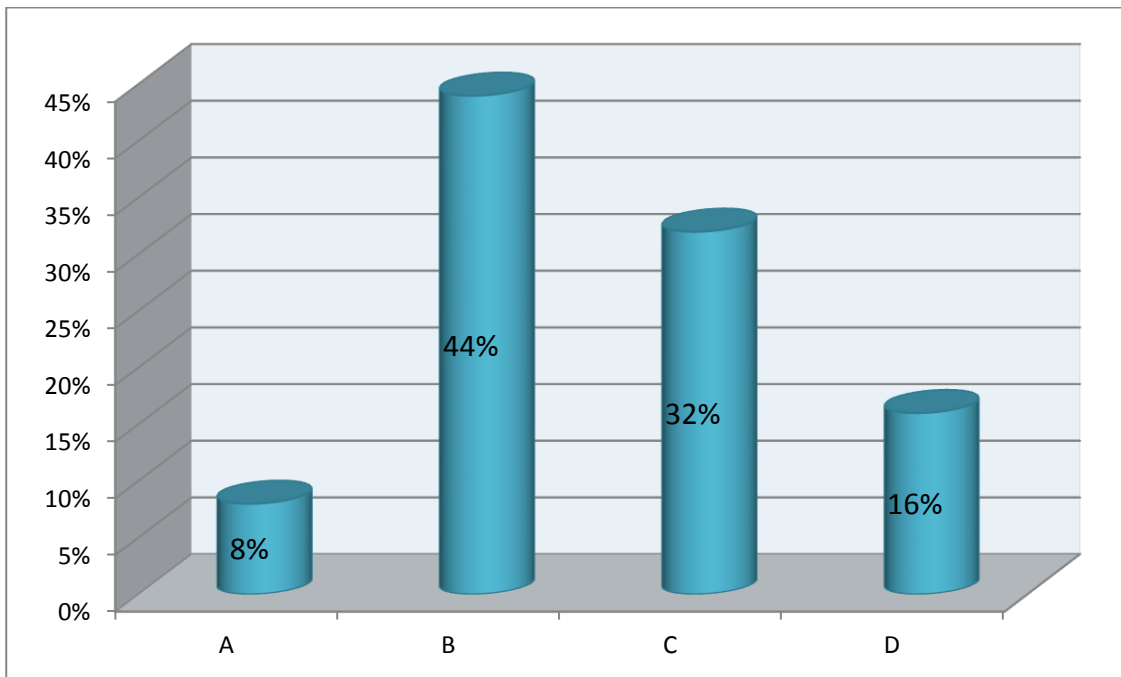


- › It is because of the topics of essays which can be sometimes boring and sometimes hard to understand.
- › It is difficult to generate many ideas.

**Question 11: How do you consider yourself in term of essays writing?**

- i) A poor easy writer
- ) An average essays writer
- :) A good essays writer
- l) An excellent essays writer

**Graph 11: student's self-evaluation of their writing**



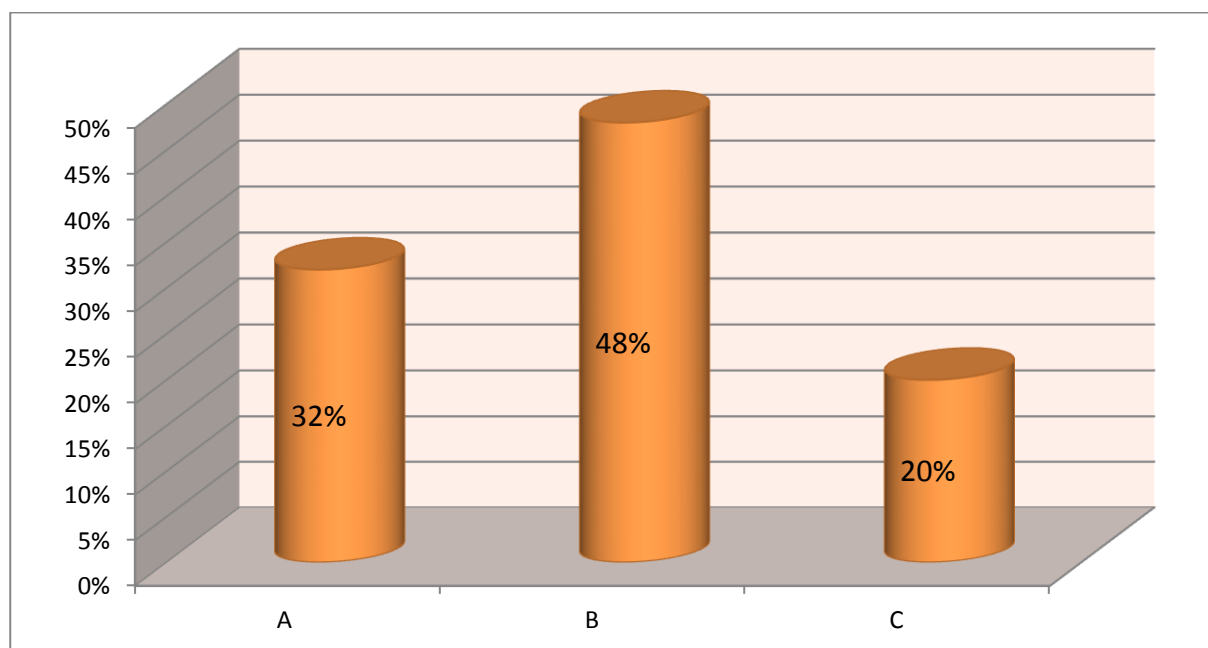
The question attempts to test student's self evaluation in writing essays, the graph shows that the majority of students 44% believe they have an average level at essay writing which can be the result of being a foreign language learners while the second proportion said that they are a good essay writing with 32% of students, and the students who evaluate themselves as an excellent essay wriing came at third place with 16%, whereas those who believe they have a poor level in writing essays only with 8% of the students, this shows that students believe that due to the difficulty of writing essays they are fully poor writers as well as an excellent essays writers this is why the majority said that they are an average essays writers .

**Question 12:**

Which part of the essays is the most challenging for you?

- i) The introduction
- ) The body paragraphs
- :) The conclusion

**Graph12: the difficult parts of essays to students**



This question aims at investigating the difficult part of student's essays, the graph indicate that a significant majority of students 48% find it essays as difficult when writing the body paragraphs, which can be due to the body paragraphs being the main part of essays and which include the main ideas and the supporting ones, while the other students 32% chose the introduction as a challenging part in writing their essay, which is the result of the introduction being the first entrance of the essay and it holds the topic and the thesis statement which introduces the reader to the whole essay, whereas the last option, which is the conclusion was only represented by 20% . The results reflect that all the essay's parts are important and difficult and mostly the body paragraph which the majority of students selected

**Question 13:**

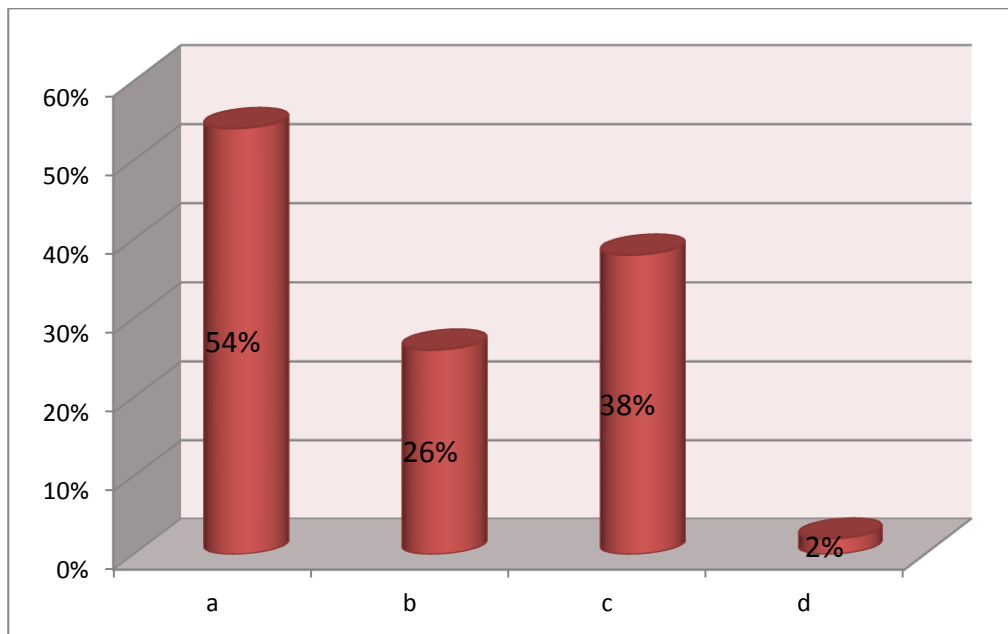
When writing essays what is the most important component according to you?

- i) Content organization
- j) Vocabulary

) Grammar

1) Punctuation and spelling

**Graph13: student's perceptions on the most important component of essay**



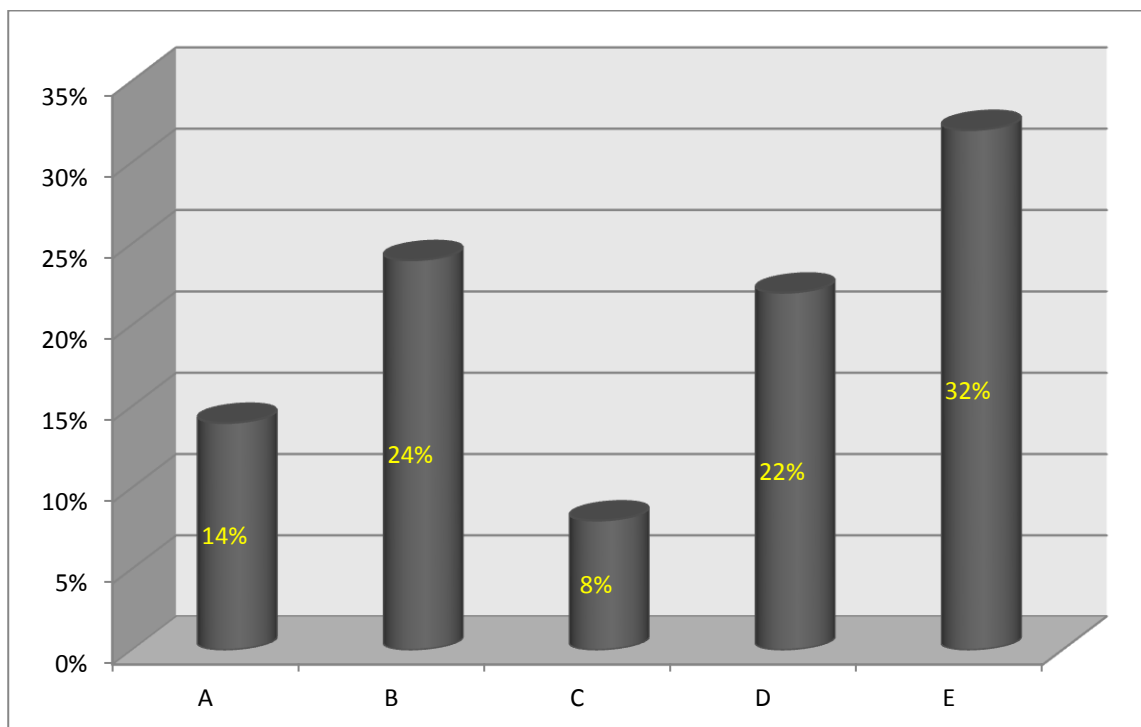
This question tends to test student's point of views on what component is the most important according to them. According to them, 54% of the students think that content organization is the most important component in essays writing, while 38% of students said that the most important component is grammar and those who chose vocabulary are with 26%, whereas punctuation and spelling was chosen by 10%. Students with the choice of content organization represent the majority; this leads to conclude that students find it necessary to focus more on the ideas and its organization when they write essays, and the students who opted for grammar focus more on the language structure while those who selected the vocabulary and punctuation with spelling tend to focus more on the aesthetic side of their essays.

### Question 14:

What is the most difficult type of essays according to you?

- i) The description essay
- ) The compare-contrast
- ) The cause-effect
- l) The narrative
- ) The argumentative

**Graph14: student's perceptions on the most difficult essay types**



This question aims at testing students attitude towards essays types and to know what are the most challenging kinds of essays according to them, according to the graph, students responses, students opted for the argumentative type of essay with 32% while 24% of student think that the compare-contrast is the most difficult type among all types, and with 22% of students who chose the narrative essay as the most challenging type for them and for the other types 14% went for the descriptive essay and only 8% of students chose the cause-effect essay as the most difficult

type for them, the results indicate that the majority of students find that argumentative essays is the most difficult type along with the compare contrast essay in second that is may be the result that those two types need more focus as to find evidences and arguments where the other types are less difficult but also represent a challenge for the students as well

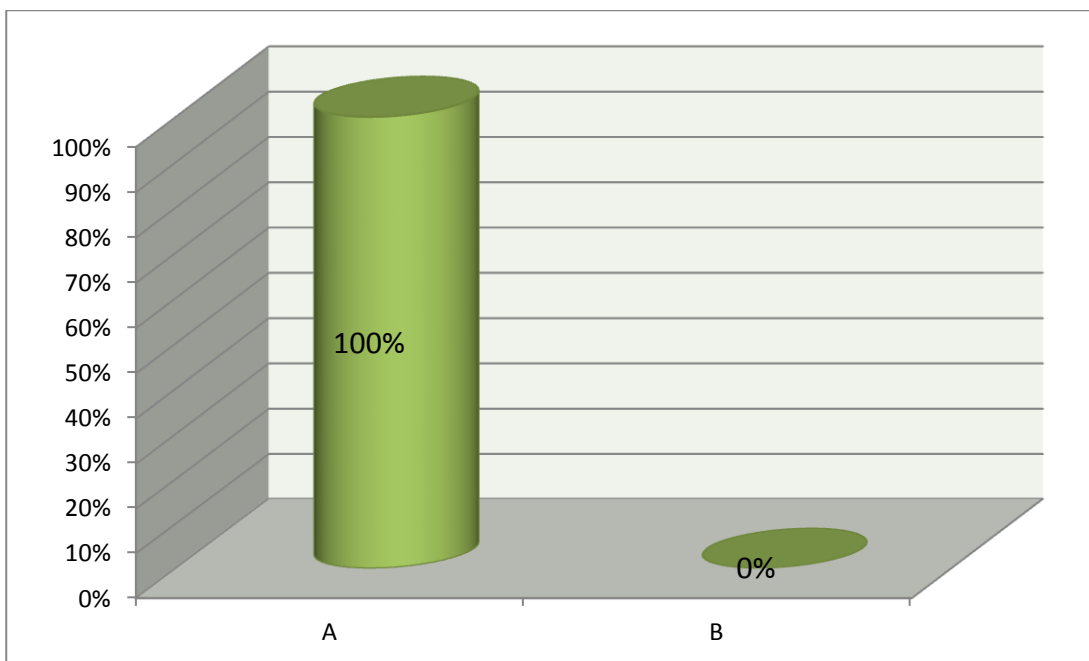
#### **Section four:**

#### **Question 15:**

When given a certain topic to write essay about, do you feel like you do not know anything about it?

- a) Yes
- b) No

**Graph15: student's readiness for writing essays**



This quest tends to test students readiness of writing an essay and whether they face the writer's block when handed the topic to write about, the result were as the graphs illustrate, all of the 50 students, that is 100% opted for the first choice which assert that students when given a certain topic to write about they feel empty minded and do not know what to write about.

from the question and its result, one can deduce that all 50 students share the same problem when given a topic to write about which can be called a writer's block

**Question 16:**

What do you use to overcome the above problem? Please explain.

Students gave different answers and ways on how they overcome the issue and it can be concluded in the following steps:

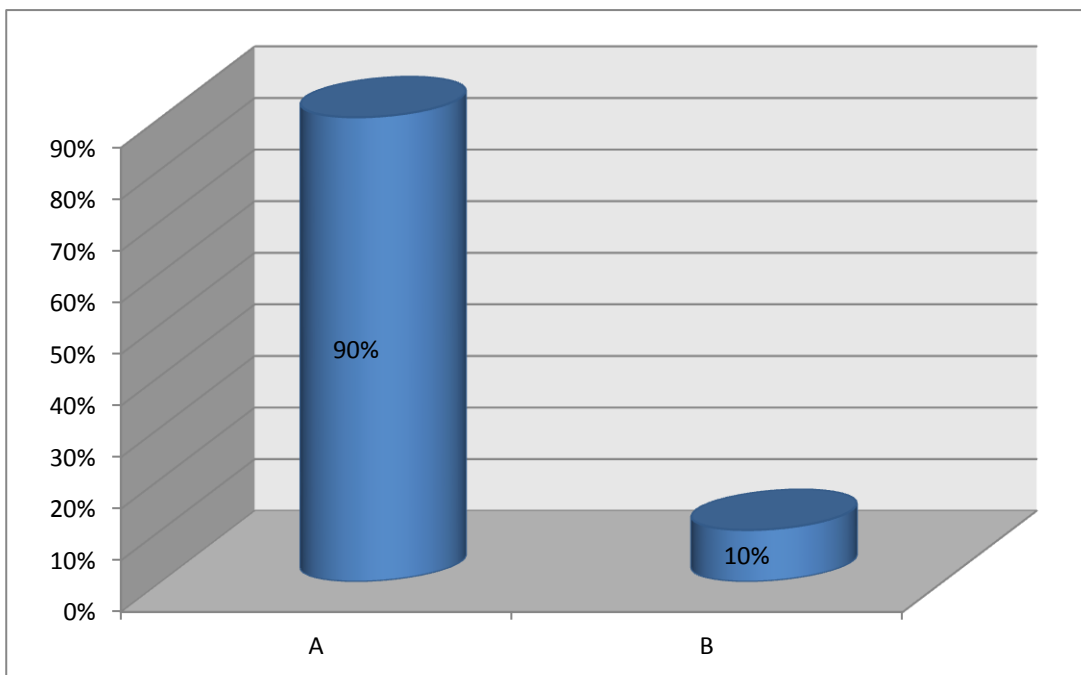
- › Students think for a while which ideas to include/exclude
- › Other students start to write directly their idea/essay on the paper
- › Most students said that they write sentences and phrases related to the topic
- › Students said that they make an outline and follow it

**Question 17:**

Do you know what pre-writing techniques?

- i) Yes                      B) No

**Graph17: students' knowledge of the prewriting technique**



The above question aims at testing students familiarity with the pre-writing techniques, and the result indicates that the majority of students know the pre-writing techniques with 90% of them who answered with yes, while only 10% said that they are not familiar with pre-writing techniques, this indicates that students have been taught pre-writing techniques during their studies, and they already know these techniques and use them when writing

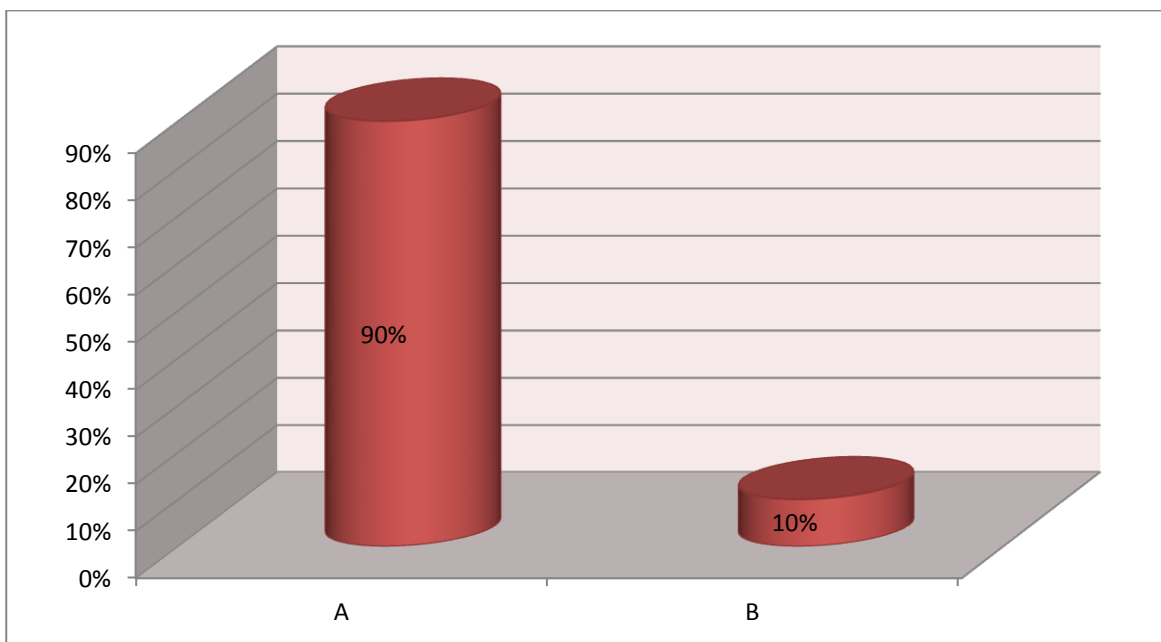
**Question 18:**

Have you been taught the pre-writing techniques?

A. Yes

B. No

**Graph18: students teaching of pre writing techniques**



The question attempts to discover whether students are taught the pre- writing techniques or not, and to know if they were exposed to these techniques through the syllabus and teachers. As the graph shows, the majority of students answered with yes to the question of whether they have been taught pre-writing techniques or not with 90% while only 10% opted for No. We can



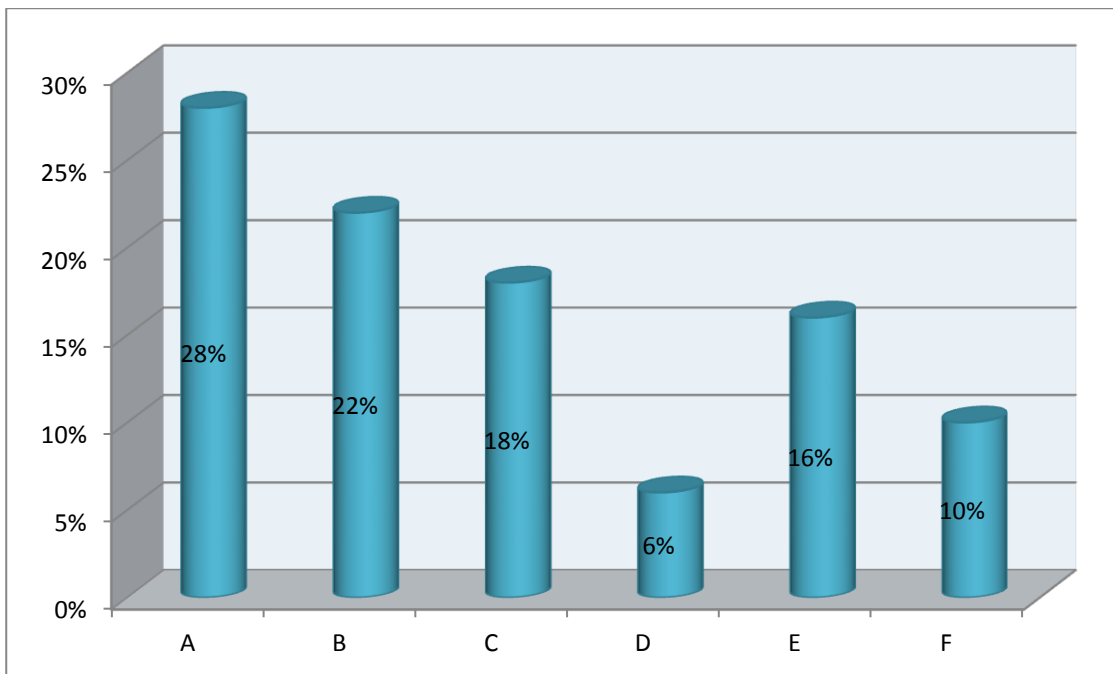
deduce that pre-writing techniques are a part of student's syllabus and they are been taught to students by students

**Question 19:**

Among the following pre-writing techniques, chose the most used technique by you when writing essays?

- i) Brainstorming
- ) Free writing
- ) Clustering
- l) Mapping
- ) Outlining
- ) Listing

**Graph19: student's most used pre writing techniques**



This question attempts at investigating students most used techniques among the many provided techniques, the graph indicate that students use different techniques according to their personal styles and what works better for their writing, the results show that the majority of students opted brainstorming technique with 28%, while the second proportion chose free writing with 22% of student, the clustering technique is selected by 18% of students whereas 16% of students picked out outlining technique and the least two chosen techniques are listing and mapping with only 10% and 6% of students. In short, students use the pre writing techniques in variation with different degrees according to the writing style and suitable technique for them

Students are asked if they use other techniques beside the mentioned above, and some added that they use those following techniques like

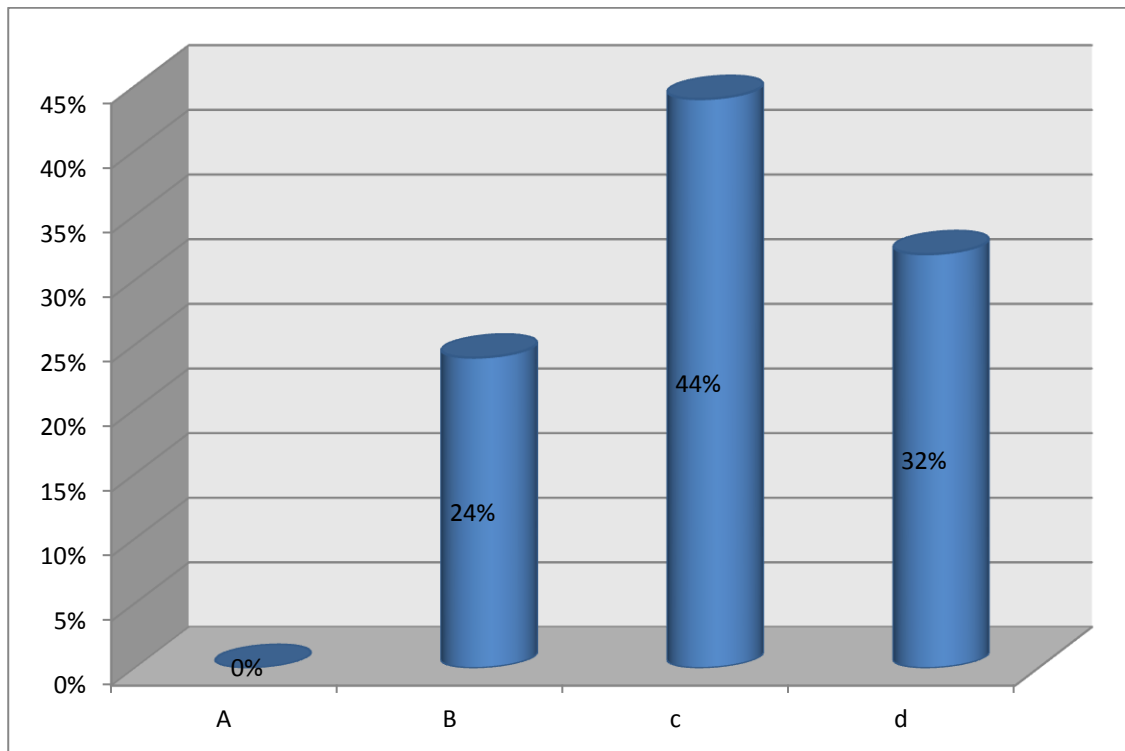
- Questioning, asking questions related to the topic
- Making a spider map of ideas
- Reading for the topic

**Question20:**

How often do you use these pre-writing techniques in writing your essays?

- A. Never
- B. Rarely
- C. Sometimes
- D. Always

**Graph20: student's frequency of using the pre writing techniques**



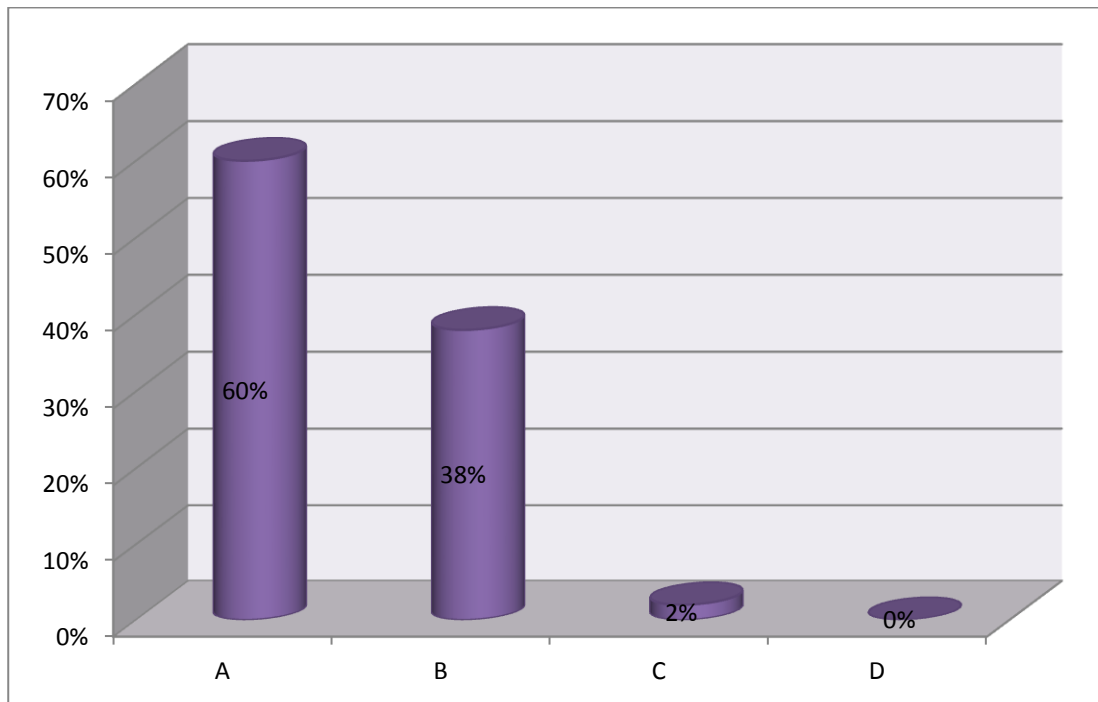
This question tends to check student's frequency of using the pre-writing techniques and discover to what extent the students work with these techniques. The majority of students 44% said that they use the pre writing techniques always in their essay's writing. While 32% of students said that they sometimes use them when writing their essays. Whereas the other student with 24% said that they use the pre-writing techniques but rarely. However, none of the students said that she/he never uses these techniques. In the light of these results, the majority of the student's answers with sometimes, one can conclude that the students rely heavily on pre-writing techniques in writing their essays

**Question 21:**

These techniques improve your essay's writing?

- A. Strongly agree
- B. agree
- C. disagree
- D. Strongly disagree

**Graph21: student's attitude about pre writing techniques**



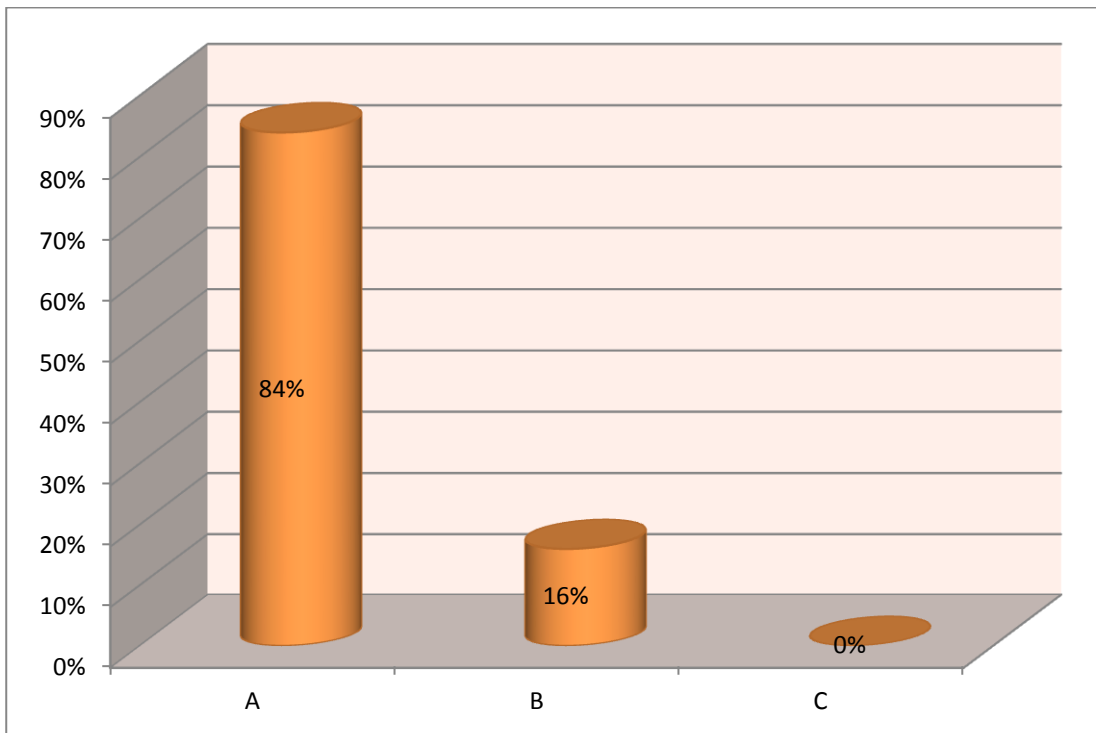
This question investigates student's agreement or disagreement on the role of pre writing techniques in improving their essay's writing, most of students (88% of students) agreed that pre writing techniques improve their essays writing with different degrees. The majority of students 60% strongly agreed with pre writing techniques role in improving their essays writing, while 38% of students agreed with pre writing as a way of improving essays writing, only 2% disagreed on the question saying that pre writing helps improving students essay's. However, none strongly disagrees with the question. Depending on the result, we can conclude that most if not all student in our sample agree that pre writing techniques improve their essay's writing.

**Question 22:**

Did these techniques help you produce better essays and overcome your writing difficulties?

- A. Helped me a lot
- B. Helped me a little
- C. Not at all

**Graph22: students' perceptions on pre writing**



This question aims at testing student's perception and attitude on whether pre writing techniques helped them or not. The graph shows that most of the student represented by 84% believe that pre writing techniques helped them a lot in writing their essays, while 16% of the students said that pre writing techniques have helped them improve their writing of essays but only just a little not much, whereas none selected the option that says that pre writing techniques did not help them in their essay's writing. So from the result, we can conclude that the majority have used pre writing techniques and it helped them improve their writing and overcome their essay's difficulties

**Question 23:**

How or in which ways do these techniques help you improve your essays? (**PLEASE EXPLAIN**)

This question tend to investigate student's views and perception on how or which ways the pre writing techniques helped them in writing their essays and the students answers were many and different, which can be concluded in the following,

- › Students said that pre writing techniques help them generate ideas and overcome the writer block issue
- › Pre writing activities help students organize their ideas and order them
- › The activities help students structure their essays through using outlining
- › The techniques make them skip or correct mistakes and errors
- › Pre writing techniques make students choose the grammatical structure when writing
- › Pre writing make students write clear and coherent sentences
- › Using pre writing activities make students skip writing many draft
- › Pre writing helps students in their essays in make facilitating the revising and editing phase of writing

### **1.3 Discussion of the results of student's questionnaire**

The analysis of the questionnaire addressed to third year students revealed some point to discuss

The answers to the background section, question 1 and 2 showed that the majority of the participants are female with 66%, and that most students come from the literary streaming in high school with 46%, student's choice of study was mostly a personal choice with 67%

In section two, the answers to question 4 and 5, and 6 represent the student's inadequate level of mastery concerning the writing skill, students answered that writing in English is difficult with 80% of the responses. Also participant's self-evaluation on their writing is with 46% of students who said that they have an average writing level. Moreover, students confirm

that by selecting writing as the most difficult and needed skill over the other skills like speaking and listening

The answers to question 4, 5,6, and 8 lead to conclude that students are aware of the importance of writing skill and the relation between writing and other skills like speaking, listening and grammar where most of the students opted for writing being the more and most difficult among the four skills, students said that ideas and how to organize them and present them is the most important in writing with 62% of the students.

The answers to the questions 7, and 9 shows that students focus on different components on writing varying from grammar to vocabulary and most of the students focus more on the ideas and how to present them while they have different methods and approaches in writing in which they chose the process approach which enable them to go through organized and structured steps and stages. Furthermore, students have positive attitude towards writing and appreciate the help that would offered for them to improve their writing skill

In section three, the answers to question 10 and 11 show that students are aware of the difficulty of writing an essay and are self evaluating their level in writing essays by considering themselves as an average essays writers, this indicate that students are open towards the development and improvement in their essays

The answers of question 12, 13, and 14 mean that students find the body paragraph part as the most difficult to write in the essay as the majority of students opted for, while in determining the important component of their writing of essays most of the students chose content organization over vocabulary, grammar and punctuation with spelling. Whereas, students find it challenging to write an argumentative essay out of the provided and studied types, which shows that students face many difficulties in writing their essays varying from the structure to the content on to the types and that they consider this a major issue to solve.

In section four, responses to questions 16, 17, 18, and 19 show most students if not all suffer from the problem or difficulty of starting to write which can be called writer's block. Furthermore, students in order to overcome this problem use certain steps that facilitate their writing, also students are familiar with the techniques known as the pre writing techniques as most of them answered that they have been taught these activities, this lead to conclude that students try to use different steps and techniques to overcome their difficulties

Responses related to questions 20, 21 mean that students are aware and use different techniques and mostly brainstorming and free writing in their essays writing and that the majority use them always when working on their essays, these responses answer our research which asks of the pre writing techniques used by students

In the answer of question 22, 23, and 24 students show that the ore writing techniques are an important activities that help them improve their essays where most of the student agreed with degrees that pre writing help students improve essays writing and make them overcome their difficulties with 80% of student's positive responses, students believe that pre writing activities have helped them a lot in essays improvement where 84% of students said that these techniques improve and develop their writing skill as well as the essay's writing in particular, students gave some explanation on how these techniques help them evolves on the grammatical level and the semantic level as well as the methodological level, these finding lead to answer one of the research question which asks how the pre writing techniques can improve students/teachers performance. Furthermore, this may partially confirm our hypothesis which says that if third year students use pre writing techniques their essay's writing will improve

So in short, the questionnaire analysis show that students consider writing as difficult skill, they also face different problem in writing essays and they try to find solutions in order



improve their level at writing essays which is in the form of prewriting techniques through using these techniques

## **2. Analysis of the teachers' interview**

In order to investigate the role of pre writing techniques in improving third year essay's writing, an interview was designed and addressed to third year teachers of written expression at Biskra University.

### **2.1 Description and design of the interview**

The interview was addressed to third year teachers of written expression at the University of Mohamed Khieder of Biskra. The sample (2teachers) was chosen systematically From the whole population because third year teachers of written expression have a close contact with their students and know their difficulties and needs as well, there are five teachers of written expression teaching third year students, but the interview was held only with two since three of them excused and refused to make an interview. This interview aims at investigating the role of pre writing techniques from the perspective of teachers.

The interview consist of open-ended questions divided into two section, the first section is about teachers perception about writing and essays while the second section is about their perceptions of the pre writing techniques and the role o these techniques in the essay, these questions were raised for seeking the adequate answers about teachers methods and techniques of teaching essays and pre writing, in addition they aim at investigating teachers-students difficulties encountering writing essays.

### **2.3 The results and interpretations of the interview**

#### **Background information**

**Item one: what is your degree?**

**Teacher 01:** “magister degree”.

**Teacher 02:** “magister degree”

**Item 02: for how long how you been teaching written expression?**

**Teacher 01:”** four years”

**Teacher 02:** “three years”

While the first teacher has been teaching writing for four years, the second teacher has been teaching it for three years. The teachers’ experiences and the period of time teaching written expressions enable them to implement the adequate method and techniques that help students write essays. Moreover, teachers with long experiences know their students needs and the difficulties encountering them when writing essays

**Section one: teacher’s perspective about writing essays**

**Item 03: how do you evaluate the third year syllabus of written expression?**

**Teacher 01:** “from the content, the programme as it is designed, I think it is really suitable for third year students because it deals principally with essays writing, all types of essays, including the different types of developments, and they have two session per week. So it is a good opportunity for them to practise writing, and I see it as effective”.

**Teacher 02:** “in the syllabus, students do not only study essays and its types but also the methodology of how to write an essay. So it is good but I think for their level, they are able to do more”.

The teacher’s attitude towards the third year syllabus of written expression is positive and it differs from one teacher to another, while the first teacher finds the written expression syllabus suitable for third year students and effective as it introduces the students to the essays writing

and the time devoted to the session is enough for students. Whereas the second teacher find the third year syllabus good but not suitable for third year students as they are able to perform more

**Item 04: according to you, what is the appropriate approach to use in teaching writing and essays?**

**Teacher01:** “As far as I am concerned, I try my best to follow the process approach because it depends on the steps of writing and stages starting from pre writing, drafting then revising, editing, proofreading. And as a teacher I do it as much as possible, but since we suffer from overcrowded classes we cannot practise it all the time, and because the process approach is very suitable for this level and this type of writing especially essays.”

**Teacher02:** “I follow the process approach because it is very methodical, it is carried out gradually. And it is appropriate for students humble level in writing and since it emphasis on the writing stages as the pre writing stages and techniques which are presidential to write an outline.”

For both teachers the process approach is the appropriate one to carry out the teaching and practise of writing. The first teacher, he said that he follow the process approach since it supports all the different steps and techniques which are suitable for the third year student and particularly essays writing, but due to the overcrowded classes teachers cannot apply it all the time. For the second teacher, he applies the process approach since it is very methodological and gradual approach but also since it comes across with student’s humble level in writing. So both teachers agreed on the effectiveness of the process approach as it contains the different stages and steps and mostly it supports the pre writing stage and techniques”.

**Item 05: what are the difficulties that students face when writing essays?**

**Teacher01:**”there are many difficulties that my students face, all these difficulties exist. Starting from the issue of generating ideas, from the problem of outlining and organizing the structure of

essays to the problem of language principally grammar, vocabulary choice, punctuation, but the main problem is the language problem grammar and vocabulary. Because shortage of vocabulary leads to poor pieces of essays and lack of mastery of the grammar leads also to catastrophic essays”.

**Teacher 02:** “students face many problems, but mostly they have problems with generating ideas and how they can come up with an outline, besides the issue of grammar and vocabulary and spelling. But i believe that the ideas and the organization of ideas are what the majority of students suffer from”.

According to teachers, students face many difficulties when writing essays. Both teachers said that their students struggle with writing essays but the first teacher view is that students face problems with generating ideas, organizing and outlining the structure of essay but the bigger issue in writing essays is with the shortage of vocabulary and the poor mastery of grammar structure which leads to poor pieces of essays, whereas the second teacher view that students face problem on the grammar and vocabulary level but more important on the ore writing level where students generating and organizing ideas. So in short, students face a major issue in writing essays either on grammar, vocabulary of the structure of ideas and teacher had to solve this problem with the appropriate techniques.

**Item 06: what is/are the most difficult essay type(s) according to students?**

**Teacher01:**”properly the opinion essays also known as the argumentative essay, since they are asked to provide arguments. Other types of essays are manageable by students, but in the argumentative essay they need to defend points of views”.

**Teacher 02:**”the argumentative essay off course because it requires a special skill in generating the arguments, and convincing the reader with arguments”

According to both teachers, the argumentative essay is the most difficult and challenging essay for students because this type of essay requires arguments and point of views to defend.

**Item 07: what are the different steps and techniques do you use to in traducing the topic and make students generate ideas?**

**Teacher01:** “i use different techniques in fact. I try students personal choices where I let them choose whatever they like in topics, I use brainstorming techniques, I suggest the topic and discuss it briefly, recently i used video clips technique and then ask student to write their reflections and I tried to stimulate students thinking”.

**Teacher 02:”** there are many techniques but personally I use listing as it is more effective and time saving, but sometimes I use mapping which pave the way to draw an outline”

The teacher use different techniques in teaching essay’s writing according to the students level and needs, each teacher uses a certain technique(s) that make their students generate and expand on the topic. For teacher one he said that he tries different brainstorming and thinking techniques to stimulate students into writing essays but recently he was more into using video clips technique where students watch a particular video on a certain subject then asks them to write about it while the second teacher said that he personally prefer listing techniques as it saves time and also mapping which pave the way of students to draw an outline.

**Item 08: in your opinion, is pre-writing stage and techniques important in improving student’s essays?**

**Teacher 01:”** definitely very important, because in pre writing students prepare themselves, and to organize their ideas and to bring all the different elements that really constitute the essay, and eventually to choose what it the most appropriate, what is appropriate and what is not. Pre writing is very important however I noticed that students skip it, they directly go to drafting “

**Teacher02:** "it is very important, because when we apply these steps or techniques is going to prevent student from writing randomly so students will write in a methodological way. And this is going to make them draw a clear outline to what will they write and eventually a great piece of writing".

The teacher's answers show that the pre writing techniques are of a great importance to both teachers and students, for both teachers applying these techniques in student's essays help them in many ways. The first teacher said that these techniques are very important in many ways either in organizing student's ideas or through correcting the essays structure but usually students neglect this stage of pre writing and go directly to drafting. For the second teacher pre writing is very important because it prevents students from writing randomly and this will lead them to write in a more methodological way to finally draw an outline to write clear and good piece of essays.

### **3. Discussion of the results of questionnaire and interview**

So based on the results of both the students questionnaire and the teacher's interview we can conclude that conclude that answers were different but somehow similar, teachers and students use various techniques productively, learner prefer certain activities to others according to their learning style and the nature of the topic which the teacher build on that to teach them essays writing, according to both learner and teachers pre writing techniques indicated improvement in writing skills achievements and attitudes. So pre writing techniques do not only help learners acquire the target language effectively but also build inter-personal thinking and planning skills that can be utilized in other skills or fields, pre writing techniques and activities help students plan and organize their essays and help the reluctant writers to find their motivation to write, according to students using pre writing techniques is problem solving and beneficial particularly in the argumentative and persuasive essays. Teachers think that students achievements in essays

writing is due to the effectiveness of pre writing techniques, the use of multimedia provide a great venue for using pre writing as it is highly flexible, motivating and interactive. So in short student's questionnaire and the teacher's interview shed the light on the difficulties faced by both teachers and students in writing essays, it also gave perspective of both learners and teachers on what techniques to use and how also to the importance of these activities in writing essays.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter was devoted to the investigation of the role of pre writing techniques in improving EFL learner's essays writing, on the light of the result revealed through this study concerning the positive and important role of pre writing techniques in improving third year essays writing confirmed our hypothesis. Through the interpretations of two different tools, a questionnaire addressed to third year students and an interview held with two teachers of written expression, our hypothesis was proved. Thus, teachers and students should take into considerations these techniques when presenting their lessons and lectures and students when writing their essays.

## **Recommendations**

Improving EFL learners essays writing through the use of pre writing techniques is the responsibility of both learners and students. Therefore, the following implications will be recommended:

7. Time allotted to writing is not sufficient, so it should have more time for written expression session and particularly essays writing sessions.
3. Pre writing techniques should be taught from the early stages of English language teaching at high school where learners practise them in their writing.
2. Teachers of third year should teach students the pre writing techniques explicitly and incorporate them implicitly in every lesson.
10. Teachers should ask students to perform and practise the techniques inside and outside the classroom before writing essays.
11. Students should try different pre writing techniques and do not stick to one technique, but also they should find the appropriate technique that could work with their thinking and writing style.
12. Instructions should be introduced gradually but firmly. First of all, and before getting students to write, teachers should encourage them to think about what they are going to write by planning the content and the sequence of what they will put down on paper.
13. The recursive aspect of the writing process should be exercised through essay writing activities which will help learners to develop automaticity in writing by manipulating, organizing and connecting the different stages of the writing activity.
14. Students should be encouraged to consider the different steps of prewriting, drafting, revising etc...
15. Students should be encouraged to write multiple drafts and learn about their own preferred techniques in order to exploit and guide it.



16. Primacy of content, planning and ideas organization over grammar, vocabulary and the mechanics of writing.
17. Other skills, like reading and listening should be integrated within the pre writing techniques
18. Schools and teachers should use technology or multimedia sources in writing as a pre writing activities to improve the quality of learning.

We hope that these recommendations and other researchers' recommendations ameliorate the level of our learners; in this case, we wish our learners become good writers.

## **General conclusion**

Writing is a productive skill and a complex process, which requires from students to follow basic rules in order to express their ideas effectively, and coherently.

The current study demonstrated the importance and role of pre writing techniques in improving EFL learners' essays writing. We aimed to develop essays writing by introducing the role of pre writing techniques in writing. In this study, we focused on the following hypothesis: if students of Third year LMD of the University of Biskra uses the pre writing techniques their essays writing will improve. In addition, this work based on the descriptive research methodology, we designed student's questionnaire and teachers' interview as a data collection tools. We selected our sample randomly from Third year Master students at Biskra University.

This study includes three main chapters. The first two are theoretical and the third one is practical. In the first chapter we represented information about the writing skill, its definition, writing components, we also dealt with the writing in relation to other skills like speaking, reading, and grammar. This chapter also introduced writing teaching methods like the product approach, the process approach, the genre approach and the process genre approach. After that, we concluded this chapter with a brief conclusion.

The second chapter, we represented the essay and the pre writing techniques. We started with the essay, its definition, its components and structure, we explained the main constituents of essay from the introduction to body paragraph till the conclusion, then we mentioned the importance of transition signals, the cohesion/coherence, and the unity in building the essays, we also dealt with the major types of essays. In the other section, we introduces the pre writing techniques, its definition, the most common pre writing techniques then its role and importance in essay's writing. After that, we concluded our chapter with a brief summary of the main points mentioned in the chapter.

The third chapter is the practical one, we designed students' questionnaire and teachers' interview and we attempted to analyse them qualitatively. Then, we discussed the results obtained from both the questionnaire and the interview. Our aim is to find out the different opinions of students of Third year and their teachers about the role of pre writing techniques in essays' writing. So, the final previous results confirmed the research questions and the main hypothesis. Also, it showed that students were more aware and interested in the importance of pre writing techniques in improving their essays.

Finally we can say that the pre writing techniques are more related the improvement of essay's writing. Thus, we can say that the pre writing techniques depend on time, effort, and practice from both learners and teachers. Essays' writing is concerned with these activities.

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## Appendices

### Appendix one

#### MOHAMED KHIEDER UNIVERSITY\_ BISKRA

#### STUDENTS'QUESTIONNARE

##### SECTION ONE : *background information*

1/ Gender: a) male

b) female

2/Streaming:

i) literary

) scientific

) technical

3/studying English at the university was:

i) A personal choice

) Imposed on you

##### SECTION TWO: WRITING

4) Do you consider yourself?

i) Poor writer

) An average writer

) A good writer

i) An excellent writer

5) Is writing in English for you?

Easy  difficult

\*Whatever the answer please explain

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

6) Is writing?

- i) Easier than speaking
- ) Difficult than speaking
- :) As easy as speaking
- l) As hard as speaking

7) Which one do you think it is the most important in writing?

- i) A good grammar
- ) A good vocabulary
- :) Ideas and how you present them

Whatever your answer please explain

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

8) When writing do you focus more on?

i) The final product ( the focus is on the finished product ,the end result of writing )

) The process ( the steps/stages which you go through in writing)

:) The genre( the literary style you write with and you rhetorical linguistic devices)

9) Do you think that the amount of time devoted to writing at university is sufficient?

YES

NO

**SECTION TWO: ESSAYS**

10)do you consider writing essays:

i) Easy task

) A difficult task

\*explain please

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

11) how do you consider yourself in term of essays writing

i) A poor essays writer

) An average essays writer

:) A good essays writer

l) An excellent essays writers

12) which part of essays is it difficult for you

i) Introduction

) Body paragraphs

:) Conclusion

13) when writing essays what is the most important component according to you

- i) Content organization
- ) Vocabulary
- ) Grammar
- l) Punctuation
- ) Spelling

14) which is the most difficult kind(s) of essays according to you?

- i) The descriptive essay
- ) The definition essay
- ) The compare-contrast essay
- l) The cause-effect essays
- ) The narrative essay
- ) The argumentative essay

***SECTION THREE: PRE-WRITING TECHNIQUES***

15/Do you know what pre-writing techniques are?

Yes  No

16/When given a certain topic to write about do you feel like you do not know anything about it (empty mind)

Yes  No

17/How often do you feel that?

Always

Sometimes

Often

Rarely

Never

18/before writing your essay do you follow a certain steps?

Yes  No

if so what are they?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

19/have you been taught the pre-writing techniques?

Yes  No

20/ among this pre writing techniques classify the most used technique(s) by you when starting to write .

Brainstorming

Free writing

Clustering



Mapping

Outlining

Listing

22/Do you believe that these techniques help you overcome your writing difficulties when starting to writing:

| agree                    | strongly agree           | disagree                 | strongly disagree        |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

23/Do you think that these techniques help you produce a better essays?

A lot

A little

Not at all

In which way(s) do these techniques help you in your essays?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

*Thank you*

**Appendix two**

**MOHAMED KHIEDER UNIVERSITY\_ BISKRA**

**FACULTY OF ARTS AND LANGUAGES**

**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**SECTION OF ENGLISH**

**Teachers' interview**

This interview aims at investigating the role of pre writing techniques in improving EFL learner's essays writing. As first year teacher of written expression you are kindly requested to answer the following questions. Your contribution will be of great help to accomplishment of this work.

Thank you in

**Background information:**

**Degree:**

**License**

**Master**

**Doctorate**

**How long have you been teaching written expression?**

.....

**How do you evaluate the syllabus of written expression of third year?**

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

**According to you, what is the appropriate approach to use in teaching writing and essays?**

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

**What are the difficulties that students face when writing essays?**

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

**Is/are the most difficult essay type(s) according to students?**

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

**What are the different steps and techniques do you use to in traducing the topic and make students generate ideas?**

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

**In your opinion, is pre writing stage and techniques important in improving student's essays?**

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

## المخلص

الكتابة هي إحدى المهارات الأساسية في تعلم اللغة. ورغم ذلك الطلاب يجدون صعوبة في تطويرها، هذه الدراسة تتطرق إلى دور تقنيات مقابل الكتابة في تحسين كتابة المقالات وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تطوير مستوى الوعي لطلاب حول كتابة المقالة وهذا عن طريق شرح دور وأهمية تقنيات مقابل الكتابة. تم الافتراض بان ه اذا استعمل الطلاب تقنيات ماقبل الكتابة فان مقالاتهم ستتحسن. و هدفها الاساسي هو تطوير كتابة المقالات للسنة الثالثة جامعي لطلبة الانجليزية في جامعة بسكرة. ولهذا قررنا استخدام المنهجية الوصفية عن طريق اجراء استطلاع رايء للتلاميذ ومقابلة مع الاساتدة . والغرض من الاستفتاء والمقابلة هو لمساعدتنا في لتأكيد او نفي الفرضية السابقة الذكر. هذه الوسائل تهدف الى جمع اراء التلاميذ و اساتدتهم وعليه فان جميع طلبة السنة الثالثة هم المجموع واخترنا 50 تلميذا ليكون عينة لنا تم تحليل النتائج باتباع الطريقة النوعية. و التيكشفت عن دور تقنيات ماقبل الكتابة الفعال في تحسين مستوى كتابة مقالات. واكثر من ذلك فالطلاب اضهروا تحسن ووعي ملحوظ في كتابة المقالات ولهذا بفقد قمنا باقتراح مجموعة من الارشادات للاساتدة والطلاب .