WRITING STRATEGIES OF TUNISIAN FIRST YEAR

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN

LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Managing to communicate one's thoughts and ideas coherently and fluently remains a challenging task for native and non-native student writers alike. This challenge corresponds to the very nature of the writing act, which calls upon multiple and sophisticated cognitive operations. The major aim of this study was to investigate the writing strategies and attitudes of a cohort of Tunisian first year Arts students and composition teachers and detect areas of mismatch between the learning preferences of the students and the teaching practices of the instructors. The study was carried out via a writing strategies questionnaire for teachers and another questionnaire for students. Most of the items included in the two questionnaires were based on Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) with some modifications to address writing skills and specific Tunisian context. The present research produced a number of key findings. Respondents seemed to favor certain strategies over others. For instance, most of the students reported that they were predisposed to strategies such as re-reading, asking the teacher for help, using bilingual dictionaries, collecting and organizing information frequently as opposed to cooperating with others, referring back to feedback from one's previous writing, and editing at the level of content and organization. As for teachers, the majority claimed that they often drew their students' attention to the use of new strategies, encouraged peer-to-peer-discussion, and advised them to look for samples of essays to follow. A large number of participants seemed to underscore the importance of several key writing strategies like engaging students in planning, organizing, and reviewing their essays and intervening during the writing process. The results reached could be used as tools by teachers to diagnose and analyze students' needs and to raise learners' awareness of using particular writing strategies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EAP: English for Academic Purposes

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

FLL: Foreign Language Learners

FL: Foreign Language

LLS: Language Learning Strategies

LS: Learner Strategies

L1:   First Language

L2:   Second Language

SILL: Strategy Inventory of Language Learning

SLI: Second Language Instruction

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

WAC: Writing-Across-Curriculum

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The present chapter first provides a brief overview of the literature related to writing and sets the context of the enquiry. Next, it proceeds further to account for the rationale behind undertaking this study. Then, it finishes with presenting the outline of the thesis.

1.1. Research background

Starting from the second half of the twentieth century a significant move has taken place within the field of second language instruction (SLI) from a teacher-centred approach to learner-centeredness (Brown, 1987). As a consequence, several researchers have become curious to investigate learner variations. Research on the writing discipline, particularly, attracted the attention of several scholars and composition practitioners who sought to identify effective instructional practices, introduce educational reform as well as explore student writers' composing strategies.

It was not until the 1980's that there occurred a significant paradigm shift in composition. In fact, a great deal of emphasis was placed primarily on the study of language learners' written products, i.e. what students wrote. To this effect, writing researchers embarked on the task of studying linguistic and syntactic aspects. They were chiefly motivated by the assumption that there exists one single, unique method to the teaching of writing. As such, they focused on grammar, text structure, accuracy and error correction in an effort to improve writing (Raimes, 1991; Zamel, 1982). But, this approach which focused on form exclusively led to the emergence of other approaches which had distinct concerns and emphases: one, for example, focused on the writer, the thinking processes, and strategies employed during the writing process; another was concerned with the content of composition and still another approach which stressed the importance of considering the concept of readership while composing (Raimes, 1991).

As was mentioned earlier, concern with empirical research covering different theories of composition and the identification of learner strategies (LS) in the field of second language instruction further raised awareness about the diversity of learners as well as to their different interests and needs. This, in turn, stimulated the curiosity of a

number of researchers who were prone to define the concept of language learning strategies (LLS) as one aspect of learner differences (Wenden, 2002). As a consequence, they tried to identify the reasons why some students are more adept than others in learning to write effectively and find out about the various strategies they utilise to handle a given set of written classroom activities. Such scholars as Richards (1990), Chenoweth (1987), Zamel (1982, 1983), and Raimes (1987) conducted several surveys investigating the attributes and strategies of the so-called 'good language learners'. Few researchers (e.g. Raimes, 1985; Vann & Abraham, 1990), on the contrary, were interested in studying the strategies of "unskilled ESL students" or "less successful" language learners using Raimes's (1985) and Vann and Abraham's (1990) terms respectively.

The identification of the characteristics of language proficient student writers has led to the development of several taxonomies of LLS in general (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1985a; Rubin, 1975) and writing strategies in particular (Oxford, 1990). This pushed composition researchers to further emphasise the utility of strategy training in improving the proficiency level of students and consider the factors that affect the choice of appropriate composing strategies and production of good pieces of written discourse.

As far as the Tunisian context is concerned, several researchers have carried out experimental studies with respect to foreign language (FL) composition. For example, Mahfoudhi (1999) investigated academic writing by examining the texts produced by student majors of English as well as their composing processes while performing an argumentative task. In another study, Bayoudh (2003) sought to investigate the writing strategies and processes of a group of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students. She also tried to identify the difficulties they faced due to lack of strategy training and limited knowledge of the conventions of the linguistic code.

Still another study was conducted by Berrima (2003) who examined the nature of teachers' feedback and the views of students with regard to that phenomenon. Belaid (2004) focused on the impact of peer- and self- feedback on the quality of students' writing. The above cited studies will be overviewed in more detail in the literature review chapter.

The present study is also situated within research on university writing instruction. It is primarily concerned with investigating the self-reported writing strategies of Tunisian first year university students as well as the teaching strategies of composition teachers. In addition, the study aims to find out about their perceptions of the composing strategies they use; i.e., to what extent their perceptions match their actual practice. It also attempts to detect areas of convergence and divergence that exist between students' learning preferences and teachers' teaching practices over a set of common writing strategies.

1.2. Statement of the problem

With reference to research in the field of English language teaching in Tunisia and in the field of composition theory in general, the main target of this study is to determine through the use of survey techniques, what strategies Tunisian foreign language learners (FLL) use and how frequently they use them throughout the writing process. For instance, the survey taken by undergraduate students included questions aiming to determine the impact of such variables as writing abilities, number of years studying English, motivation behind attending composition courses, selection and frequency of classroom activities on the quality of language learners' written products. It also comprised questions enquiring about the reasons learners had behind employing a certain category of composing strategies more frequently than others.

As for the teacher questionnaire, the researcher sought to elicit information on their teaching practices and to corroborate the data obtained from students. To attain these research objectives, data about what strategies first year students and composition practitioners used was sought by using the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990). The items included in the two questionnaires, which corresponded to different themes in the model of LLS proposed by Oxford (1990), were modified and adapted so as to fit the purposes of the current research project.

The responses of the participants were analysed by means of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to assess the overall frequency of use of composing strategies. The researcher hopes that this analytical software will help her get further insights into individual learners and teachers' own behaviours and composing strategies. The following section outlines the main objectives of the current research project.

1.3. Research objectives

One of the main motives behind undertaking this research project is the desire to identify what composing strategies first year students claim to use and how frequently they use them. It also attempts to investigate the writing strategies teachers target when teaching composition. The responses are examined with reference to Oxford's (1990) comprehensive model of language learning strategies (LLS). The results will help us formulate suggestions on how to help novice writers write better and enrich their repertoire of writing strategies.

In fact, long before deciding to conduct this longitudinal study, I often heard my teachers of writing and language content teachers complain about the deterioration of the quality of students' writing in English. At the same time, students also expressed their dissatisfaction with the way teachers responded to their written texts and complained about the lack of guidance and insufficient feedback. Therefore, these issues inspired me to investigate the learners' use of strategies and their teachers' policy regarding strategy teaching. This study will help us reach a better understanding of the current situation of the teaching and learning of writing within the Tunisian educational context and can serve as research-driven base for future decisions related to writing instruction.

1.4. Research questions

To attain the objectives mentioned above, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What writing strategies do students say they use while performing writing assignments?
2. What writing strategies do teachers target in composition classes?
3. What areas of mismatch exist between learners' learning needs and preferences and the teachers' teaching practices?

Following the results, the implications for teaching composition at university level will be discussed to propose recommendations for curriculum design and pedagogy.

1.5. Organization of the study

The present paper is made up of six chapters. The introductory chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study and states its rationale. The second chapter reviews the literature and the main tenets underpinning theories of teaching writing. Moreover, it draws attention to the models of writing strategies as proposed by scholars such as Hayes and Flower (1981) and Oxford (1990). It also surveys a number of process-oriented studies investigating the composing strategies of "skilled" and "less skilled" writers in relation to their L1 peers. Chapter three is concerned with the methodology adopted. In that chapter, a detailed description of the target population, the research instruments, and themes are provided. Chapters four and five sum up and discuss the findings of the current survey in relation to previous research on writing instruction. The paper ends by making recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical background of this study with a particular reference to the key issues in the field of second language (L2) writing instruction. It is divided into four main sections. It first reviews the literature relevant to research on composition by explaining how writing developed, clarifying the concept of linear and non-linear writing, and outlining theories of composition. The second section highlights the often mentioned discrepancy between theory and practice. As for the next section, it reviews theories of learner strategies particularly writing strategies and discusses two main models for teaching writing strategies: Flower and Hayes's (1981) model and Oxford's (1990) model. It then draws attention to the major findings obtained from research investigating the strategies used by ESL "skilled" and "less skilled" writers in relation to first language (L1) composition research.

2.1. Research on composition

The present section starts with a review of how writing came to be integrated with learning. Next, it discusses how composition researchers and student writers view writing. Lastly, it surveys the four predominant teaching paradigms to L2 writing instruction, highlights and discusses the theoretical principles and teaching practices underpinning each of them (Raimes, 1991).

2.1.1. Writing as a learning tool

It was not until the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s that writing came to be viewed as a skill in itself and began to occupy a vital role in the program (Reid, 2001). Indeed, most English Language Teaching (ELT) researchers and educators were convinced that writing primarily served as a tool for communicating information and mastering grammatical structures and linguistic forms (Ibid). As Reid (2001) expressed it, "while graduate programmes in TESOL regularly offered courses in other skill areas, virtually no coursework was available in teaching L2 writing" (p. 28). This meant that writing was not perceived as a tool for learning; i.e., not believed to have any relation with promoting thinking, discovering new ideas and learning new concepts.

As a result of the growing dissatisfaction with the writing abilities of ELT learners, practitioners and scholars gradually came to recognize the need to integrate writing into various disciplines and to weave writing assignments across all content areas. This formed the essence of the "Writing-Across-Curriculum" (WAC) movement, an educational reform program, which emerged in the 1970s in the United States. This movement stressed the need to and importance of integrating writing into mainstream curriculum so as to facilitate learning as well as command of the writing conventions of various disciplines (Tynjälä, Mason & Lonka, 2001). As Tynjälä, Mason and Lonka (2001) pointed out, "the WAC programmes involved training and workshops for teachers across disciplines about how to use writing for content-area learning and how to deal with students' writing problems" (p. 8).

Likewise, a significant move in the focus of research on composition took place at around the same time (1980s) from product-centred to process-centred approaches. While the product approach attended particularly to the finished written product; i.e., what students write. Therefore, it stressed a writing instruction that catered for appropriate application of grammatical rules, command of text types, and prevention of errors. The process-dominated approach, on the other hand, focused on the writer's internal cognitive processes -planning, translating, and revising- which were constantly drawn upon during the completion of the writing task at hand.

This shift was mainly traced back to the "cognitive revolution in psychology" which extensively affected composition investigators' view of the act of writing (Tynjälä, Mason & Lonka, 2001). As we shall see later, supporters of the above two paradigms differently perceived the composing process and had distinct focuses. But before proceeding further in reviewing the literature related to the development of teaching theories of writing, it would be adequate to begin with clarifying one of the key concepts that extensively affected people's understanding of the nature of writing: the concept of linear and non-linear writing.

As a matter of fact, the concept of linear and non-linear writing was often conceived of as a dichotomy. Accordingly, they were treated as two distinct styles of thinking and writing. In linear writing, writers are expected to follow a straight line from planning, translating, then to revising. No alternation between the three writing phases occurred. On the contrary, non-linear writing denoted recursion. During the composing process, writers kept moving back and forth between the rehearsing, drafting and revising phases (Raimes, 1985). This theme, along with other themes,

recurred in most ESL composition studies. Indeed, several L2 researchers and teachers of composition embarked on the task of investigating the written products as well as the different composing behaviours and strategies of skilful and less skilful students (see section 2.4.). They also attempted to assess student writers' views of writing and to investigate which composing strategies seem to be conducive to the production of effective texts (Reid, 2001).

This led to the appearance of terms such as "product", "linguistic accuracy", "linearity" as opposed to "process", "making meaning", "invention", and "multiple drafts", on the one hand, and to the introduction of a number of teacher-tutored activities like peer and group work, on the other hand (Raimes, 1991). This was clearly reflected in the false dichotomy between process and product oriented approaches and which in turn led to differing writing definitions. While some composition researchers viewed writing as linear and non-recursive; others deemed it as cyclical and recursive.

Process researchers like Raimes (1985, 1987) and Zamel (1982, 1983) argued that writing ought to be regarded as recursive and non-linear by virtue of the complex and multiple cognitive demands that are continuously called upon during the accomplishment of a given writing task. In her experimental study which will be discussed in detail in the fourth section, Raimes (1985) came to the conclusion that both advanced L1 and L2 writers do not follow a defined sequence. They rather tend to pursue a non-methodological and unstructured "sequence of planning, organizing, writing, and then revising" (p. 229). That is to say, as student writers proceed in their written output, they begin to detect their opinions and ideas step by step. Meanwhile, they can introduce some changes (addition, editing, and omission) so as to express their intended meaning.

Furthermore, Zamel (1983) argues that composition teachers have to let students discover their ideas and thoughts before providing them with an instruction that reinforces acquisition of syntactic structures as well as prescribed plans and models of writing. To put it simply, she believes that students should be given opportunities and freedom to choose topics that are relevant to them, explore their inner thoughts, write and revise their multiple drafts, along with receiving constructive feedback. The following quote by Zamel (1983) sums up the concept of writing as a recursive and non-linear process:

> Writing is indeed a process of discovering and making meaning. Through the act of writing itself, ideas are explored, clarified, and reformulated and, as this process continues, new ideas suggest themselves and become assimilated into the developing pattern of thought. (p. 166)

The next section outlines the major assumptions and pedagogical practices underlying each teaching paradigm.

2.1.2. Theories of writing

Over the last decades, there emerged several teaching orientations some of which have had tremendous effects on composition research and pedagogy. The following three writing dimensions-the finished written product (the text), the writing process, and academic writing-received a great deal of attention (Reid, 2001; Raimes, 1991). Indeed, numerous studies were carried out with each having a distinct area of interest. In her historical overview of L2 writing theories, Raimes (1991) identified four major teaching paradigms which she assigned approximate dates showing "when each focus first appeared" (p. 408). For example, the first approach, which emerged in the 1960s, focused on the form of the text; the second one which appeared in the mid seventies drew attention to the writer and the mental operations involved during the act of writing. The third and the next approaches, on the other hand, which appeared in the mid eighties emphasised the content for writing and highlighted the need to consider readers' expectations while composing (Raimes, 1991).

However, none of the above-cited approaches, as Raimes (1991) pointed out, were "discrete and sequential" (p. 412). They rather survived in many ESL/EFL classrooms (Raimes, 1991). They were more or less the result of paradigm shifts. That is to say, new theories developed so as to replace the old ones and to afford adequate competent alternatives. In what follows, I will summarize the main tenets and assumptions of each approach and highlight their impact on writing pedagogy.

2.1.2.1. The product approach

Under the product-focused approach, writing was fundamentally used as a means for mastering syntactic aspects, testing accuracy, and the overall organisation of various genres of texts and paragraphs (Raimes, 1991; Richards, 1990). It was not, therefore, viewed as a skill in itself but as a "support skill" used to fulfil a number of functions such as writing answers to grammar and reading activities, checking

spelling, and improving handwriting. Even when students were instructed to write down statements, they were asked to introduce transformations at the grammatical level by changing tenses (Reid, 2001; Raimes, 1991; Zamel, 1987). Accordingly, it did not highlight the complex nature of the writing process, as shall be seen in the next section (Raimes, 1991; Richards, 1990).

Concern for syntactic forms was not unique to the product approach, it rather extended further to cover rhetorical form. This, as Raimes (1991) pointed out in her historical overview of composition research and practice, paved the way for the introduction of Kaplan's (1966) concept of "contrastive rhetoric". He was interested in assessing texts generated by non-native speakers of English and inferred that ESL writers made use of their L1 rhetorical conventions and structural patterns while composing in L2 (Raimes, 1991). To this effect, new writing exercises were devised instead of the old ones. Students were trained to identify and write topic sentences, imitate written models of essays and paragraphs, along with putting scrambled paragraphs into a new order (Ibid). This did not result in engaging student writers in real activities; i.e., classroom activities were not authentic, as they did attend neither to sentence meaning nor to the correlation between sentences (Raimes, 1991).

Learners, thereby, grew dissatisfied and frustrated as they faced lots of troubles while writing in English (Raimes, 1985). This led to a shift in emphasis. Writing researchers such as Zamel (1982, 1983) and Raimes (1985) who were convinced of the futility of the above "traditional" approach, shifted their attention to studying the cognitive processes involved during the act of writing. This paved the way for the emergence of an alternative approach to the teaching of ESL writing called the process approach.

2.1.2.2. The process-dominated approach

Central to the "process approach", also referred to as the 'expressive approach', which emerged in the mid 1970s is the attempt to investigate the composing behaviours as well as the different recursive and non-linear stages that both "skilled" and "less skilled" L2 writers went through during the act of writing (Reid, 2001; Raimes, 1991). To this effect, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on "means" (how students write), rather than on "ends" (what students produced). This was mainly related to the belief that in order to foster good writers, it would be sensible to adopt and use a writing instruction that takes into consideration the

cognitive processes as well as the composing strategies of good writers (Richards, 1990). This, consequently, led to the development and widening the scope of L2 composition research from focusing particularly on "form" and accuracy to studying the various and complex "cognitive processes" writers employed while composing as well as the audience of writing (Raimes, 1991, p. 408).

As such, a number of L2 process researchers like Zamel (1983), Raimes (1985, 1987) and Cumming (1989), who have been closely influenced by L1 composition research, embarked on the task of investigating the composing processes of ESL writers (skilled and unskilled) in comparison with their native counterparts. Take, for example, the empirical studies carried out by Zamel (1982, 1983) on the writing behaviours of advanced ESL student writers in which she found instances of similarity between them and native speaker-student writers. She argued that both groups viewed writing as a process of generating meaning. To perform the task at hand, writers utilised a number of complex mental processes in a recursive, non-linear way to plan, transcribe, and revise their output.

Re-reading and revising, as Zamel (1983) noted, were omnipresent in the composing behaviours of the six advanced ESL participants. Zamel (1983) recorded that subjects reread their drafts in order to clarify their ideas and assess what they produced. Raimes (1985), who shares a similar view of writing, cautions that when teaching L2 composition teachers should not amply adopt L1 teaching practises and apply them to ESL students; i.e., on the basis of the common features shared by L1 and L2 writers. Instead, they had to consider the potential differences between L1 and L2 writers. They should not be treated as equal. As stated above, this will be developed fully under section 2.4. comparing the composing processes of native and non native writers of English.

Focus on the writer's composing process and the different writing strategies s/he used to generate output, therefore, presented the scope of process-oriented studies. From this perspective, a new understanding of writing was provided. The next two subsections will explore the conceptions and tenets governing the content-dominated and reader-dominated approaches respectively.

2.1.2.3. The content-dominated approach

Concern with the content and academic demands, rather than the writer's composing processes, was brought to the fore with the "content-based approach" which was initially introduced by Mohan in 1979 (Cited in Raimes's historical review of composition theories, 1991). Mohan (1986), for instance, claimed that it is beneficial for ESL students in the sense that by attaching the writing course to the content course in the other subject areas, their sphere of vocabulary will be enlarged. That is to say, by being familiar with the technical vocabulary and the language conventions and formats of the subject field or a given discipline, this will help students acquire the target language, understand the content and command the skills of writing (Raimes, 1991).

Following Raimes's (1991) review of *Emerging traditions in the teaching of writing* across the last quarter, this current "traditional" approach emphasized the necessity of choosing the pertinent content for the teacher to prepare activities and courses of writing and reading that fit the given content. Yet, she states that unlike the previous traditional approaches to the teaching of writing, this orientation remarkably affected the form of academic courses of study. In other words, conventional ESL classroom routines were changed and were substituted by new practices such as "team teaching", "linked courses", "topic-centred modules or mini courses", "field-specific instruction", and "composition or multi-skill English for academic purposes (EAP)" (p. 411). Commenting on this writing pedagogy, Raimes (1991) suggests that instructors ought to "take some of the features of a writer-focused approach, such as prewriting tasks and the opportunity for revision" (p. 412) instead of focusing exclusively on content.

2.1.2.4. English for Academic Purposes approach

Contrary to the previous process-centred paradigm which stressed the writer's cognitive operations, there appeared another writing approach at about the same time (1986) referred to as English for Academic Purposes (Raimes, 1991). Focus on the demands and expectations of readership along with acute opposition to "personal" writing formed the basis of such paradigm. In fact, advocates of this approach strongly argued that attention should be extended to surpass emphasis on correctness and adhesion to accuracy and rote learning as well as the composing processes of

writers to include the reader as a representative of the academic community; i.e., pre-defined readers (Ibid).

Horowitz (1986b), an opponent of the process-oriented approach, for example, harshly criticized it for its limited perception of language teaching and "its failure to provide any clear perspective on the social nature of writing: the conventions, regularities, genres, requirements, typical task types, and so on" (p. 788). He argued that the process approach did not provide students with sufficient training in dealing with the various writing tasks (exam essays) they will face, whenever the opportunity arises (see section 2.2.).

This, eventually, led to an increasing interest in investigating the extent to which language learners adhere to the conventions of academic writing (Reid, 2001). To this effect, terms like academic *demands* and *academic discourse* [the author's italics] along with audience and readership have been widely used in the EAP orientation (Raimes, 1991). However, it should be noted that the lexical item "audience", for example, is not specific to this present approach. It was rather a characteristic of the process-approach from the start where teachers and peer students were seen as the classroom target readers. With the EAP approach, on the other hand, audience refers to readers who represent the whole discourse community not a small one, i.e. defined individuals (Raimes, 1991).

As can be seen, focus on the reader and adherence to the conventions of academic writing along with preparing students to become proficient academic writers formed the basis of the EAP approach. Yet, this approach, dissimilar from the process-dominated approach, remains faithful to the product-approach in view of its undue interest in meeting the demands of academic discourse; thus, announcing a return for prescriptivism. From this perspective, writing instruction under this teaching paradigm would inevitably be directed towards teaching the written conventions specific to a given discipline or subject prescriptively. Thus, resulting, as Raimes (1991) conceptualized it, in renaming the teaching paradigm and keeping almost similar interests. To put it another way, the old teaching paradigms reappear and gain prevalence but under different and new nomenclatures; thus, resulting in reinforcing and echoing the principles, practices and scopes of writing paradigms that were once predominant. The next part tries to account for the gap between theory and practice as far as composition instruction is concerned.

2.2. The gap between theory and practice

No teaching approach can be classified as a unique, effective orientation. Each approach does have its assets and shortcomings. As mentioned earlier, one can notice that the history of L2 composition was characterized by the emergence of several successive approaches which extensively affected the learning and teaching of ESL and EFL writing. Both the growing dissatisfaction with the present approach, and the innate eagerness for change and newness, in our case overthrow of the product approach initially and the process approach later, form part of the explanation concerning paradigm change (Raimes, 1991; Hamp Lyons, 1986).

Horowitz (1986a), a critic of the process-based approach, does acknowledge the fact that the process approach did bring a new understanding of the concept of writing to the field of second language composition. In fact, he (1986b) concurs that process teachers are aware of individual differences and learners' various writing strategies. This is reflected mainly in their interest in studying the writing behaviours of ESL students with different L1 backgrounds rather than with their finished products and in their attempts to provide students with a given set of academic writing situations that require the use of various strategies.

Yet, he regards it as a misfit theory in that it "fails to prepare students for at least one essential type of academic writing"; i.e., essay exams (p. 141). He contends that this approach does not render them capable of producing highly polished written products that abide to the "real" demands or set of instructions required for successful academic writing. He (1986b) assumes that the process approach is unproductive because it "give[s] students abstractions and general strategies without realistic simulations of the demands they will face" (p. 789).

Commenting on the seemingly ever-lasting controversial issue between adherents of the academic approach, as Horowitz (1986a) termed it, and supporters of the process-approach, one would cite Liebman-Kleine's (1986) and Hamp Lyons's (1986) responses to what Horowitz (1986a) wrote in TESOL Quarterly Forum concerning the drawbacks of the process-approach. Liebman-Kleine (1986), a critic of the academic approach, argues that such controversy is unproductive for a number of reasons. For one thing, she ascribes it to the inconspicuous changes that affect the scholastic life especially the process. Indeed, she claims that there has been a gradual growth and an increasing consciousness about the significance of creating writing courses and incorporating the findings of the process-oriented approach in a number

of schools. For example, some teachers started to encourage their students to work in pairs and groups, get peer feedback, produce multiple drafts, devise composing as a means for learning, and consider a broader readership while writing.

Another reason showing the falseness of the academic and process dichotomy, as Liebman-Kleine (1986) pointed out, is the narrow view of the process-approach critics who deemed it as "miscast". She states that as a concept and not a theory, the concept of process denotes difference. Given its complex nature, she firmly believes that it reflects lots of differing orientations and aspects of being including "cognition, emotion, sense of self, sense of others, situation, background, experience, development" (p. 785). That is to say, not all writers write in the same way and employ the same composing strategies to the various tasks encountered. They rather differ.

Furthermore, she considers the process and academic approaches as one in that both of them entail a process. That is to say, writers are to be taught how to cope with demands such as purpose, audience, self and situation while composing. What distinguishes the two approaches, according to Leibman-Klein (1986), is how they view writing in a language class. For proponents of the academic approach, composing is an illustration of language learners' actual knowledge; i.e., what they know. For them teaching and training writers how to cope with the potential constraints of writing activities they will encounter in other classes constitute the major goal of the writing class. As for advocates of the process approach, writing is viewed as a useful means for learning; i.e., it develops and refines writers' skills.

In light of the above claims concerning the product and process dilemma, Kamimura (2000) strongly argues in favour of integrating the two entities in the EFL classroom setting. He believes that they should not be treated as separate entities. Paying equal attention to product and process when teaching composition might be the soundest solution as Kamimura (2000) suggested. Nonetheless, this remains hard to achieve. Zamel (1987), for instance, maintains that the rationale behind the non-application of the findings obtained from new paradigms to the teaching of composition is related to the gap existing between theory and practice. The restrictions imposed by the educational system on tutors is one among many other determinant factors that discourages teachers from adopting and employing new techniques on the one hand, and at the same time encourages them to stick to traditional paradigms.

Liebman-Kleine (1986) though agrees with Horowitz's (1986a) claim that "there are as many different writing processes as there are academic writing tasks", acknowledges that the process approach does not practically meet the demands of all sorts of academic writing. Nonetheless, she assumes that this is not the responsibility of practitioners of writing only, simply because given the large number and diversity of writing tasks along with time constraints it seems almost impossible to cover all tasks.

Alternatively, she proposes providing students with various strategies and helping them find out about their writing processes for learning to take place. This can be facilitated by training both composition teachers and students about strategy use and introducing them to the key strategies identified in the writing discipline. This can be achieved by referring to the current developments in writing instruction including findings of process-oriented studies and to some of the most influential models of composing strategies. The next sections overviews Flowers and Hayes's (1981) and Oxford's writing typologies.

2.3. Models of writing strategies

In this section, I will deal with the taxonomies of writing strategies proposed by Hayes and Flower (1981) and I will pay specific attention to Oxford's (1990) model for her great impact in and valuable contribution to this domain. As such, a summary of the tenets underlying each model will be provided and will be accompanied when necessary with tables representing the writing strategies identified.

2.3.1. Flower and Hayes' (1981) cognitive model of writing

In the early 1980s, Flower and Hayes (1981) proposed a practical model of writing in which they identified three basic components, as shown in Figure 1 below. In this model, which comprised the outcomes reached from different writing studies, they tried to sum up the various cognitive processes involved and strategies writers employed while writing. The first component is the task environment which comprises the writing assignment -topic, audience- the writer's motivation and the text written. The writer's long-term memory, which is in the charge of retaining issues like knowledge of topics, audience, and writing plans, forms the second component of the cognitive model. As for the third element, it covers the three basic stages of the writing process: planning, translating, and revising.
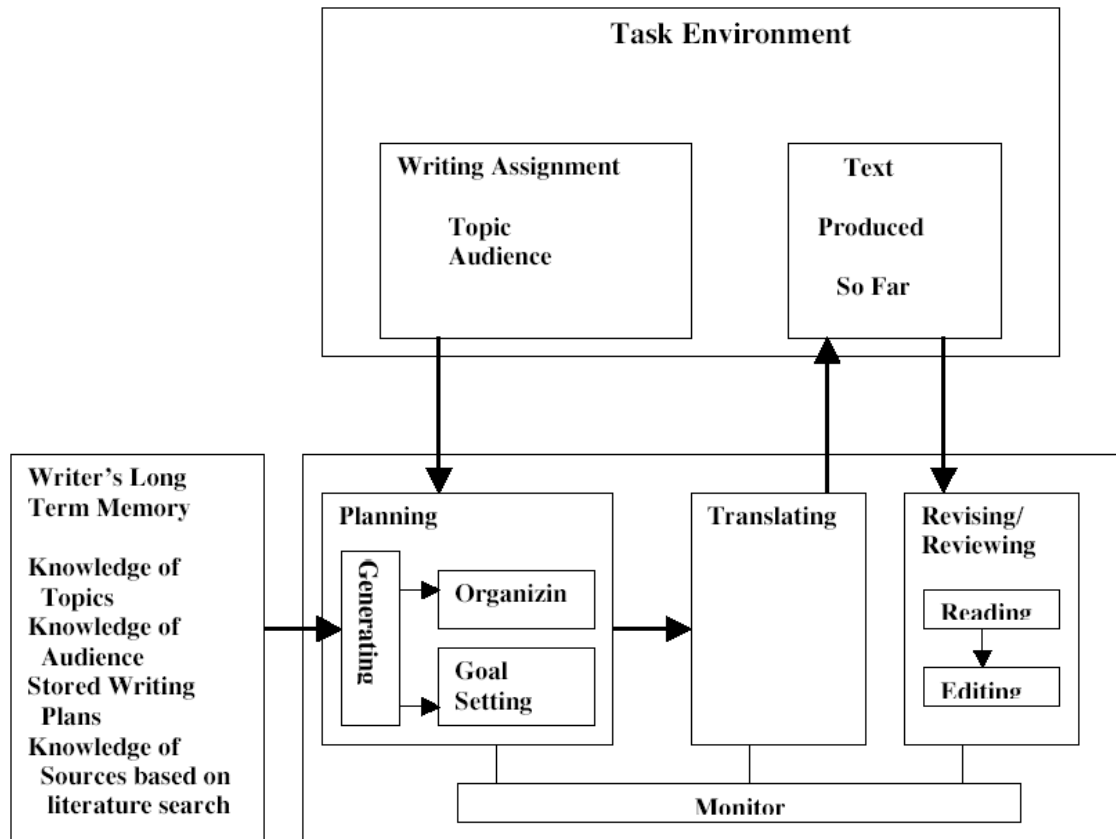
Figure 1: Flower and Hayes's (1981) cognitive model of the composing process

The first stage of the third component, planning, is subdivided into three major sub-processes. They serve to retrieve and organise the pertinent information generated from the writer's long term memory and the task environment, as well as transform them into ways that meet the goal set and direct the proceeding of the following operations. The second stage involves translating the data retrieved from long term memory and producing it in a way that fits the plans and goals established by the writer. Reviewing or revising forms the last phase of the writing process during which the writer rereads and introduces changes in an attempt to get a highly polished piece of discourse; i.e., enhance the quality of the written text by correcting errors, deleting, adding and clarifying ideas.

According to Flower and Hayes (1981), the composing process is recursive and cyclical rather than linear; i.e., not proceeding in one-way sequence from planning, to translating, to reviewing. In fact, the writer's long term memory is constantly probed for adequate information in terms of topic relevancy and satisfying the needs and requirements of readership. Thus, editing, an integral component of the

writing process, seems to be omnipresent in almost all stages of writing. This implies, according to Flower and Hayes (1981), that the use of "sophisticated" writing strategies like planning, translating and revising extensively affect student writers' written products.

Given the complexity of the act of writing which is further aggravated by multiple and simultaneous constraints (transforming abstract knowledge into real text, organising unorganised thoughts, considering audience) imposed on the writer's limited abilities namely the restraints of short term memory. Flower and Hayes (1981) argue that planning along with other effective strategies can contribute to reducing the high exhaustive and multiple cognitive demands placed on conscious attention. Ignoring certain constraints intentionally, partitioning or dividing the problematic aspect into sub-problems, setting priorities, automatizing procedures exemplify the set of strategies Flower and Hayes listed to overcome constraints. This set is further backed up in Oxford's (1990) comprehensive model of learning strategies that can be applied to the four modalities including writing.

2.3.2. Oxford's (1990) classification of writing strategies

In her book on LLS, Oxford (1990), whose model I will use in my survey, identified a number of different learning strategies and grouped them under two main categories: direct and indirect strategies which can be linked to the four language skills: Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing or (the neglected R). These two basic groups, as Figure 2 below shows, are further classified and subdivided into six groups which will be dealt with in details later on and will be tabulated too. As will be displayed, Oxford's (1990) model, which was adjusted to the needs of the present research project, comprised several strategies that were specific to writing and were employed by both L1 and L2 writers, i.e. as pointed out in process-focused studies. In what follows, a report of the composing strategies falling under the first class of direct strategies will be provided followed immediately by a list of indirect writing strategies.

Language learning strategies

Direct Strategies

Memory Strategies	Cognitive Strategies	Compensation Strategies

Indirect Strategies

Metacognitive Strategies	Affective Strategies	Social Strategies
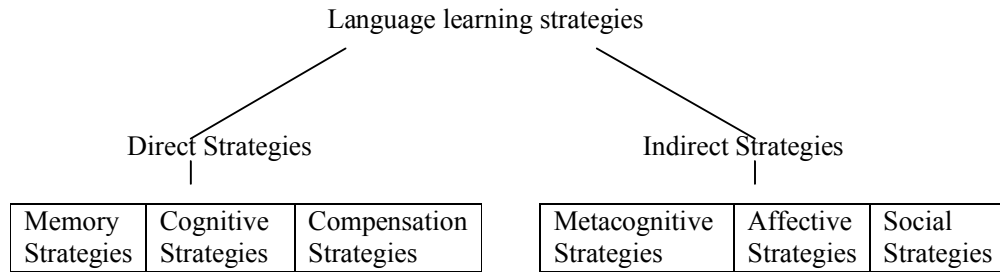
Figure 2: Oxford's (1990) model of language learning strategies

2.3.2.1. Direct writing strategies

Direct strategies, as defined by Oxford (1990), "require mental processing of the language" (p. 37). They are broken into three types: memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies.

2.3.2.1.1. Memory Strategies

According to Oxford, storage and retrieval of new data represent the major functions of memory strategies. These are effective for retrieving relevant information during the act of writing. As seen in Table 1 below, there exist under this category three clusters of memory strategies that can be applied to writing: (a) "creating mental linkages", (b) "reviewing well", and (c) "employing action".

With regard to the first strategy, Oxford (1990) maintains that placing new words into a context can help writers memorize and utilize new words or expressions meaningfully in a written discourse. As for the next strategy, reviewing well, it enables learners to review newly learned materials in the target language at varying spans of time; i.e., reviewing new vocabulary until it becomes automatized. Lastly, using a mechanical technique is another subset of memory strategies under employing actions can also be used to facilitate recall of new items and practice of writing. In fact, Oxford (1990) believes that through employing mechanical techniques such as flash cards, students can practise writing. That is to say, they can write complete sentences containing the new words read or heard.

Table 1: Oxford's (1990, p. 18) cluster of memory strategies

2.3.2.1.1. Memory Strategies	1. Creating mental linkages	1. Placing new words into a context
	2. Reviewing well	1. Structured reviewing
	3. Employing action	1. Using mechanical techniques

2.3.2.1.2. Cognitive Strategies:

The second group of learning strategies identified is cognitive strategies. The latter are said to contribute directly to the learning process in the sense that they provide learners with "techniques" that enable them to understand and produce new input and cope with tasks that require analysis and reasoning. Among the main cognitive strategies, identified by Oxford (1990) are "practicing", "receiving and sending messages", "analysing and reasoning", and "creating structure for input and output" which are further subdivided into a number of sub-writing strategies. Table 2 lists Oxford's (1990) set of cognitive strategies.

- **Practicing**

Practicing consists of five sub-strategies. Repeating, a sub-cognitive strategy falling under practicing may not seem significant or creative at first. Yet, it is pertinent to the four literacy skills when employed in meaningful ways. For writing, a student may write the same item, the same sentence or passage several times and in various ways. In the same way, urging students to imitate L1 users of a given language and providing them with different written models to follow are beneficial. Oxford (1990) argues that they can speed up and enhance command of literacy skills of the target language including appropriate use of idioms, lexical items, syntactic and structural rules.

Additionally, she (1990) identified another key use for the strategy of repeating which is revising. The latter is considered by many writing researchers (e.g. Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1983) as essential to the production of at least an acceptable piece of writing. Most writers chiefly proficient ones go through the process of revising their drafts several times, focusing each time on a specific area of interest. To the fulfilment of this revision task, writers differ; with some treating writing and revising as distinct phases. Others deeming them as one phase; i.e., they constantly review and reread their written drafts (Oxford, 1990).

Formally practising with writing systems, another sub-cognitive strategy involves learning and practising the written system of the language learned by rewriting alphabetic letters and copying words in both languages (L1 and L2). According to Oxford (1990), this technique helps students to recall them and use the newly learned materials in a meaningful context.

With respect to the third sub-strategy, recognizing and using formulas and patterns, it involves providing students with various writing tasks and texts that require the use of formats and expressions typical to the target language. This can help students understand and write better in the target language (Oxford, 1990).

Recombining is the fourth sub-cognitive strategy identified under practicing that can be applied to writing. It centres on encouraging student writers to use familiar words meaningfully in order to produce a coherent paragraph which contains all the learned items and forms in new ways.

Lastly, practising naturalistically-identified as one of the most essential developmental skills-covers various modes. These include creation of various products comprising multiple formats such as diaries, poems, stories, and real reports written by individuals and group work. In other words, when writing partners collaborate and provide each other with peer feedback in order to produce one piece of discourse, they will develop their composing skills as they get writing practice.

- **Receiving and sending messages**

As illustrated in Table 2, using resources for receiving and sending messages which falls under receiving and sending messages is applicable to the four skills. As far as writing is concerned, learners can devise this technique to help them explore and look up the meaning of new items and generate written output in the target language. This can be done via the use of different tools such as printed materials: monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, grammar books, and encyclopaedias.

- **Analysing and reasoning**

Reasoning deductively is one of the three sub-strategies that belong to the set of analysing and reasoning. Learners sometimes resort to logical thinking and to their prior knowledge of general rules to grasp the essence of what is heard or read. Oxford (1990), however; cautions that overuse of this cognitive strategy may lead to problems and instances of overgeneralization.

Translating, the second sub-cognitive strategy identified under analysing and reasoning, is effective provided that it is used thoroughly and infrequently. That is to say, at the first stages of learning development translating can play a crucial role. Because most novice writers are tempted to resort to their mother tongue to be capable of producing and understanding target language input and output.

Nevertheless, it can turn into a crutch when it is misused or used frequently, thus resulting in hampering and slowing down learning.

Another sub-strategy which makes part of the analyzing and reasoning is transferring. Transferring, in fact, stands to conveying and applying L1 knowledge to L2 knowledge. This means that writers can resort to their mother tongue to facilitate acquisition of new target language elements. Like translating, transferring does have its perils. Transfer can be positive or negative. Positive when the transferred elements are similar across the two languages. Nonetheless, this is not always the case because transfer can result in errors due to differences observed across languages.

- **Creating structure for input and output**

All of the three sub-strategies that fall under this category of cognitive strategies-taking notes, summarizing, and highlighting-apply to the four skills. To start with, Oxford (1990) argues that beginners should be taught and encouraged to take notes from the outset. She presupposes that this skill should not be considered as a hard tool to command or a tool limited particularly to experts. Novice writers ought to be trained and urged to employ it using whether a mixture of the target language and the mother tongue or just the target language. Raw notes, shopping list, semantic maps, and tree diagrams exemplify some of the various forms that could be employed to take notes.

Summarising which means reproducing the original written message or text in a short, condensed way also applies to writing. As an activity, it is more demanding and time consuming compared with note taking. In fact, summarizing activities vary according to writers' level of proficiency (Ibid).

When highlighting is added to the two previous strategies, taking notes and summarising, it becomes more effective and developmental. Drawing attention to key points, in fact, represents the basic function of highlighting which can take differing forms from using different colours, capitalizing, drawing boxes, to circling.

Table 2: Oxford's (1990, p. 19) set of cognitive strategies

2.3.2.1.2. Cognitive Strategies	1. Practicing	1. Repeating
		2. Formally practicing with sounds/writing
		3. Recognizing and using formulas and patterns
		4. Recombining
		5. Practicing naturalistically
	2. Receiving and sending messages	1. Using resources for sending and receiving messages
	3. Analyzing and Reasoning	1. Reasoning deductively
		2. Translating
		3. Transferring
	4. Creating structure For input & output	1. Taking notes
		2. Summarizing
		3. Highlighting

2.3.2.1.3. Compensation strategies

Compensation strategies form one of Oxford's (1990) six main categories of LLS. These strategies, according to Oxford (1990), are frequently utilised by learners mainly writers to compensate for an imperfect linguistic knowledge especially vocabulary. She adds that the use of compensation strategies is not only exclusive to beginning level students. Also advanced learners as well as native student writers tend to employ them whenever they face difficulties. In writing, as Table 3 shows, four sets of compensation strategies are identified: "selecting the topic", "adjusting or approximating the message", "coining words", and "using a circumlocution or synonym".

Writing in a target language precisely choosing an interesting topic to write about is obviously more motivating than writing in a non interesting one. Yet, it is not usually the case that students are allowed to select a relevant topic. Instead, they are compelled to attend to the concept of readership; i.e., who is going to read their written assignment, and do their best to generate output that abides to the writing conventions and requirements of a given language.

Another important compensation sub-strategy that Oxford (1990) identified is "adjusting or approximating the message". This strategy, as shall be seen in the next section, is deemed to be central to the writing process. According to Oxford, most

writers chiefly skilled ones are predisposed to employ this strategy while they are rereading their written drafts in search of errors. Attending, deleting, clarifying, hinting or using circumlocution illustrate the cluster of strategies writers employ while writing. Coining words and using a circumlocution exemplify the strategies students may resort to so to convey their intended message successfully when the dictionary fails them, when they don't know how to phrase a given concept, or are restricted by time (Oxford, 1990).

Table 3: Oxford's (1990, p. 19) set of compensation strategies

2.3.2.1.3. Compensation Strategies	1. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	1. Selecting the topic
		2. Adjusting or approximating the message
		3. Coining words
		4. Using a circumlocution or synonym

2.3.2.2. Indirect writing strategies

As for indirect strategies, Oxford (1990) postulates that they do not involve direct use and manipulation of the target language but they covertly "support and manage language learning situations" (p. 135). They consist of three groups: meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies.

2.3.2.2.1. Meta-cognitive strategies

By meta-cognitive strategies, Oxford (1990) means "actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process" (p. 136). In her view, meta-cognitive strategies are essential in that they enable students to plan their own learning, control their input and output, assess their own performance, process and produce new output in the target language.

Nonetheless, research on learner strategies reveals that the majority of students were not aware of the significance of meta-cognitive strategies. Oxford (1990) argues that they utilized them infrequently and had a relatively small repertoire of meta-cognitive strategies. In what follows, I will present in Table 4 Oxford's (1990) set of meta-cognitive strategies in which she has identified three basic meta-cognitive strategies: "centring your learning", "arranging and planning your learning", and "evaluating your learning", which are further broken into eleven sub-strategies.

- **Centring your learning**

Centring your learning is subdivided into two main sub-strategies: over-viewing and linking with already known material and paying attention. The first sub-strategy consists of previewing formal knowledge and letting students establish associations between previous and incoming learned materials when handling a given task. As for the second sub-strategy, paying attention, it also comprises two major "modes" of attention: 'directed attention' whereby the learner focuses on the task as a whole, and 'selective attention' meaning that emphasis is placed on particular types of information or details. In the area of writing, selective attention entails focus on specific aspects of discourse like form, content, vocabulary, purpose, mechanics, and audience.

- **Arranging and planning your learning**

This meta-cognitive strategy, as displayed in Table 4, is subdivided into six subsets that can be applied to writing. The first sub-strategy relates to the need to find out about the conventions and practices of writing mainly mechanics which are often marginalized. Indeed, Oxford (1990) recommends teachers to encourage their students to talk about their writing problems overtly, ask for help and share ideas about the efficient strategies they used for task completion.

Next organizing, another important meta-cognitive sub-strategy is said to be essential for successful language learning. Oxford argues that writers ought to be encouraged to plan, schedule their time and use a notebook (to help them store and recall various sorts of information and target language elements such as new expressions, structures, class assignments, effective writing strategies, goals and objectives).

Setting goals and objectives, another significant sub-strategy also makes part of the category of arranging and planning your learning. These refer to the aims student writers set regarding the learning process in general, and the writing process in particular. Writing goals, for example, stand for the development of a number of writing skills needed to produce different sorts of written discourse or formulas. These include corresponding with native writers of the target language, conforming to the conventions of composition, and developing skills to write business letters and scientific articles.

Identifying the purpose of the writing task from the start, the fourth sub-meta-cognitive strategy, is also deemed to be vital for the production of a meaningful written product. In doing so, writers, as Oxford (1990) pointed out, are very likely "to channel their energy in the right direction" (p. 158). Providing arguments to prove the validity of a given point, entertaining the reader, causing the audience to identify with a given situation, reporting factual data, identifying the format of the written text are examples of the purposes that need to be considered when writing.

Planning for a writing task, the fifth sub-strategy, requires student writers to be aware of issues such as identifying the nature of the task, its requirements, and the writer's internal and external resources. As an example, Oxford (1990) cites the case of Livia who realized that she had to find out about the different planning steps (application of pertinent structures, functions, lexical items) to pursue before writing a letter to her friend.

Lastly, Oxford argues that students are recommended to look for additional writing practice opportunities outside the classroom if they want to improve and reach high levels of competency in the target language.

- **Evaluating your learning**

Evaluating one's learning is subdivided into two main sub-strategies: self-monitoring and self-evaluating. In writing, self-monitoring plays a very important role. It consists of making conscious decisions on the part of students to regulate and correct their errors. As said earlier, keeping notebooks is useful for learner development as they enable writers to internalise effective writing strategies, have a better insight of their own strategies and tackle their writing difficulties. Oxford (1990) goes on to suggest that teachers should create a comfortable learning atmosphere during which writing partners are encouraged to provide each other with peer feedback on their written drafts.

As for the second sub-strategy, self-evaluating, it aims at measuring writers' overall progress in writing in several ways. In other words, students can compare and review their own written products in terms of content, form, and style with the ones produced by their expert or peer writers. In doing so, student writers are very likely to benefit and develop their writing abilities.

Table 4: Oxford's (1990, p. 20) classification of meta-cognitive strategies

2.3.2.1.4. Meta-cognitive Strategies	1. Centering your Learning	1. Overviewing and linking with already known material
		2. Paying attention
	2. Arranging and Planning your learning	1. Finding out about writing
		2. Organizing
		3. Setting goals and objectives
		4. Identifying the purpose of a writing task
		5. Planning for a language task
		6. Seeking practice opportunities
	3. Evaluating your learning	1. Self-monitoring
		2. Self-evaluating

2.3.2.2.2. Affective strategies

Generally speaking, affective strategies refer to the steps and actions learners employ to control their feelings. According to Oxford (1990), affective strategies are also significant in that they help learners achieve better results. For example, the regulation and management of one's emotions, worries, and views about the learning process are features attributed to 'good' language learners. Indeed, when the learner perceives the process of learning positively, learning will take place and vice versa. The following three sets of affective strategies which are subdivided into other sub-clusters, as can be seen in Table 5, also apply to writing: "lowering your anxiety", "encouraging yourself", and "taking your emotional temperature" (Oxford, 1990).

- **Lowering your anxiety**

While learning to write in a target language, some writers may feel anxious and frustrated. To alleviate and reduce anguish, Oxford (1990) recommends students to use the following three techniques -relaxation, deep breathing or meditation- which scientifically proved to be efficient. Indeed, when relaxing, breathing deeply, and meditating procedures are joined together, learners of all ages will be served positively in one way or another; i.e., they will manage to complete the writing task at hand efficiently. Moreover, she suggests using music and laughter, other anxiety reducer sub-strategies, to facilitate learning and make it more enjoyable. According to Oxford, listening to music before solving a demanding writing activity is

advantageous and relaxing since it results in motivating learners and in enhancing their writing competencies.

- **Encouraging yourself**

In addition to lowering one's anxiety, Oxford (1990) believes that raising one's self-esteem is also vital for development of the language acquisition process. Indeed, this can be manifested in several ways via making positive expressions and/or statements, taking risks wisely and rewarding oneself. The following instances, as Oxford (1990, p. 165) suggested, exemplify some of the positive statements that student writers utter:

"I'm a good writer"

"I enjoy writing in the new language"

"Writing helps me discover what's on my mind"

"I don't have to know everything I'm going to write before I start"

"It's OK if I make mistakes"

"Everybody makes mistakes: I can learn from mine!"

Undue fear of making mistakes and failing to solve potential writing difficulties may be harmful in the sense that it hampers the progress of the writing process. For this reason, Oxford (1990) argues that writers should be encouraged to take risks rationally through using and combining several strategies (namely direct and affective strategies).

Getting external reward in itself is not sufficient, self or what is referred to as internal reward is also needed for learning to be successful and effective. In fact, what student writers, are in most need of, is constant meaningful praise which can vary from one learner to another. For instance, students are urged to make positive statements frequently to increase their sense of motivation, and feel confident as well as value their well-written compositions in the target language (Oxford, 1990).

- **Taking your emotional temperature**

Taking your emotional temperature is the third strategy belonging to the category of affective strategies. This strategy consists of four main sub-strategies applicable to writing.

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The first one, listening to your body, aims at attending to, monitoring and measuring one's inner feelings, motivations and views. This sub-strategy is valued for the great covert effects that it exerts on the development of literacy skills in general and writing in particular. For one thing, as Oxford (1990) pointed out, "negative feelings like tension, anxiety, fear, and outrage tighten the muscles and affect all the organs of the body. Positive feelings like happiness, pleasure, contentment and excitement can have either a stimulating or a calming effect" (p. 167) completely different from negative ones.

With respect to the second sub-strategy, she argues that using a checklist is also practical. As it permits writers to assess and regulate their attitudes and emotions toward their learning progress.

Another efficient affective writing sub-technique is the use of a language learning diary which provides students with precious opportunities to record their physical sensations and the various strategies (both effective and ineffective ones) they employ. To put it simply, student writers differ; with some being willing to share and discuss the entries of their own diaries; while others feeling uncomfortable and willing to keep their written journals out of sight.

As for the last sub-strategy, discussing your feelings with others, Oxford (1990) postulates that learners should be promoted to discuss what they wrote in their diaries or checklists. For instance, they can discuss and share their feelings, attitudes, and problematic aspects of the target language with their writing partners, teachers and outsiders.

Table 5: Oxford's (1990, p. 21) set of affective strategies

2.3.2.1.5. Affective Strategies	1. Lowering your Anxiety	1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or mediation.
		2. Using music
		3. Using laughter
	2. Encouraging yourself	1. Making positive statements
		2. Taking risks wisely
		3. Rewarding yourself
	3. Taking your emotional temperature	1. Listening to your body
		2. Using a checklist
		3. Writing a language learning diary
		4. Discussing your feelings with someone else

2.3.2.2.3. Social strategies

In addition to the above strategies, Oxford (1990) has identified another group of indirect writing strategies which is social strategies. From her viewpoint, social strategies are tools tailored to actively engage students in language use. They are divided into three major strategies: "asking questions", "cooperating with others", and "empathizing with others" (See Table 6 overleaf).

- **Asking questions**

Unlike the other two skills, listening and reading, where learners often ask for clarification, in the writing and speaking areas learners frequently ask for correction. Asking for correction is closely related to the meta-cognitive strategy referred to as self-monitoring in which writers are tempted to pay attention to errors and correct them. However, the amount of correction and kinds of writing difficulties encountered differ greatly since they are largely determined by aspects such as writers' level of competency and purpose of the given composition task.

- **Cooperating with others**

Under this strategy, Oxford identified two subsets: cooperating with peers and cooperating with proficient writers of the target language. As a social act, cooperation or exchanging data with individuals is necessary for successful language learning. Games, written journals, and brainstorming activities illustrate some of the activities that are conducive to skill development especially writing. Writing, though often viewed as a solitary act, can be a cooperative one. Student writers, for example, can discuss their written products with their peers and respond to their comments and receive feedback in turn.

As for the second sub-strategy, cooperating with proficient writers or users of the target language, it also applies to the four literacy skills. For writing, cooperating with expert writers is of paramount importance. This can be obtained in a variety of ways. For example, when confronted with difficulties in the workplace, in the classroom, or on a journey, students can ask experts for help. They can ask them to explain sophisticated technical terms, written guidelines, or apply the pertinent style required for a given written format or genre in the target language.

- **Empathizing with others**

Empathizing with others, the last social strategy identified, is made up of two main sub-strategies: developing cultural understanding and becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings. With respect to the first sub-strategy, Oxford (1990) emphasises the need to raise student writers' cultural awareness of the target language. She argues that this technique helps writers produce a polished written product which abides to the maxims and conventions of writing. This can be attained by informing students and encouraging them to know about the culture of the target language whenever the opportunity arises whether inside or outside the classroom setting; i.e., through reading and watching TV films.

Similarly, she claims that students should be made aware of the feelings and thoughts of others as expressed in written products chiefly in printed materials like novels, stories, articles, letter exchanges. Indeed, these materials were found to be effective as they permit students to pursue and comprehend the viewpoints and attitudes of users/writers of the target language; i.e., comprehend surface and deep levels.

Table 6: Oxford's (1990, p. 21) set of social strategies

2.3.2.1.6. Social Strategies	1. Asking questions	1.Asking for correction
	2. Cooperating With others	1.Cooperating with peers
		2.Cooperating with proficient writers of the target language
	3. Empathizing With others	1.Developing cultural understanding
		2.Becoming aware of other's thoughts and feelings

The next section overviews the main findings reached from L2 process-oriented research and highlights the similarities and differences exhibited in the writing processes of ESL writers (skilled and unskilled) in comparison with their L1 counterparts.

2.4. L2 process writing studies

The mid 1970s was considered as the starting point for research on language learning strategies (LLS) within the field of second language acquisition (Brown, 1987). The identification of LLS represented the main concern of several researchers such as Rubin (1975) and Naiman et al. (1975) who were interested in identifying the

characteristics of the so called "good" language learners. To this effect, they used and combined various research procedures like classroom observations, verbal reports and interviews (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 2001). Though it is agreed that learners can employ various strategies to accomplish a given task, not all the strategies selected and used are effective and pertinent to solve the task at hand. From here, the success and efficacy of the teaching pedagogy can be judged.

In the same way, L2 writing researchers and scholars carried out several studies in an effort to investigate and identify the written products and writing strategies of ESL students; i.e., see how skilled and less skilled writers differed in the ways they completed writing activities (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). The following two subsections outline the main findings of ESL process-oriented studies by focusing initially on the similarities and then on the differences between skilled and unskilled L2 writers and their L1 counterparts.

2.4.1. Writing strategies of "skilled" writers

As mentioned previously, Rubin (1975) has been one of the pioneering researchers who were aware of individual differences and interested in identifying the strategies of successful learners. Indeed, she conducted several surveys where she outlined a number of features that were supposed to be central for learning a new language successfully. Rubin (1975) proposed that a skilful acquirer of a target language makes "accurate guesses" and is not afraid of making mistakes. S/he also attends to meaning and form, looks for opportunities to practice the target language, and regulates his or her output and that of others (Rubin, 1975).

These features, in turn, correspond to some of the writing strategies identified later by ESL composition researchers such as Chenoweth (1987), Raimes (1985, 1987) and Zamel (1982, 1983) who draw heavily upon first language writing research. Take for instance Zamel's (1982, 1983) experimental case studies. In her first study, she (1982) investigated the writing behaviours of eight "proficient" university-level ESL students with different mother tongues. Participants were asked to perform a composition task and were interviewed at the end of the task. Zamel (1982) found that native and non-native writers employed similar composing strategies and perceived the very act of writing as a process of creating and generating meaning. The following quote by Zamel (1982) accounts for the different recursive processes involved throughout the composing process.

It [the composing process] involves much more than studying a particular grammar, analyzing and imitating rhetorical models, or outlining what it is one plans to say. The process involves not only the act of writing itself, but prewriting and re-writing, all of which are interdependent. (p. 196)

This implied the possibility of adopting L1 teaching practices and applying them to the ESL/EFL composition classroom. To put it in another way, Zamel (1982) argues that instead of focusing on surface level aspects; i.e., producing drafts void of grammatical and lexical problems, teachers are recommended to introduce and teach their ESL students "how to make use of prewriting strategies or invention techniques" (p. 203). Writing notes, brainstorming, holding classroom discussion prior to writing, re-reading, writing several drafts, revising and considering readership exemplify the main writing strategies utilised by the eight proficient ESL writers.

A year later, Zamel (1983) conducted another case study which corroborated the findings of her earlier study- that L2 writers compose like their L1 peers. In this study, Zamel (1983) investigated the composing process of six "advanced" ESL university students who were her own students and opted for "a more rigorous methodology" (p. 169). She observed and recorded subjects' composing behaviours and collected their essays. Then she interviewed them at the end of the study. She also found that like their native counterparts, ESL student writers (skilled and less skilled) employed similar strategies and viewed writing as a non-linear and recursive process.

Yet, she argues that contrary to experienced writers who regard writing as a "cyclical" process in which they are capable of monitoring their products, i.e. by introducing changes, adding, and deleting when necessary. The "least skilled" student writer hardly views composing in such a way. While the skilled writer revised more and spent more time writing, the less skilled writer revised less and spent less time composing. The "least skilled" participant, as Zamel (1983) pointed out, "seemed to have a very different understanding of what composing required. She seemed to view writing as a static transcription of 'a series of parts-words, sentences, paragraphs'" (p. 180).

Although participants used different strategies as they had distinct priorities, they gave precedence to planning and revising their written drafts and tracking down the development of their thoughts and ideas over emphasis on form and accuracy (Zamel, 1983). Zamel (1983) claimed that her subjects "did not view composing in a second language in and of itself [as] problematical" (p. 179). This indicated that it is

students' writing expertise rather than linguistic competence which distinguishes proficient writers from less proficient ones. To put it in another way, task requirements along with writing experience largely determine the quality of L1 and L2 writers' written performance. As Zamel (1983) suggested, "certain composing problems transcend language factors and are shared by both native and non-native speakers of English" (p. 168).

Almost the same applies to the Tunisian context. Several researchers have carried out experimental studies with respect to FL composition. For example, Mahfoudhi (1999) analysed the composing processes and texts of eight second year university students writing on argumentative essays. Subjects were asked to perform two writing tasks. He found that like skilled and unskilled L2 writers, EFL subjects were primarily preoccupied with generating meaning and organising their ideas and paid little attention to grammar correction. Yet, he noticed that subjects did not seem to have command over a number of writing areas. For instance, at the level of processes, student writers planned infrequently, rarely wrote notes before composing, and wrote with no audience in mind. At the level of product, subjects' written texts were not void of a number of low-level and high-level concerns alike. Low-level shortcomings included shortcomings at the level of mechanics, grammar, and lexicon. As for the high level, subjects failed to write clear topic sentences, and supplement them with pertinent supporting details.

Moreover, Bayoudh (2003) sought to investigate the writing strategies and processes of third year English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students. Her data consisted of a writing task, a questionnaire, self reports and think aloud protocols. Six out of the thirty students (three experienced and three inexperienced writers) were given a writing task to perform. Bayoudh (2003) noted that though participants were concerned with generating content, they lacked strategy training as they faced many difficulties while writing. Most subjects reported not to use a number of effective composing strategies like planning, organizing ideas, revising, and finding appropriate ways to express their thoughts; i.e., they did not use them.

Still another study conducted by Berrima (2003) who examined the nature of teachers' feedback, the writing strategies and the views of the students with regard to that phenomenon. To this effect, she administered questionnaires on 214 first and second year students and 13 composition teachers. She found that writing teachers seemed to have a confined perception of writing. Similarly, students tended to view

writing not as a process but as a product due to their preoccupation with detecting and correcting sentence level problems more than with generating meaning. Students found their comments random and not instructive. Organisation and content, nevertheless, seemed to be out of the scope, a finding that echoes those reached in some L2 process-focused studies (e.g. Chenoweth, 1987). This, according to Berrima (2003), contributes to reinforce a negative attitude on the students' part towards the essence of writing. That is, students were very likely to see writing solely as a product rather than as both process and product.

Another study focusing on the impact of peer- and self- feedback on the written texts and attitudes of two groups of second year university students was carried out by Belaid (2004). Her data consisted of three types of research instruments: a writing task, two questionnaires, and two interviews. Subjects, ranging from intermediate to upper intermediate, were divided into two groups: experimental and control groups.

Belaid (2004) found that participants specifically the experimental group appreciated and benefited more from peer- and self-feedback on "early drafts" and teacher-feedback on "later drafts". In contrast to the control group which obtained teacher feedback on both first and final drafts. She noted that by practising self- and peer-feedback techniques students benefited a lot and improved their writing. This resulted in encouraging those belonging to the treatment group in particular to endorse a positive view of writing, to acquire and to develop their strategies for monitoring and reviewing their written products. Therefore, they started to set priorities; i.e., decide which aspects of writing need to be examined first high level features (content and organisation) or low level features (grammar and mechanics).

Going back to L2 process-oriented studies, one can cite Cumming's (1989) experimental study. In this study, he sought to investigate the impact of the above-cited variables –writing expertise and L2 proficiency– on the performance of 23 ESL French undergraduate students through the use of think-aloud protocols. Subjects participating in this study were classified into three levels (basic, average, and professional experienced writers) of L1 writing expertise and two ESL proficiency levels (intermediate and advanced). Subjects' L1 writing expertise was measured on the basis of "holistic ratings" of essays they wrote in their mother tongue, self assessment of their L1 writing abilities and former professional writing experience. As for their linguistic competency, it was assessed in relation to their oral skills.

A thorough analysis of the aspects examined in the written products of the French ESL students revealed that these two factors did not correlate as they were "psychologically distinct". That is to say, they provided an explanation for "large proportions of variance" as concerns the quality of the written output generated and the problem-solving strategies participants employed.

Cumming (1989) also provided an account of the writing behaviours of "expert" and "inexpert" participants in which he stated that both groups made use of disparate strategies while handling the three tasks at hand. For example, expert L1 student writers managed to generate meaningful content as well as efficient discourse organisation. Moreover, they attended to intriguing aspects of writing and chose appropriate words and phrases carefully. They also employed a wide range of "problem-solving" strategies so as to plan, evaluate, and tackle problems while composing in English. Inexpert L1 subjects lacking writing expertise, on the contrary, did not seem to be knowledgeable about strategy use as they employed a small range of "problem-solving" strategies. In fact, they did not have a clear view of what they intend to say.

As Cumming (1989) pointed out, L1 inexpert subjects "did not have a guiding mental model of how to proceed in their writing" (p. 120). In spite of the fact that they were capable of producing coherent drafts, their written texts were poor in terms of quality. On the whole, writing expertise largely correlated with the above aspects of ESL student's performance. As for the other variable, second language proficiency, it seemed to be an "additive" element in that it resulted in increasing second language competency and in improving the quality of their written compositions.

2.4. 2. Writing strategies of "less skilled" writers

Knowing that effective language learners would employ a wide range of LLS compared with less successful learners. This obvious fact is further affirmed by Vann's and Abraham's (1990) survey on learning strategies of "unsuccessful" language learners. As an example, they cited the case of two "unsuccessful" female students, Mona and Shida, who showed a huge difference in the way they approached the writing task at hand. While Shida perceived writing as a non-linear process in that she deployed many "meaning-based control" strategies that characterised 'good' writers but she failed to monitor her text in terms of errors. Mona, on the other hand, seemed to have a different approach to writing; i.e., viewed writing as linear. Results

showed that she was preoccupied chiefly with correcting surface level problems over content.

Vann and Abraham (1990) came to conclude that even "unsuccessful learners used many of the same strategies as the successful learners" (pp. 182-183). Example strategies include asking for clarification/verification, guessing meaning from the context, attending to form, applying rules of grammar, and using "social management strategies" (p. 181). They argued that participants used several strategies that were attributed to "successful" learners but they did not know how to use them appropriately; i.e., they often end up not choosing the pertinent strategies for task completion. This outcome refutes the popular belief expressed by Wenden (1985) that "unsuccessful learners are inactive" (p. 177) or do not use strategies.

Almost the same applies to unsuccessful writers. Indeed, it is in the mid-eighties that ESL composition researchers began to investigate the differences exhibited in the composing behaviours of L1 and L2 writers. A case in point is Raimes's (1985) experimental study entitled *What unskilled ESL students do as they write*. In this study, she sought to study the composing processes of eight "unskilled" students with different L1 backgrounds in comparison with their native counterparts; i.e., how they differ. Participants, the researcher's own students, were placed in the same course "according to their skill in writing" (p. 236) and were asked to think aloud while handling a narrative task. Subjects were classified as "unskilled" on the basis of holistic scores of their written performances on a university writing test (a measure similar to the one Zamel (1983) used to assess students' writing competency). She also collected data about their "background, education, and experience with and attitude toward English and writing" (p. 235) via the use of questionnaires and audiotapes.

Raimes (1985) claimed that no definite pattern of behaviour can be observed as a consequence of the study inspite of the fact that the eight candidates studied exhibited some instances of similarity. While some participants rehearsed frequently; i.e., they voiced their thoughts for various purposes including search for adequate grammatical forms and endeavour to try out ideas before putting them down on paper. Others like Johnny and Harriet rehearsed less frequently (once) and backtracked what they composed rarely. She did not find correlation between participants' writing abilities and their linguistic competencies. Subjects were not only hampered by low linguistic abilities but also by lack of competence in writing.

This finding lends support to Zamel's (1983) observation of the writing strategies and behaviours of "less skilled" writers. Both researchers found instances of similarity between ESL students and their L1 counterparts (they devoted little time for planning and rehearsed mainly at the sentence level). Nevertheless, Raimes (1985) found some noteworthy differences to be mentioned between "less skilled" L1 and L2 writers like commitment of unskilled ESL subjects to writing in the target language, and lack of inhibition. Actually, they seemed to be preoccupied with easing the flow of their ideas and trying to find out ways of how to proceed from one sentence to another instead of focusing exclusively on editing and error correction, as it was the case for L1 writers of English. Raimes (1985) asserts that even for unskilled students who had low ratings,

> the act of writing, however recursive and retrospective, served to generate language. Thus language and the ideas expressed in that language emerged out of the student writers' own creativity, not out of textbook instruction or teacher-supplied input. (p. 248).

She goes on to suggest that finding ways to convey one's intended meaning successfully is a problem that is common to native and non-native writers of English alike. Raimes (1985) attributes the non-preoccupation of her "less successful" ESL subjects with correcting surface mistakes to their beliefs that they are language learners. They are, hence, less concerned with errors compared with native speakers of English. She (1985) adds that "language proficiency", "knowledge of writing in L1 and L2" and writing behaviour", were among other reasons, that do affect the quality of the written output and account for participants' differing writing behaviours and strategies.

Raimes's (1987) experimental study of the writing processes of eight ESL students provided support for her earlier findings. In this study, subjects were asked to write two writing assignments and to voice their thoughts while composing. Raimes (1987) argues that though unskilled L1 and L2 writers shared a number of writing strategies (spent little time prewriting and planning their essays), they significantly differed from each other. She maintains that unlike their unskilled native peers, unskilled L2 student writers "did not appear inhibited by attempts to edit and correct their work" (p. 458). They kept rescanning their texts in search of meaning, appropriate syntactic structures and lexical items, and paid less attention to form and accuracy. For this reason, she advocates the need to consider differences between

skilled and unskilled L1 and L2 writers as well as to adapt rather than adopt L1 writing teaching theories and practices to second composition instruction.

Conversely, Chenoweth (1987) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) maintain that what distinguishes "skilled" and "unskilled" writers is the effective use of a variety of strategies chiefly global strategies such as editing, adding, and reorganizing during the act of writing. Chenoweth (1987), for instance, asserts that research on composition "has revealed that unskilled writers lack strategies for handling the content of the essay as a whole" (p. 26). She contends that the two groups differ greatly in the way they write and rewrite.

Unlike Raimes's (1985, 1987) unskilled writers, Chenoweth (1987) reported that unskilled writers attended particularly to local issues; i.e., grammar, punctuation, and word choice. While revising their drafts, they tempted to select more appropriate words and correct potential grammatical mistakes and punctuation. They neither attempted to clarify and explain in details their ideas to the reader nor did they reorganize and improve the quality of their texts. Refining and adding the final touches to their papers was, accordingly, outside their scope. Skilled writers, on the other hand, prioritized content and meaning over form. They did their best to make their written products clear and intelligible as much as possible. For this reason, she recommends teachers of writing to organise their "classes in ways that will help students expand their repertoire of strategies for rewriting compositions" (Chenoweth, 1987, p. 25).

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed a number of key issues related to the learning and teaching of writing specifically the assimilation of writing with learning and development of several teaching approaches over the last decades. Accordingly, it highlighted the major assumptions and practices underlying each teaching paradigm and their impact on writing instruction; i.e., classroom practice. Moreover, it highlighted the gap between theory and practice namely the false dichotomy existing between the product and process approaches by citing the views of its supporters and opponents (Horowitz, 1986a, 1986b; Liebman-Kleine, 1986). It also focused on two important models of composing strategies namely Flower's and Hayes's (1981) popular L1 cognitive model and Oxford (1990)'s taxonomy of writing strategies.

Lastly, attention was also directed to surveying the written products and composing processes of L2 students and how they differed from their L1 counterparts. That is to say, how they viewed writing and what writing strategies were typical to 'skilled' and 'less skilled' student writers. Revising, editing, rereading, and attending to content over form exemplify some of the key writing strategies that advanced student writers employed while composing and which ought to be adopted in writing classrooms. As a matter of fact, the findings obtained from research on composition proved to be, on the whole, very insightful and formative for the teaching methodology of writing both in the field of second and foreign language instruction. Indeed, ESL process-oriented composition research has managed to mirror the complexity and cyclical nature of writing.

Since one of the primary goals of the present study is to raise students' awareness to the real nature of writing and to the importance of the concept of strategy use in shaping their texts. I intended to draw attention throughout the paper to this and to pay particular attention to Oxford's (1990) model whose model I will use in my survey. Therefore, it's worth investigating and identifying the writing strategies and preferences of Tunisian EFL students as well as the teaching strategies and practices of composition teachers.

The forthcoming chapter will describe the research methodology, data collection instruments and analysis procedures utilised.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The present chapter describes the methodology used to gather and analyze data about the writing strategies EFL first year university students use while performing writing tasks and the policy of their composition teachers regarding strategy teaching. It is composed of four main sections. The first section deals with the research design and explains the reasons for choosing and employing the research instruments. It also describes the two questionnaires in terms of their themes and the theoretical models underpinning their construction. The second section contains the description of the respondents. The procedures and types of data analysis are then outlined.

3.1. Research design and instruments used

In this section, attention will be directed to portraying the two research instruments chosen in terms of their aims, designs, and themes. To begin with, one of the primary purposes of the present descriptive survey was to investigate the writing strategies students use when writing and those teaching strategies teachers target in composition courses. For this reason, questionnaires are helpful in collecting the needed information as they enable the researcher to directly elicit personal views and obtain precise statistical information concerning the learning/teaching behaviors of both teachers and students.

To this effect, two questionnaires were employed: a writing strategies questionnaire was conducted with thirty composition teachers of academic writing and another questionnaire was also given to 100 learners to be filled in. The above claim concerning the efficiency of questionnaires in gathering data about strategy usage is further corroborated in Dőrnyei's (2003) book on the *Construction, administration and processing of questionnaires*. He claimed that questionnaires "are *versatile*, which means that they can be used successfully with a variety of people in a variety of situations targeting a variety of topics" (p. 10).

Although it might be argued that questionnaires, like interviews, may not account for what writers actually do when composing, they rather can be deemed as one of the most effective instruments that could be used to find out what participants think. That was one of the chief reasons behind choosing such an instrument.

Actually, the researcher sought in the first place not to investigate participants' actual writing strategies but to examine the writing strategies they assume themselves to use. As reported by Petrić and Czărl (2003), questionnaires are conducive to reaching this type of information. Indeed, they maintained that questionnaires "elicit self-reported data providing an insight into what writers think they are doing or should be doing when writing" (p. 189).

From this perspective, attention was directed to the investigation of the writing strategies participants claim to use; i.e., what strategies students and teachers assume they are using. This goes in line with O`Malley and Chamot's (1990) claim concerning the usefulness of the questionnaire as a research instrument in eliciting further information that may help us understand individual writers' own behaviors. In what follows, a detailed description of the two questionnaires is provided.

Out of a total of 78 items included in the two questionnaires, 47 writing strategies were identified in the student questionnaire most of which recurred in the teacher questionnaire) and another 31 composing strategies were investigated in the teacher questionnaire (See Appendices A and B). Most of the composing strategies identified in the two questionnaires were also found in Oxford's (1990) model which consisted of 45 writing strategies: 20 direct strategies and 25 indirect strategies.

To meet the objectives set for this study, several items were added, omitted, and substituted. Take for example, questions ten and fifteen in the student questionnaire underwent some reformulations. Items two and six under the tenth question which sought to elicit information about students' attitudes towards a set of 'good' writing strategies changed from "I spend time thinking about the writing task at hand" and "I make fewer changes at the surface level" to "planning how you will approach the writing task at hand" and "concentrating more on meaning than on correctness of your sentences." The first item of question fifteen, dealing with "post" writing strategies, was also changed to "I re-read [my draft] to check for errors" instead of "I go back to my writing to check for typos and slips of the pen."

Likewise, the teacher questionnaire was edited according to the comments and suggestions of two EFL composition teachers during the pilot stage. The following items exemplify some of the changes made. Items six and seven "I require my students to identify the audience to whom they will write" and "I intervene during the writing process to provide support", querying about the overall frequency of eight composing strategies teachers of writing may target in composition sessions, were

changed to "I help students analyze the audience to whom they will write" and "I provide support during the writing process."

Overall, the strategies identified in the two questionnaires were grouped into two main classes: "direct" and "indirect strategies." By direct strategies, Oxford (1990) means strategies that "directly involve the target language [. . .] and require mental processing of [it]" (p. 37). Indirect strategies, on the other hand, "support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language" (p. 135). As seen in the literature review, each of the two classes comprised three other main subcategories. In the student questionnaire, the first class consisted of 24 direct writing strategies (1 memory strategy, 12 cognitive strategies, and 11 compensation strategies). The second class of indirect strategies consisted of 21 writing strategies (14 meta-cognitive strategies, 6 social strategies, and 1 affective strategy).

As for the teacher questionnaire, 10 direct strategies were identified (1 memory strategy, 7 cognitive strategies, and 2 compensation strategies) along with 20 indirect strategies (12 meta-cognitive strategies, 7 social strategies and 1 affective strategy). Still another category was introduced covering 3 negative strategies (2 strategies were included in the student questionnaire and another item that recurred in the teacher questionnaire). This was done on purpose so as to further increase the validity of the data collection procedures used. To put it simply, the researcher sought to actively engage students when filling in the questionnaires by eliminating the possibility of agreeing with all of the items proposed.

Nonetheless, it is worth bearing in mind that, as Oxford (1990) pointed out, "[. . .] there is no complete agreement on exactly what strategies are; how many strategies exist; how they should be defined, demarcated, and categorized" (p. 17). That is to say, scholars may agree or disagree over the classification of strategies. With this in mind, the researcher thoroughly tried to classify the items according to the different sub-strategies that formed the skeleton of each category identified in Oxford's model of writing strategies. In the next two subsections, a thorough description of the themes and the rationale of the two questionnaires will be provided.

3.1.1. Description of the student questionnaire

The student questionnaire consisted of three main sections. The first section (from question 1 to question 7) provided information on the background of respondents and the extent to which that data influenced the way they wrote. As such,

it sought to elicit information about the following variables: age, gender, number of years learning English, level of proficiency, the language they preferred to write in, their motivation for attending writing sessions and the different types of composition tasks they undertook in class throughout the year.

In the second section (from question 8 to question12), the researcher sought to identify the overall frequency of the writing strategies students employ to help them deal with a variety of writing assignments. Students were also asked to provide information on the kind of changes (local or global) they made while revising their texts and the type of materials they use for the course of composition. Participants' personal views concerning teachers' writing methodology and their assessment of a set of ten distinct writing strategies; i.e., state how they viewed them as 'good' or 'bad', were considered.

The third section (from question 13 to question 15), on the other hand, is the most important one as it comprised the gist of the survey. It investigated the writing strategies students reported to use throughout the writing process. This section was further subdivided into three parts: "pre-writing", "while-writing", and "post-writing." Thus the items included in the three questions were ordered following the structure of the writing process as identified in Flower's and Hayes's (1981) cognitive model (See literature review). Broadly speaking, two major goals were sought from asking these specific questions. The first goal was to identify the most often used strategies participants claim to utilize during the three writing phases; i.e., while planning, writing, and revising. The second one was to determine whether subjects were familiar or unfamiliar with the suggested writing strategies.

Thus, in the first sub-section, focusing on "pre-writing strategies", respondents were asked to rate how often they planned their texts before starting to write and referred back to their handouts and to teachers' feedback. They were also asked how frequently they brainstormed or planned their written products on a five-point scale with options ranging from "never" to "always."

The "while-writing" part which comprised nine items asked respondents, for example, whether they switched to Arabic or French words or expressions and translated them into English. It also sought to see how frequently they wrote incomplete or full sentences and/or paragraphs, edited their topic sentences, and used linguistic materials such as dictionaries and grammar books to check word form and correctness of given grammatical structures. As for the last sub-section, focusing on

"post-writing", respondents were asked whether they revised, re-read or sought help from peer or expert writers after finishing their essays.

3.1.2. Description of the teacher questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire consisted of four main questions, with each comprising a set of sub-strategies and a cover letter. It was made up of 31 items which covered four main issues. The first question which comprised eight items sought to explore the writing strategies composition teachers target when teaching composition. Teachers were asked to answer, for instance, items on how frequently they "encouraged peer-to-peer discussion prior to writing", "engaged students in planning, organizing, and reviewing essays", "helped students analyze the audience to whom they will write" and "provided support during the writing process."

The second question assessed their views about the composing strategies they advise their student writers to employ. Out of the ten items suggested in the second question, one can cite the following so-called 'good' strategies: "underling the key words in the assigned task", "making their writing explicit" and "collecting and organizing information before planning."

In question number three, which was made up of seven items, composition teachers were asked to rate how frequently they recommend their students to employ strategies like "searching for similar essays for inspiration", "re-reading what they wrote to figure out what other ideas they can write about", "asking the teacher for help" and "seeking help from another student who usually gets good marks" so as o deal with writing difficulties.

As for the last question, comprising six items, teachers were instructed to indicate how frequently they urged their students to use strategies including revising, considering the audience, and writing with a purpose in mind. By raising the above themes, the researcher wanted: (1) to identify and get further insights into the overall frequency of the writing strategies teachers use in composition courses; (2) to establish some sort of comparison between teachers' and students' responses with regard to a common set of writing strategies.

As can be seen, the ultimate goal of the two questionnaires was to get further insights into the writing strategies students reported to use and those teachers target when teaching composition. The researcher also sought to explore the views of both groups with respect to a set of common strategies that will be discussed in more detail

in the next chapter and to detect latent instances of congruence and incongruence between the two groups. These objectives were sought while considering validity and reliability.

3.1.3. Establishing validity and reliability of the instruments

For the results to be scientifically approved of, the two questionnaires were checked in terms of validity and reliability. For this reason, several criteria were taken into account among which one can cite "content, construct, and response validity" (Petrić & Czárl, 2003; Fayers & Machin, 2000, p. 45).

During the construction of the two research instruments particular attention was given to these validation methods. Thus, in order to evaluate the validity of the content, help was sought from two experienced teachers and researchers of academic writing. As such, pertinent changes were made so as to meet the needs and objectives set. These changes were related to the extent to which the suggested items, as pointed out by Fayers and Machin (2000), "[were] sensible and reflect[ed] the intended domain of interest" (p. 45); i.e., whether they were representative of most of the strategies that may be employed by the target population. Therefore, clarity and legibility were brought to the fore. The changes introduced included dealing with a number of wording problems, simplifying technical terms, omitting irrelevant and repeated items and replacing them with new items.

With regard to construct validity which aimed at assessing whether the chosen research procedure measured what it was designed to measure, the different items were built with reference to the literature on writing (Ibid). To this effect, items were grouped around a common theme. For example, in the student questionnaire the researcher grouped a list of composing strategies respondents may or may not use in order to cope with their potential difficulties when writing. These strategies exemplified some of the strategies falling under the two main categories mentioned in Oxford's model. Similarly, in the last section of the student questionnaire, items were divided into three sub-groups corresponding thereby to what are considered the three vital components that make up the writing process according to Flower's and Hayes's (1981) cognitive model.

In the same way, a similar amount of attention was also drawn to check the reliability of the research procedures and the validity of responses. Hence, a pilot study was conducted on a small group of students with different levels of proficiency

so as to check their comprehension of the items and determine what kind of problems that need to be dealt with. In fact, participants were encouraged to ask questions about items they found difficult or unclear as well as to suggest ideas or comments as far as the content and layout of the questionnaires are concerned. As a consequence, the researcher introduced some modifications by simplifying the language, and changing the wording of certain items in a way that is easily understood.

3.2. Participants

A total of 115 students took part in this study. Only 100 questionnaires were kept and 15 questionnaires were discarded or were not returned (7 copies were discarded because they were incomplete and 8 copies were missing). Participants were Tunisian first year university students majoring in English. All of them had studied English as a foreign language (EFL) for at least seven years: three years at the basic school level and four years at the secondary school level. The final target population consisted of 100 students: 15 males and 85 females.

Thirty composition teachers from three universities (University of Manouba, High Institute of Languages, Tunis (ISLT), and Faculty of Human and Social Sciences 9th April, Tunis) participated in this study. They were 7 males and 23 females. All of them taught composition courses for at least one year.

3.4. Data collection

Data came from two sources: the student and teacher questionnaires. Before administering the questionnaires on participants, a pilot study was carried out. During piloting, the researcher sought to assess subjects' attitudes towards the layout and content of the two questionnaires. She also sought to answer respondents' questions in order to check the validity of the responses provided and correct possible "erroneous" responses. Subjects' comments and suggestions with regard to issues such as layout, and length of the questionnaire, legibility of the items and terms proposed were taken into consideration.

After preparing the final draft of the composition teacher questionnaire, 30 copies were produced and distributed by the researcher on ten participants from each of the three universities. Before filling in the writing strategies questionnaires, the researcher explained the general aim of the study and ensured that participants taught

writing previously. On the whole, the work went smoothly and there were no real difficulties except for the fact that the data collection coincided with exam periods (first session May, 2009) and that inhibited the researcher from entering and distributing the questionnaires. So, at times the researcher was obliged to get in secretly as she had no official paper allowing her to enter the visited institutions. But in all, most of the participants were very cooperative and friendly as they expressed their enthusiasm to fill in the questionnaire which took them from ten to fifteen minutes and handed it back to the researcher either on the spot or later.

With respect to the student questionnaire, the researcher did not face any significant problems of access. The distribution of the questionnaires lasted for two days. Actually, most of the students were willing to fill in the questionnaire except for some students who refused to volunteer, a decision that was respected. During and after the administration of the questionnaires, the researcher was available to explain questions using sometimes Arabic or French.

3.4. Data handling procedure

To handle the data collected from the student and teacher questionnaires, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. As a result, both the students' and teachers' answers were entered into the SPSS data matrix processing. To this effect, several pertinent tables, bar charts and graphs comprising descriptive statistical measures such as percentage, frequency, and mean were drawn to present the variables investigated and the data reached. In some instances, the researcher deliberately presented the same data in two ways- as counts and percentages- mainly for a better presentation of given sets of data. In addition to descriptive statistical analysis, multiple response analysis was also used for multiple choice questions (questions four and six in the student questionnaire) so as to describe and provide simple summaries about the sample and results of the variables studied. A full account of the results reached will be given in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter contains a summary of the main findings derived from the data analysis. It starts by presenting the student questionnaire results. Then it proceeds to the outcomes reached from the teacher questionnaire and compares them to the students' data. Lastly, it classifies the writing strategies compiled from the results of the two questionnaires, stating the overall frequency of use for each of the categories identified with reference to Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of writing strategies.

4.1. Results of the student questionnaire

The present section provides an overview of the results thanks to the student's writing strategy questionnaire. A set of variables including age, gender, years of learning experience, respondents' self assessment of their writing abilities, language preferences, and motives for attending composition courses were investigated by means of the statistical package (SPSS). The answers to each question are presented and examined below.

The first part of the questionnaire is meant to provide biographical data about the participants. Results show that the target population consisted of 100 first year university students: 15 males and 85 females falling between two main age categories. As shown in Table 7 below, 29 subjects were under 20 years old and 71 subjects were between 20 and 25. Therefore, the majority fell under the category of 20 and 25 years.

Table 7: Age and gender distribution of participants

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age group	-20years	4	25	29
	20-25yea	11	60	71
Total		15	85	100

As for the students' previous learning experience, analysis reveals that most of the students (85%) studied English for eight years. Only 8% said that they studied it for seven years, 6% for ten years, and only one participant said that she studied English for more than ten years. Hence, participants' former learning experience could

be viewed as an asset in helping them learn and have better command of the conventions of the target language.

In the fourth question, subjects were required to rate their level of proficiency in English. Results show that they placed themselves into four main groups: 45% considered themselves as good, 45% of participants ranked themselves as fair, while 8% students said that they were very good, and only 2% viewed themselves as poor. None of the participants deemed himself/herself as very poor (See Figure 3 below).

How do you rate your level in English?
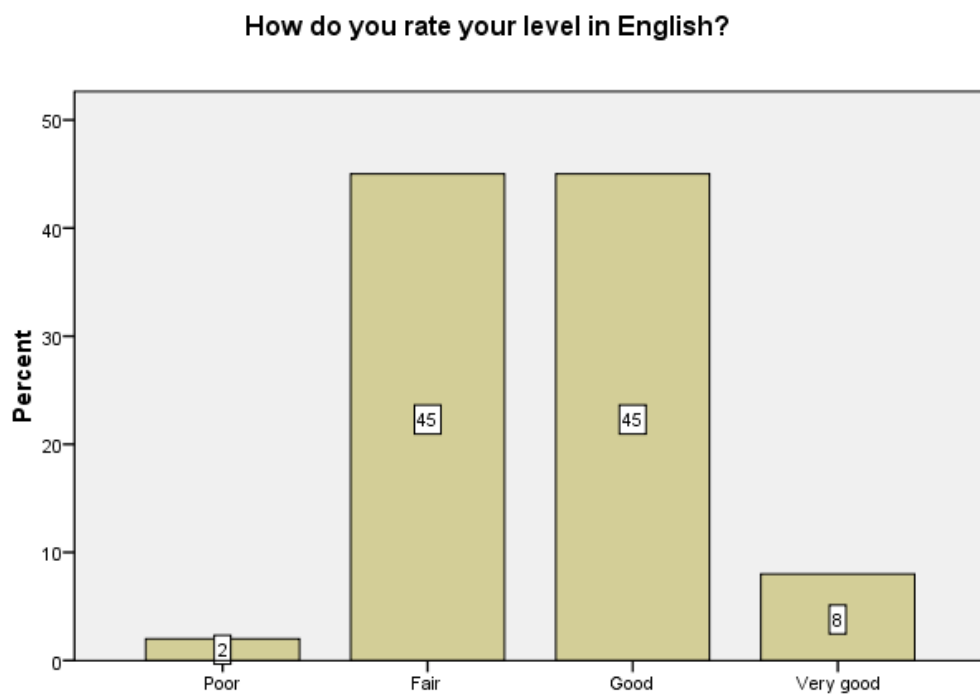
Figure 3: Students' rating of their level of proficiency

Data related to the fifth question (See Figure 4) explored learners' writing preferences. The question was: "If I had a choice, I would write in a given language." 14% participants reported that they preferred to write in Arabic, 14% said they were likely to write in French, while 70% chose English. The majority of the students wanted to write in English which means that they are motivated to learn writing. Among the 70 students who were predisposed to write in English, 11 subjects said they wanted to write in other languages in addition to English. 5 students selected Spanish, 3 chose German and 3 others chose Italian. Unexpectedly, only 2

respondents did not opt for any of the three aforementioned languages. They preferred to write in German or Spanish.

If I have a choice, I would write in...
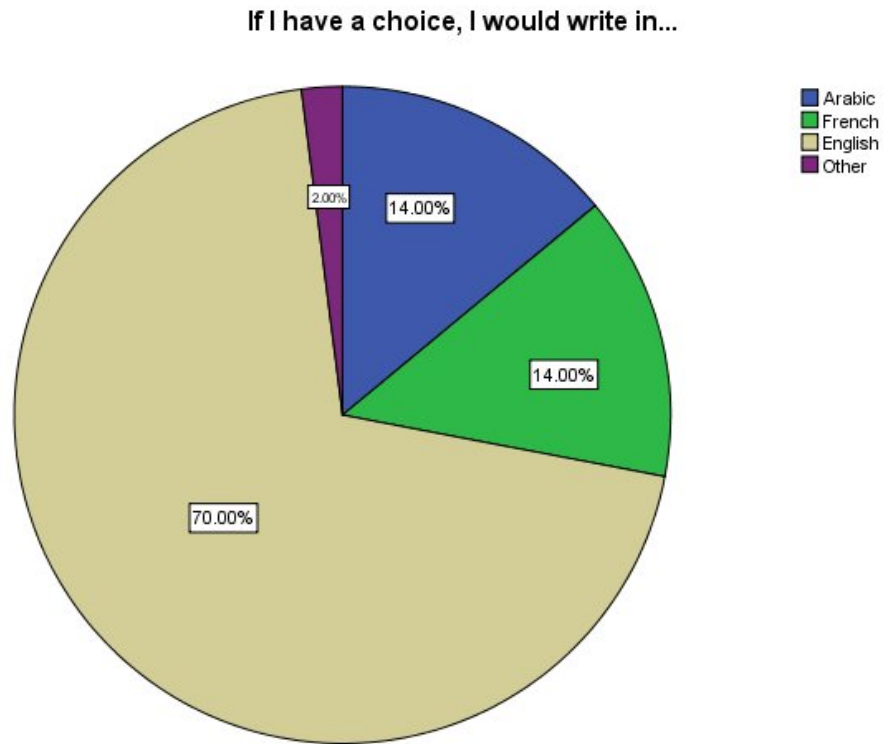
Figure 4: Participants' composing preferences

Results related to the question about the student motives for attending composition sessions, as shown in Figure 5, revealed that "preparing oneself for the demands of jobs in the future" was considered their first main motive in that it obtained the highest percentage (16%). The next two items "learning about writing" and "getting good marks" received the same scores (15,4%) and were ranked second. Item 5 "becoming a talented writer" was ranked third with 13,4%, followed respectively by these three items which got approximately the same scores: "simply to have an opportunity to express oneself" with 10,9%, "pass content subjects" with 10,3%, and "enjoy writing in a target language" with 10%. However, the results imply that the majority of participants underestimated the significance of writing as a means for practicing the newly-learned grammatical structures and lexical items that they were introduced to in language and content subjects. Only 8,6% reported that they attended composition courses to help them pass language exams. The low rate

assigned to this item (passing language exams) partly accounts for the grammatical and structural errors that appear and reappear in the written work of many students.
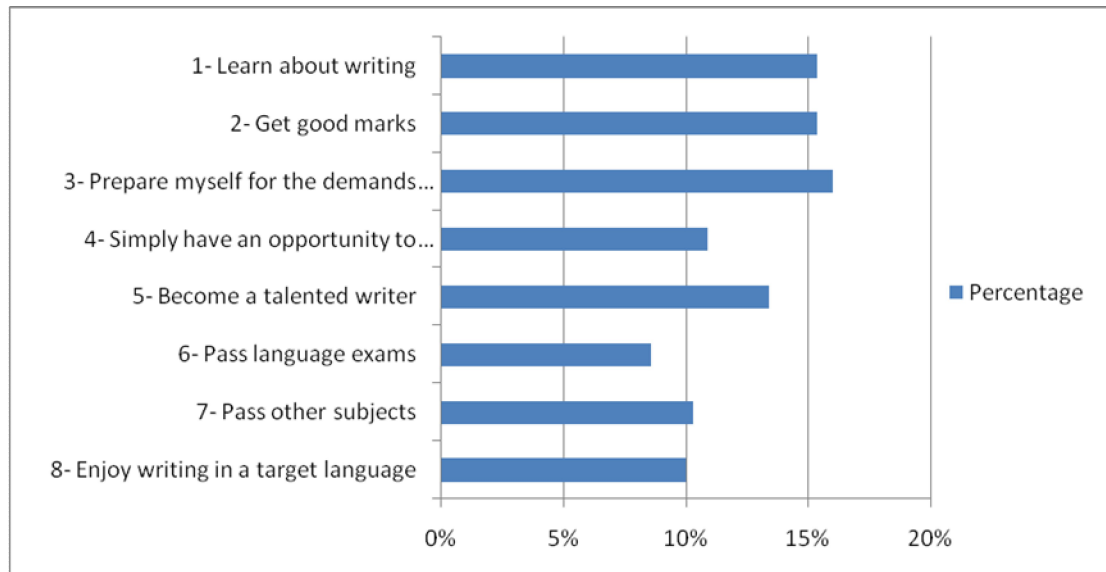
Figure 5: Frequency of students' motives for attending composition courses

In the last question of the first section, students were also asked to rate the overall frequency of the composition tasks they performed throughout the year. Results will be displayed by order of frequency. Among the nine tasks displayed in Figure 6, paragraphs obtained the highest total of percentage (18,09%). For instance, 81% of the participants reported that they were required to write paragraphs at the beginning of the year, 8% said that they wrote paragraphs throughout the year, and 7% said that they were asked to write paragraphs in the middle of the year. Nevertheless, 2% reported that they composed short paragraphs by the end of the year against 2% who said that they were never asked to write paragraphs. The second selected composition task was dialogues with 13.58% of the total percentage. Indeed, 38% said that they were asked to write dialogues at the beginning of the year, 20% in the middle of the year, 22% throughout the academic year, 16% said never, and only 2% said that they were required to write dialogues by the end of the year.

The third most-frequently selected task was full essays (12,62%). 69% of the students reported that they wrote essays by the end of the year, 18% in the middle of the year, and 8% throughout the year. 4% said that they were asked to write essays at the start of the academic year and only one participant said that s/he was never asked to produce a full essay in the composition class. Continuing in descending order, the

next three selected writing activities were summaries (11,59%), responses (10,14%), and research reports (9,81%). With regard to the first task, 15% indicated that they wrote summaries at the beginning of the year, 24% in the middle of the year, 23% throughout the year, 17% by the end of the year, and 20% answered never.

The second task—written responses—indicated that 22% of the students wrote responses at the beginning of the year and 35% throughout the year. 8% reported that they wrote responses in the middle of the year, 5% by the end of the year, while 30% said that they never wrote responses. As for the third task, 36% of the participants said that they performed research reports throughout the academic year. 12% said they did research reports at the beginning of the year, 16% in the middle of the year, and 8% by the end of the year. However, 28% said they were never asked to prepare research reports.

Commentaries came seventh in the overall classification of composition tasks with 9,06% of the total count. 40% said they wrote commentaries throughout the academic year, 11% at the beginning of the year, 7% in the middle of the year, and 10% by the end of the year. Nevertheless, 30% reported that they were never required to write commentaries in the composition class.

Lastly, letters (8,20%) and diaries (6,91%) were the least favored writing tasks undertaken in composition classes. In fact, 59% of the students said that they were never required to write letters. 7% reported that they performed this task throughout the year, 13% at the beginning of the year, 7% in the middle of the year, and 12% by the end of the year. As for diaries—which received the lowest percentage—69% of respondents said that they were never asked to write diaries while 4% stated that they performed this task throughout the year. Moreover, 5% reported that they wrote diaries at the beginning of the year, 7% in the middle of the year, and 13% by the end of the year.

The results as illustrated in Figure 6 and as reported above suggest that students were trained to perform several composition tasks over different spans of time across the academic year. For example, the majority of participants indicated that they were trained to write paragraphs (81%) and dialogues (38%) frequently at the beginning of the year. Moreover, others said that they were required to write full essays by the end of the year (69%) and summaries in the middle of the year (24%). Subjects also reported that they were asked to write responses (35%), research reports (36%), and commentaries (40%) throughout the academic year. However, most of the

students said that they were never required to write letters (59%) or diary entries (69%) in the composition class.
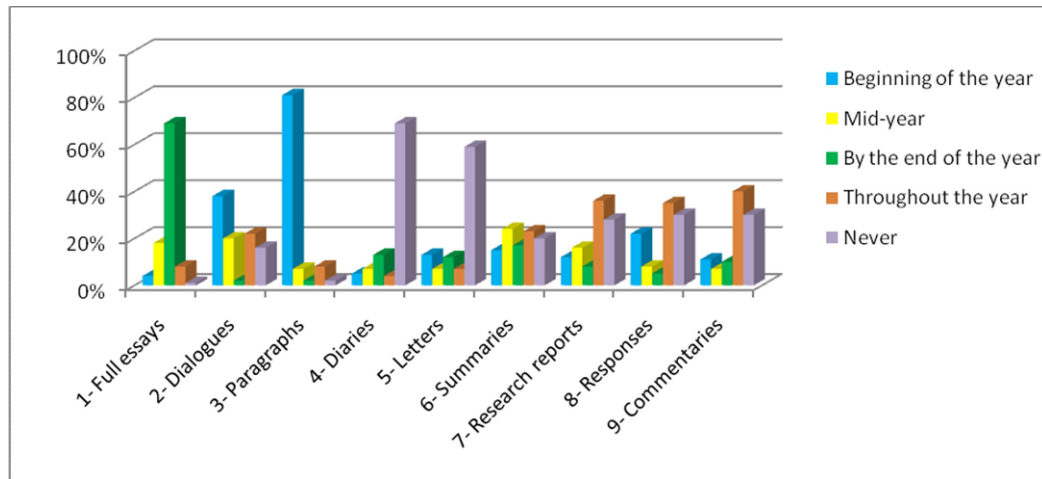
Figure 6: Distribution of the composition tasks undertaken throughout the year

Figure 7 summarizes the composing strategies participants claim to employ when they face difficulties during the writing phase. Items 5 and 2 respectively "I re-read what I wrote to figure out what other ideas I can write" (14,68%) and "I use a bilingual dictionary to search for a given word" which obtained the highest percentages (14,35%) were the most frequently used strategies. For example, 62% said that they always used this strategy, and 33% stated that they often did so. However, only one student said s/he used it occasionally, and 4% said that they never employed it. Next, 31% reported that they always utilized a bilingual dictionary, 44% reported that they often used this strategy, 13% said that they sometimes resorted to it as opposed to 11% who claimed that they tended not to employ it (5% chose rarely and 6% opted for never).

Then came item 6 "I ask the teacher for help" and item 4 "I search for similar essays for inspiration" in third and fourth place since they received the next two highest percentages with 12,57% and 12,10%. For item 6, 30% said that they always asked the teacher for help, 39% said that they often used this strategy, and 20% said that they occasionally did so. Nevertheless, few students reported that they did not employ this social strategy when they face writing problems (7% rarely and 4% never). As for item 4, 28% reported that they always looked for similar essays for inspiration, and 39% said that they often used this strategy. Moreover, 17% said that

they sometimes looked for samples of essays to follow as opposed to 16% who said that they did not employ this strategy (8% answered never and 8% answered rarely).

Items 9 "I seek help from another student who usually gets good marks" and 1 "I cross everything out and start all over again" were ranked as the fifth and sixth composing strategies used to tackle writing problems with 11,28% and 10,71% respectively. For example, 22% of the participants said that they always sought help from proficient students, 44% said that they often employed this strategy, and 6% claimed that they sometimes asked for help. 11% of the students stated that they rarely and 17% said that they never used this strategy. For item 9, 37% reported that they often crossed everything out and started all over again, 14% answered always, and 16% answered sometimes. In contrast, 30% said that they rarely employed this strategy and 3% said that they never rewrote a new draft.

As for the three remaining items, they got approximately the same percentage with 8,37% for item number 3 "I switch to the mother tongue to deal with it later", 8,33% for item 8 "I read a classmate's paper to get inspired" and 10,71% for item number 7 " I put off writing for later" which got the lowest percentage. With regard to item 3, 21% said that they sometimes switched to the mother to deal with it later, 21% reported that they often utilized this strategy and 6% said that they always resorted to translation. However, 26% said that they rarely switched to the mother tongue and 26% said that they never opted for it.

For item 8, 10% of the participants said that they always read their classmates' papers to get inspired, 21% often, and 14% occasionally. In contrast, 23% reported that they rarely resorted to this strategy when they faced difficulties composing, and 32% said that they never used it. Lastly, only 4% said that they always put off writing for later, 11% said that they often did so and 26% reported that they sometimes gave up writing. 32% claimed that they rarely opted for this strategy, and 27% said that they never employed it.
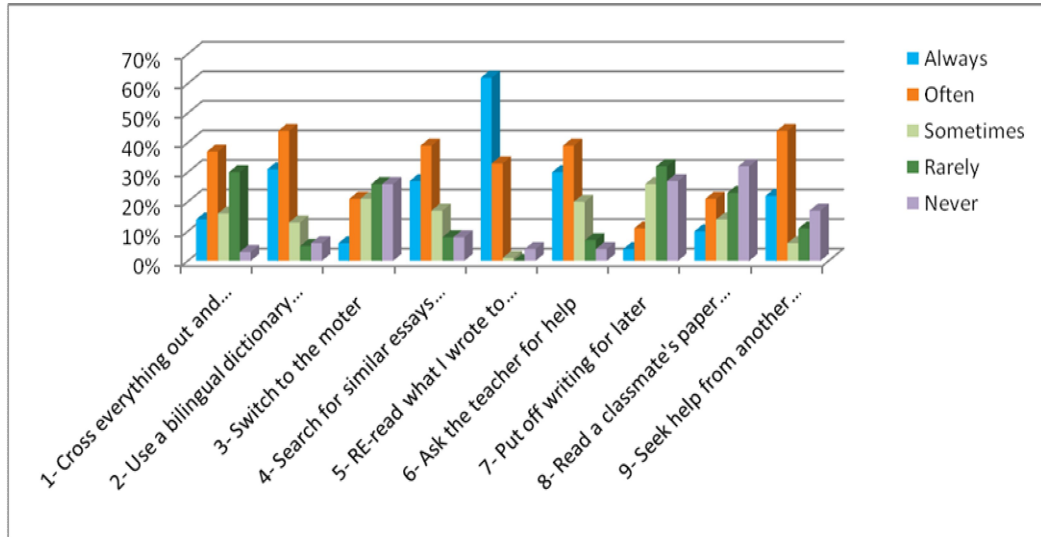
Figure 7: Frequency of the writing strategies students use to tackle difficulties

As shown in Figure 8, the overall mean score of responses reflecting the changes students made as they wrote did not exceed 4, which means that they attended to writing at both the local and global level. Indeed, scores were closely related to each other as they ranged between 3.37 and 3.70. Results will be presented in an orderly manner; i.e., following the original order of items.

With respect to the first item, 28% of the students reported that they always edited their texts at the word level, 20% said that they often introduced changes at the lexical level, and 39% said that they sometimes attended to this local feature. However, 8% claimed that they rarely made changes at the word level, and 5% said that they never edited their drafts at this level while composing. For item 2, 33% claimed that they sometimes made changes at the sentence level, 27% said that they often edited their texts at this level, and 22% said that they always attended to sentence-level problems. In contrast, 14% reported that they rarely edited their drafts at the sentence level and 4% said that they never focused on sentence errors while writing.

As for the third item, 42% of the students said that they always edited their output at the level of grammar, 14% claimed that they often edited for grammatical errors, and 23% said that they occasionally attended to grammar concerns. However, 14% reported that they rarely made changes at the syntactic level compared to 7% who said that they never concerned themselves with surface-level features such as grammar. With regard to the fourth item, 29% reported that they always edited their

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texts for mechanical errors. 17% said that as they wrote, they often made changes at the level of mechanics (spelling and punctuation) compared to 26% who said that they sometimes introduced changes at this level. 10% reported that they never revised their texts for mechanical errors, and 18% said that they rarely used this technique.

Results related to global-level changes related to ideas were as follows: 26% said that they were always concerned with generating meaning, 23% claimed that they often edited their texts to ease the flow of their ideas, and 31% said that they sometimes attended to content. In contrast, 15% said that they rarely made changes at this level and 5% claimed that they never revised their texts at the level of ideas. As for the last item, 35% of the participants reported that they always made changes at the level of essay organization, 13% said that they often reviewed their drafts at this level, and 20% said that they sometimes attended to this level while writing. However, 23% reported that they rarely focused on essay organization, and 9% said that they never opted for this strategy.
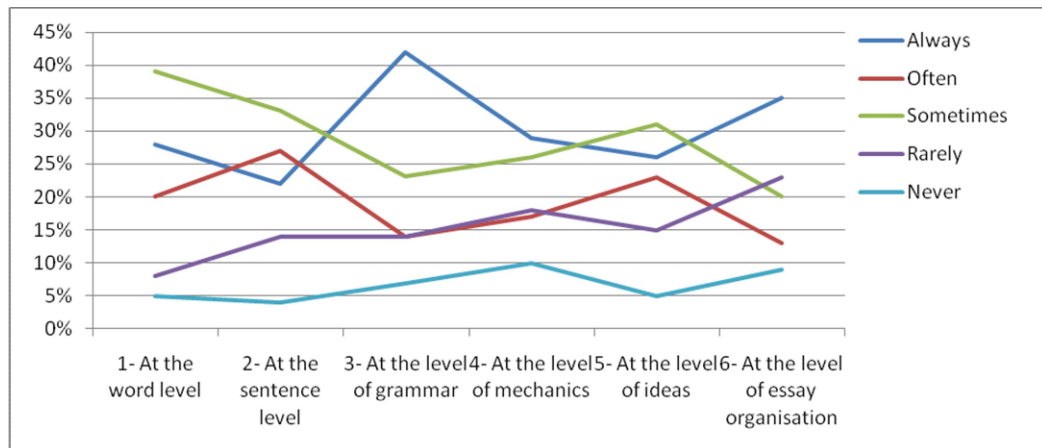
Figure 8: Frequency of the changes students introduce while writing

In the second section of the questionnaire for students, participants were also asked to express their views about a set of 'good' composing strategies. As indicated in Figure 9, participants tended to perceive the following four strategies, which received the highest rates as efficient:

- underlining the key words in the assigned task (12,53%),
- collecting and organizing information (11,70%),
- devoting time for organization and planning your essay (11,38%), and
- planning how you will approach the writing task at hand (10,87%).

Indeed, a large number of students (74%) strongly agreed that item 1 "underlining the key words in the assigned task" was beneficial when writing, 23% answered agreed, and 3% were undecided. Item 5 "collecting and organizing information" also received a high rate. For example, 55% of the participants strongly agreed that this was a good strategy to students when writing and 38% answered "agree". However, 3% of students strongly disagreed, 3% disagreed, and only one participant was undecided.

As for the third most frequently used strategy, 52% responded strongly agreed and 34% agreed to view this strategy (devoting time for organization and planning your essay) as efficient when composing. While 8% were undecided, 3% strongly disagreed, and 3% disagreed. Next, 38% said that they strongly agreed to consider item 3 "planning how they will approach the writing task at hand" as efficient and 44% answered "agree" compared to 8% who were undecided. 6% said that they disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed.

Items 10 and 2 respectively "adding, omitting, substituting, and reorganizing when revising" and "reflecting on how to make your writing explicit" were ranked fifth and sixth respectively with a slight difference in the total percentage with 10,31% for item number 10 and 10,23% for item number 2. Item 10 results showed that 43% of the students strongly favored revising, and 30% viewed it as efficient. While 7% felt undecided, 8% strongly disagreed, and 12% disagreed; i.e., they did consider this strategy as good.

For item 2, 21% chose "strongly agreed" and 53% viewed "reflecting on how to make one's writing explicit" as efficient. 17% were neutral, 8% disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Next, 9,31% of the students considered "revising and producing multiple drafts" as a good strategy and ranked it seventh. 22% of the respondents answered strongly agreed, 36% agreed, 21% were neutral against 14% who disagreed and 7% who responded "strongly disagreed".

Item 6 "concentrating more on meaning than on correctness of your sentences" was scored 8,27% and was ranked eight. Participants' responses regarding this strategy were closely related to each other and contradictory at the same time. For example, 47% reported that they perceived this strategy as good: 19% strongly agreed and 28% agreed. Nevertheless, 41% had a different perspective: 26% answered "disagree" and 15% chose "strongly disagree". On the other hand, 12% were undecided.

Moreover, item 8 "getting peer feedback" received almost the lowest percentage (8,05%). 38% of the students viewed this strategy positively (12% strongly agreed and 26% agreed) against 31% who viewed it differently (17% disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed). 31% were undecided. Lastly, item 4 "writing whatever ideas come into your mind" obtained the lowest score 7,35%. Indeed, 50% of the students did not consider this strategy as beneficial when composing (23% strongly disagreed and 27% disagreed) compared to 38% who viewed it as efficient (14% strongly agreed and 24% agreed). 12% did not have a firm stance; i.e., they were undecided.

As can be seen in Figure 9, almost all the items suggested received positive scores except for item 8 "getting peer feedback" where the majority of respondents answered undecided 31% and item 4 "writing whatever ideas that come into your mind" which was not perceived as efficient by the majority of participants when writing.
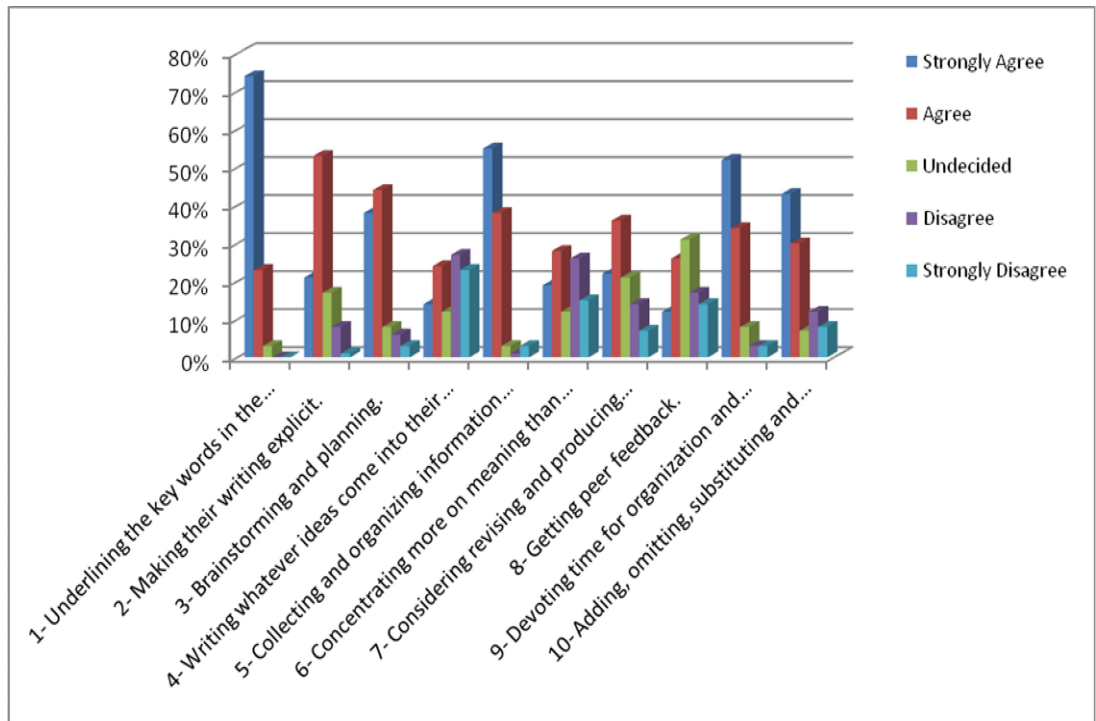

Figure 9: Students' assessment of what consists of 'good' writing strategies

Table 8 overleaf shows the overall percentage of the teaching materials used along the academic year for the composition course as reported by participants. Results show that most of the participants reported that they employed grammar books more frequently than other materials (representing the highest total of

percentage 15,13%). For example, 44% of the students said that they always used grammar books, 25% often, and 17% sometimes. Few students (14%) said that they infrequently used them in their composition classes (7% answered rarely and 7% answered never).

Guidelines from the teacher, in turn, received the second highest percentage (15,13%). 39% claimed that they were always given teacher guidelines, 19% often, and 25% sometimes. However, 14% said that they were rarely given guidelines from the instructor, and 3% chose never. Next, samples of good writing came third in the classification of the materials used most often with 14%. 36% of the students said that they were always given samples of good essays, 15% often, 29% occasionally, while 12% answered rarely and 7% answered never.

As for the following materials "the Internet" (13,60%) and "language workbook" (13,37%) which got approximately the same scores, subjects ranked them in the fourth and fifth positions successively. 34% reported that they always used materials from the internet, 17% often, and 25% sometimes. Few participants said that they almost never utilized materials from the Internet for the composition course (12% rarely and 12% never). With regard to the fifth material, 32% said that they always used a language workbook, 18% often, and 25% sometimes. However, 13% claimed that rarely used it and 12% reported that they never used it in their writing courses. Next, a writing methodology text came seventh with 12,47%. 21% of the students reported that they always used it, 16% often, and 39% sometimes. In contrast, 12% chose rarely and 12% answered never.

Newspapers/magazines and audio tapes, on the other hand, obtained the lowest scores: 8,76% and 8,76%. For newspapers or magazines, most of the participants said that they infrequently employed them (30% rarely and 35% never). While 19% reported that they sometimes used magazines or newspapers, 7% often, and 9% always. Lastly, audiotapes were the least frequently used material for the composition class. Most of the students reported that did not use this kind of material: 47% said never and 22% said rarely. Whereas, 12% claimed that they sometimes used audiotapes, 15% often and 4% always.

Table 8: Frequency of the teaching materials used for the composition course in order

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Overall Percentage
1- Grammar books	44%	25%	17%	7%	7%	15,13%
2- Guidelines from teacher	39%	19%	25%	14%	3%	14,62%
3- Samples of good writing	36%	15%	29%	12%	7%	14%
4- The Internet	34%	17%	25%	12%	12%	13 ,60%
5- Language workbook	32%	18%	25%	13%	12%	13,37%
6- A writing methodology text	21%	16%	39%	12%	12%	12,47%
7-Newspapers/magazines	9%	7%	19%	30%	35%	8,76%
8- Audio tapes	4%	15%	12%	22%	47%	8,05%
Total	**100%**					

When participants were asked about their personal views with respect to what they believed composition teachers should do, results reveal that a large number of the students were strongly in favor of the five items suggested. For instance, 74% strongly agreed that the primary task of teachers was to "explain how a paragraph and/or essay should be written", 23% agreed, one participant was undecided against one who strongly disagreed and 5 answered disagreed. This was the most selected item having received the highest overall percentage 21,21%.

Likewise, the other four items received high scores. "Writing comments on top of their essays to indicate how they can enhance them" was ranked as the second favored answer with 20,29%. Indeed, 67% reported that they strongly favored this item, 22% agreed, 8% were neutral. However, 2 strongly disagreed, and one disagreed. Item 1 "provide models of writing for students to follow" was the next item selected most often with 20,19%. Actually, 61% of the participants wanted their instructors to provide them with samples of good writing and 31% strongly favored in contrast, one said that s/he strongly disagreed, 5 disagreed and one participant felt undecided.

Item 4 "provide corrections for students' words and/or sentences" and item 3 "make their evaluation criteria explicit" obtained very similar percentages: 19,92% and 18,40% thereby occupying the last two positions as far as the order of items is concerned. For Item 4, 55% of the students strongly wanted their teachers to provide

corrections for their erroneous words and/or sentences and 36% agreed. On the other hand, 5% were undecided, 3% disagreed, and one student strongly disagreed. As for the last item, half of the participants (50%) believed that teachers ought to make their evaluation criteria explicit, 32% strongly agreed as opposed to 3% who disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed and 12% were neutral (See Figure 10 below).
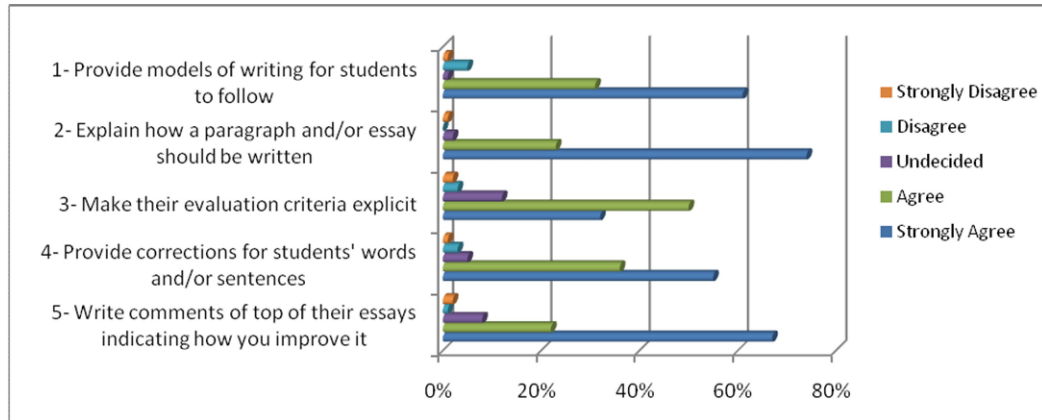
Figure 10: Students' attitudes towards teachers' teaching approaches

In the third part of the questionnaire, students were required to fill in three major questions corresponding roughly to the three main stages of the writing process as identified by Hayes and Flower (1981) on a five point scale. Analysis of the data, as indicated in Figure 11, revealed the tendency of more than half of the subjects to employ these four techniques which obtained the highest percentages before they start writing:

- I consider the instructions carefully (12,77%),
- I read my lesson notes and handouts (12,34%),
- I search for extra materials about the theme to develop ideas for my writing (12,25%), and
- I brainstorm ideas and write them down (11,53%).

To start with the results related to the item selected most often, 61% of the participants reported that they always paid attention to task instructions before starting to write, 26% chose often, and 11% said that they occasionally employed this strategy as opposed to one participant who said that s/he rarely did that and one who said never. As for the second strategy, 53% reported that they always read their lesson

notes and handouts, 30% said they often did that, 13% sometimes. In contrast, 1% answered rarely and 3% answered never.

Item 1 "I search for extra materials about the theme to develop ideas for my writing" was the third strategy selected most often. Indeed, 55% of the students claimed that they always looked for extra materials to develop ideas for their writing, 21% often did that, and 20% said that they employed this strategy from time to time. However, few students said that they did not use this technique (1% rarely and 3% never). 51% claimed that they always brainstormed ideas before they started composing, 18% often used this strategy, and 19% sometimes used brainstorming. 6% of the participants rarely brainstormed their ideas and 6% never opted for this pre-writing strategy which was ranked in the fourth position.

Item 9 "I make arrangements to write in a comfortable, quiet place" came fifth with 11,38%. 46% said that they always used this pre-writing strategy, 16% often, and 27% sometimes. 9% reported that they rarely made arrangements to write in quiet place and 2% said that they never did that. Item 8 "I make an outline in English" (10,89%) was ranked sixth in the overall classification of pre-writing strategies. 38% said that always employed this strategy, 23% often planned their essays, and 25% occasionally made an outline. However, some participants claimed that they were not tempted to use it (8% rarely and 6% never).

Item 3 "I refer back to the feedback from my previous writing" came seventh with (10,84). 28% reported that they always took into consideration the feedback from their former drafts, 20% answered often and 41% said they sometimes used this strategy. However, few participants said that they did not refer back to previous feedback: 9% answered rarely and 1% answered never. For item 7 "I make a list of vocabulary words and expressions I can use" which was ranked eighth with (9,27%), 27% said that they always employed this strategy, 9% often, and 32% occasionally. 23% claimed that they rarely did that and 9% said that they never made lists of vocabulary they can use when the need arises.

Lastly, item 5 "I discuss what I am going to write about with someone" was the least frequently writing strategy students reported to employ before writing in that it received the lowest percentage (9,09%). 24% said that they rarely used it and 7% chose never as a response option. However, 30% reported that they sometimes used this social strategy, 23% said often, and 16% said always.
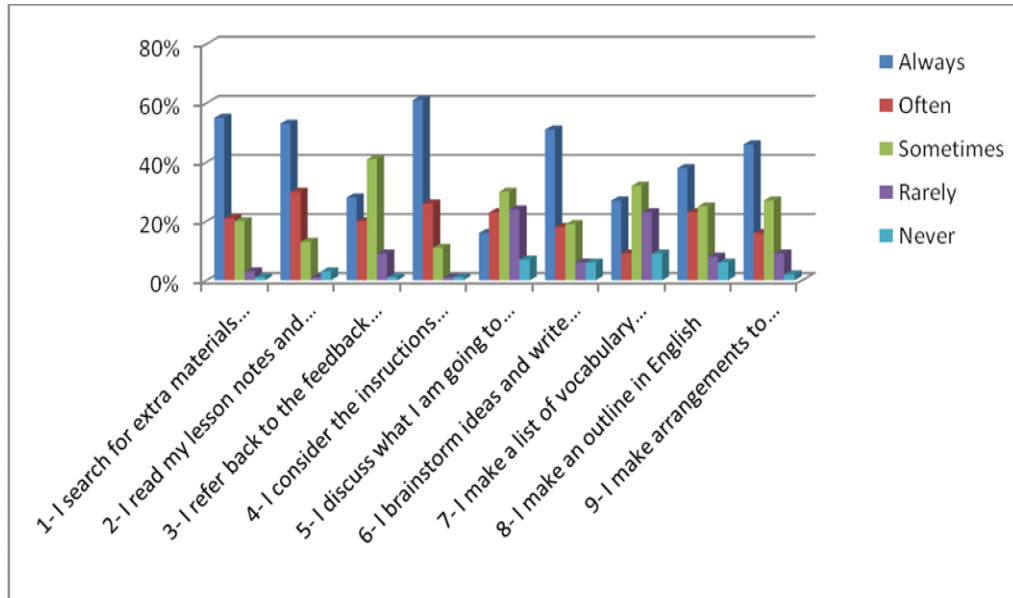
Figure 11: Pre-writing strategies students use

With regard to the writing strategies students reported to use while composing, item 5 and item 8 were considered to be the most frequently used techniques in that they obtained approximately the same mean scores: 13,58% and 13.06% respectively:

- I use an English-English dictionary to check spelling and meaning of words (item 5)
- I reflect on how to attract the reader's attention from the start (item 8)

For item 5, 59% of the participants said that they always used a monolingual dictionary to check spelling and meaning of words, 18% said that they often used it, and 15% reported that they occasionally employed this strategy. Only few participants said they infrequently employed it (3% never and 5% rarely). As for the responses related to the second item selected most often, 49% said that they always reflected on how to attract the reader's attention from the start, 26% said they often did so, 15% claimed that they utilized this strategy from to time as opposed to some participants (6% rarely and 5% never) who were not tempted to employ it.

Next, "using grammar books to check things they are not sure of" came third with 12,64%. Results show that about half of the students (48%) tended to use linguistic materials such as grammar books while writing. Moreover, 19% reported that they often consulted grammar books, and 19% said that they sometimes used them while writing against 11% who answered rarely and 3% who answered never.

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Item 9 "I include a brief summary of the paper's main points in the conclusion" occupied the fourth grade (12,50%) in the overall classification of items. 41% of the participants reported that they always restated the paper's main points in the conclusion, 26% said that they often did so, and 22% said that they sometimes wrote a conclusion. Nevertheless, 8% claimed that they rarely used this strategy and 3% responded never.

Continuing in descending order, item 4 "I edit my paragraphs to include topic sentences" came fifth (11,73%). 37% said that they always used this strategy, 20% often did so, and 23% claimed that they sometimes edited their paragraphs to include topic sentences against 8% (rarely) and 9% (never) who tempted not to employ this technique while writing. Item 3 "I build up full paragraphs" came sixth in the overall classification of the items used most frequently (11,44%). 28% of the students said that they always wrote full paragraphs, 28% also said that they often built up complete paragraphs, and 23% reported that they sometimes did so. However, 15% claimed that rarely built up full paragraphs and 5% said that they never wrote complete paragraphs.

The next item—"I use a thesaurus to vary my word choice"—was rated at a mean score of 10,70%. 20% reported that they always used this strategy, 42% said that they sometimes varied their choice of words, and 20% did so most of the time. On the other hand, 13% answered rarely and 5% said that they never used a thesaurus to vary their word choice.

Finally, the following two strategies "writing incomplete sentences" and "using words and expressions from Arabic or French and then translating the ideas into English" received the lowest percentages 7,16% and 7,13. For item 2, 52% of the students said that they never wrote incomplete sentences and 8% answered rarely. However, the rest of the participants reported that they frequently used this technique: 11% chose always, 16% answered often, and 13% answered sometimes. As for the last item, results show that a large number of the students tended not to employ this strategy. For instance, 36% said that they never used words and expressions from Arabic or French and then translated them into English and 31% reported that they rarely resorted to translation. However, 10% answered always, 7% answered often, and 16% said that they occasionally used this technique while writing (See Figure 12 below).
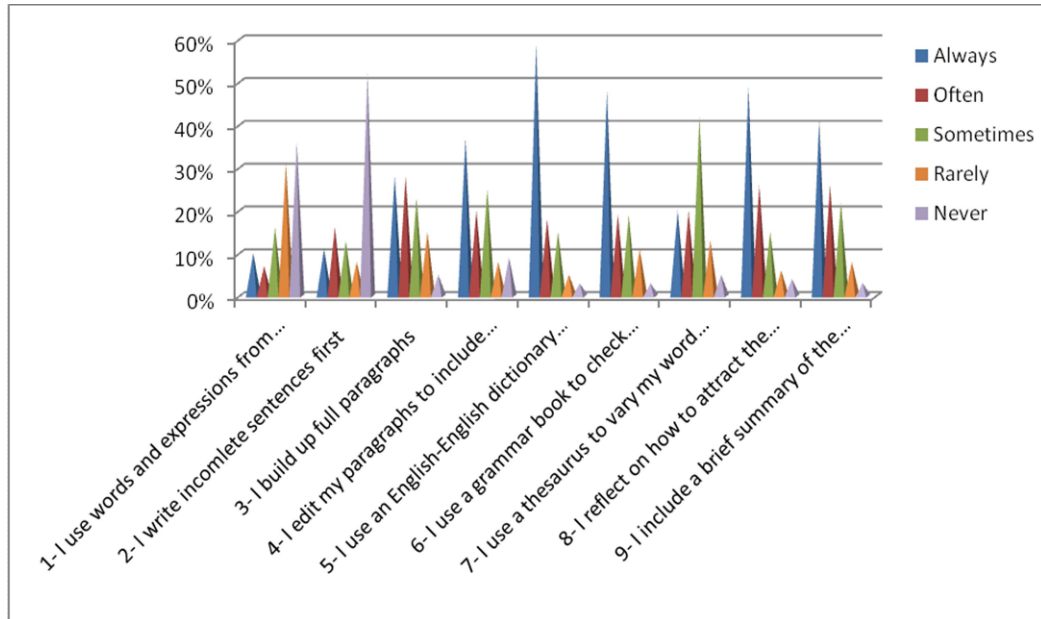
Figure 12: While-writing strategies students use

Figure 13 sums up the statistical data representing the composing strategies students claimed to use after finishing their drafts. "Re-reading their first drafts to check for errors" was the most selected item as it got the highest overall percentage (37,25%) succeeded by item 4 "I reproduce a tidy copy of my draft to my teacher" which came second at a mean score of 24,94%. For example, the majority of students (85%) said that they always revised their drafts. 10% said that they often rescanned their drafts as opposed to few students who preferred not to re-read their texts to check for errors: 3% answered sometimes, 1% answered rarely, and 1% chose never. As for the second most frequently selected item, 35% of students reported that they always reproduced a tidy copy of their essays to their composition teachers, 7% did so most of the time, and 24% said that they sometimes used this technique. 34% claimed they did not use this strategy: 10% answered rarely and 24% answered never.

Then came item 2 "I seek someone's help to get inspired" in the third place with 22,02%. 11% reported that they always used this strategy, 20% often, 33% sometimes against 13% who said that they rarely asked others to proofread their drafts and 23% who said that they never did that. Lastly, item 3 "I hand over my draft as it is" was the least selected item (15,79%). 47% reported that they never submitted their papers as they were or in a rough draft form. 22% said that they rarely handed their papers before rescanning them as opposed to 6% who answered always, 7% who

ticked the response option often, and 17% who said that they sometimes handed their texts as they were.
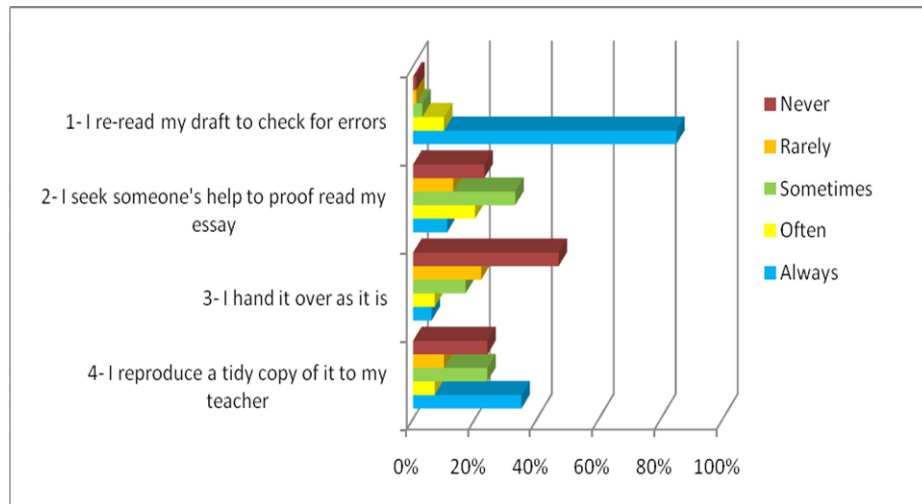
Figure 13: Post-writing strategies students use

In brief, the main findings to be drawn from this part were as follows. First, the target population was divided into four main groups: very good, good, fair, and poor. Second, the majority of respondents chose English as their favorite language as far as writing is concerned. Third, they also reported that they mainly attended composition courses to get prepared for the demands of jobs in the future, learn about writing and get good marks. However, very few of them seemed to be aware of the efficiency of doing writing tasks in helping and preparing them pass language or content subjects. Fourth, participants said that they were frequently asked to write paragraphs, full essays, and dialogues during writing sessions. Fifth, to cope with gaps in the target language while writing, participants claimed to frequently employ the following three strategies which were arranged according to order of overall frequency:

- I re-read what I wrote to figure out what other ideas I can write obtained the highest score (14,68%),
- I use a bilingual dictionary to search for a given word came second with (14,35%), and
- I ask the teacher for help was the third strategy used frequently (12,57%).

As for the strategies that received the lowest scores, one can cite the following three items which obtained approximately similar low scores which will be presented orderly according to the overall percentage:

- I switch to the mother tongue to deal with it later was ranked as seventh (8,37%) in the overall classification of the nine suggested items,
- I read a classmate's paper to get inspired came eighth (8,33%), and
- I put off writing for later was the least frequently used strategy as it received the lowest score (7,61%).

 Another important remark concerns surface and deep level features which make part of the second section. In fact, most of the respondents reported that they edited their essays mainly at the grammatical and lexical levels and paid little attention to essay organization and mechanics. Continuing in ascending order, when subjects were asked to assess a set of ten 'good' writing strategies, subjects largely agreed to label eight out of the ten suggested strategies as 'conducive to good writing' with slight differences in percentages. Take for instance, the following four writing strategies: "underlining the key words in the assigned task", "collecting and organizing information", "devoting time for organization and planning one's essay" and "planning how to approach the writing task at hand" were considered efficient in helping them improve and write better. In contrast, items 4 and 8 "writing whatever ideas come into their minds" and "getting peer feedback" had the lowest overall percentages: 7,35% and 8,05% respectively.

As for the most frequently used materials for the composition course throughout the year, subjects said that they were frequently given grammar exercises (44% always), guidelines from teacher (39% always), models of good essays to imitate (36% always), and materials from the Internet (34%). Moreover, results show that they strongly wanted their composition teachers to provide them with ample details and legible instructions as to how a paragraph and/or essay should be written. This contradicts what they reported earlier (36% said that they were always given samples of good writing). They also stated that they sought to be provided with clear evaluation criteria and tips about how they could enhance their written texts.

With regard to the major findings related to the third section, a number of points could be highlighted. First, according to participants' responses, it was found that more than half of the students reported that they consistently employed the

following pre-writing strategies: paying a great deal of attention to task instructions (61%), reading one's lesson notes and handouts (53%), looking for extra information related to a given theme (55%) and brainstorming one's ideas (51%). However, 14% of students reported that they were not predisposed to plan their texts or refer back to previous feedback on earlier pieces of discourse before starting to write compared to 38% who answered always. 32% (23% chose rarely and 9% chose never) also said that they were not tempted to make vocabulary lists against 27% who said that they always utilized this strategy. Similarly, 31% of participants (24% selected rarely and 7% selected never) reported that they chose not to cooperate with others so as to discuss what they intend to write as opposed to 16% who said that they always employed this technique.

As for while-writing strategies, most of the subjects reported that they always employed the following strategies:

- I use an English monolingual dictionary to check spelling and meaning of words (59%),
- I reflect on how to attract the reader's attention from the start (49%),
- I use a grammar book to check and use appropriate grammatical structures (48%), and
- I include a brief summary of the paper's main ideas in the conclusion (41%).

However, 67% of the students said that they did not use words and expressions from Arabic or French and then translated the ideas into English; i.e., 31% answered rarely and 36% answered never. Moreover, a large number of respondents (52% answered never and 8% answered rarely) reported that they preferred not to write incomplete sentences first while composing as opposed to 11% who said they frequently used this strategy.

Lastly, most of students (85%) concurred that after finishing their essays they re-read their drafts to check for errors. 35% said that they always reproduced neat and tidy copies for their teachers against 24% who claimed that they never did so. Furthermore, 23% said that they never sought help from peer or proficient writers to proofread their essays as opposed to 11% who answered always. 47% reported that they never handed their initial drafts as they were compared to 6% who submitted

their texts without revising them. In the forthcoming section, a detailed report of the major findings obtained from the teacher questionnaire will be provided.

4.2. Results of the teacher questionnaire

The present section sets out to summarize the main results obtained from the teacher questionnaire. First, it deals with the data related to participants' years of experience in teaching English and composition. Then, it examines the answers to each question separately. Then it ends by drawing a comparison between teachers' and students' responses over a set of common writing strategies.

As illustrated in Table 9 below, the output sums up participants' years of teaching experience in English and in composition. The first column shows a mean of 12.67, the sample average for the thirty composition participants, with a minimum of two and a maximum of 29 years teaching English. The second one displays a mean of 6.93 with a minimum of a year and maximum of twenty years teaching composition.

Table 9: Participants' years of experience in teaching English and composition

English		Composition	
Years	Frequency	Years	Frequency
0-5	3	0-5	11
5-10	7	5-10	11
10-15	11	10-15	4
15-20	3	15-20	3
20-25	3	20-25	1
25-30	3	25-30	0
Mean	12.67	Mean	6.93
Total	30	Total	30

In the first question of the questionnaire which was made up of eight items, as shown in Figure 14 below, composition teachers were asked to provide information on the strategies they target as they teach writing. Results related to each item will be presented as they were arranged in the questionnaire. For the first item, 76% said that they frequently encouraged peer-to-peer discussion prior to writing (10% always, 30% often, and 36% sometimes) as opposed to 23,3% who said that they rarely (20%) or never (3,3%) used this strategy. Next, 73,3% of the teachers reported that they just modeled how to use the newly introduced writing task (20% always, 23,3% often, and

30% sometimes) against 26,7% who chose not to target this technique in composition classes (16,7% chose rarely and 10% selected never).

As for the third item, 86,2% claimed that they frequently asked their students to read a similar piece of writing first: 37,9% said that they always employed this strategy, 23,3% said that they often did so, and 27,6% said that they sometimes recommended their students to read similar pieces of writing. Nevertheless, 13,7% said that they did not target the above strategy as they taught composition (3,4% opted for rarely and 10,3% answered never). Moreover, a large number of the participants (96,7%) said that they used item 4. 46,7% reported that they often drew their students' attention to the use of particular writing strategies, 30% said that they always did so and 20% said that they sometimes employed this strategy as they taught composition. 3,3% claimed that they never drew their students' attention to a given strategy used by a given writer.

Continuing in ascending order, item 5 "I engage students in planning, organizing, and reviewing essays" was one of the least frequently used strategies. 96,6% of the teachers said that they rarely (23,3%) or never (73,3%) engaged students in planning, organizing and reviewing essays against 3,3% who said that they sometimes employed this strategy. In addition, 73,4% of respondents reported that they did not help students analyze the audience to whom they will write: 36,7% chose rarely and 36,7% answered never. However, 23,3% indicated that they occasionally emphasized the need to consider the concept of readership while writing while 3,3% said they always did so.

Item 7 "I provide support during the writing process" also scored low with 24,1%. 3,4% reported that they often intervened during the writing process while 20,7% said that they sometimes provided support during the writing process. 75,9% of the teachers said that they did not target this strategy in composition courses (34,5% chose rarely and 41,4% chose never). Lastly, 73,3% claimed that they did not require their students to re-read their compositions and to re-submit them (40% answered rarely and 33,3% answered never) against 26,6% who said that they frequently employed this strategy (3,3% often and 23,3% sometimes).

Notice that apart from the first item which received more positive answers, results show the tendency of most of the respondents to just model strategy use. To put it simply, according to the results obtained one can note that there was little teaching of writing as process or of monitoring. For example, the majority of

responses for the four last items were either rarely or never (See results above). Few teachers seemed to actively engage students in using various writing strategies.
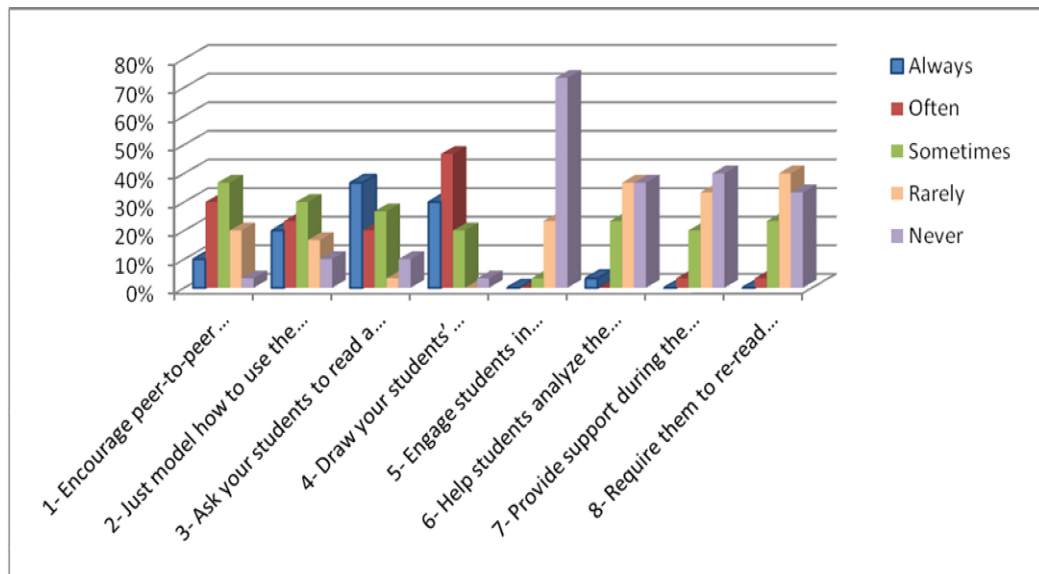
Figure 14: Samples of the writing strategies composition teachers target in their writing classes

In the second question, composition teachers were asked to express their views regarding a cluster of ten writing strategies considered to be efficient when writing. The data obtained from the sum of responses particularly positive ones will be presented in an orderly manner; i.e., from the highest to the lowest. As displayed in Figure 15, all of the participants (100%) viewed item 3 "brainstorming and planning" as beneficial to students when writing: 73,3% strongly agreed and 26,7 agreed. Similarly, item 9 "devoting time for organization and planning one's essay" was viewed as efficient. 56,7% of the teachers strongly agreed to deem it as helpful compared to 43,3% who just agreed. None of the respondents conceived this strategy negatively.

Next, item 2 "making their writing explicit" and item 5 "collecting and organizing information before planning" had the same scores 93,3%. 40% of the composition teachers were strongly in favor of item 2 and 53,3% answered "agree" in comparison to 6,7% who were undecided. As for item 3, 63,3% strongly agreed to consider "collecting and organizing information before planning" as a good strategy to students when writing, 30% just agreed as opposed to 3,3% who strongly disagreed.

Moreover, item 10 "adding, omitting, substituting, and reorganizing when revising" also scored high 83,3%. 40% of participants answered "strongly agree" and 43,3% agreed to consider it as a 'good' strategy. 10% were undecided, 3,3% disagreed, and 3,3% strongly disagreed. Item 1 "underlining the key words in the assigned task" received a high score (80%), too. 50% reported that they strongly agreed to term this strategy as effective, 30% also viewed it positively against 6,7% who were neutral and 13,3% disagreed. Likewise, item 8 "getting peer feedback" obtained the same sum (80%) with rating differences. 23,3% reported that they strongly favored this strategy, 56,7% agreed to consider it as efficient. However, few participants seemed to have a different view: 10% were undecided and 10% disagreed.

Continuing in descending order, 76,7% also viewed "considering revising and producing multiple drafts" as beneficial to students when composing. 26,7% were strongly in favor of it and 50% agreed as opposed to 13,3% who were neutral and 10% did not consider this strategy as conducive to effective writing. Moreover, 73,3% considered item 4 "writing whatever ideas come into one's mind" as efficient. 33,3% strongly agreed and 40% agreed while 6,7% disagreed and 6,7% answered "strongly disagree". 13,3% were undecided.

Unlike the previous strategies which were viewed positively, the majority of participants (73,3%) did not view the sixth item "concentrating more on meaning than on correctness of their sentences" as beneficial. Item 6 results showed that 30% strongly disagreed, 43,3% disagreed, and 3,3% were undecided. 3,3% answered "strongly agree" and 20% agreed. As shown in Figure 15, most of the items proposed received positive scores except for the sixth item which received a negative score.

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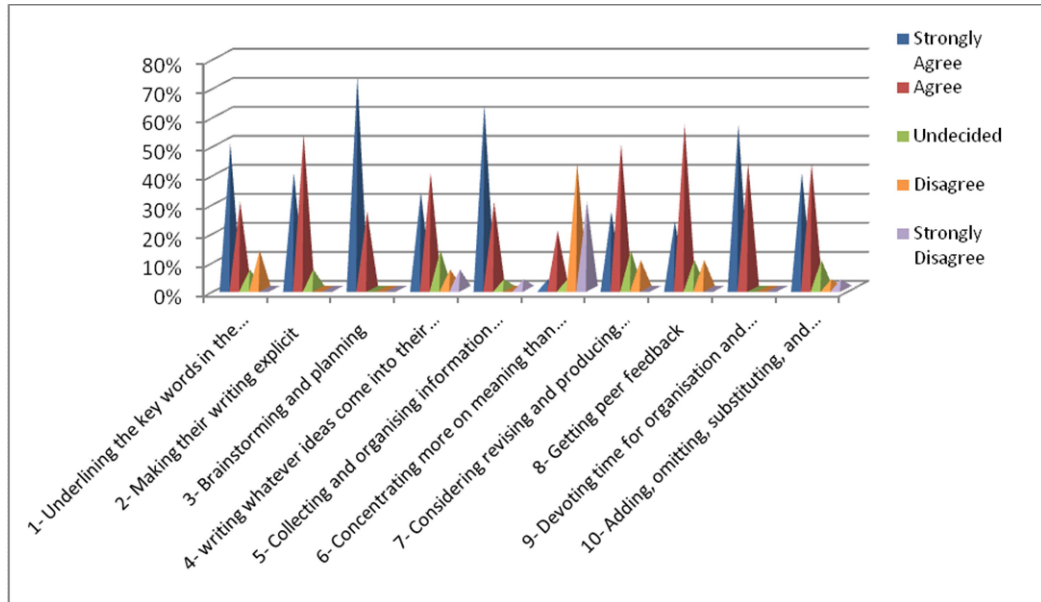
Figure 15: Teachers' assessment of a set of 'good' writing strategies

Question three was made up of seven writing strategies that teachers might recommend their student writers to employ when facing difficulties. Item 4 "asking the teacher for help" was the most selected answer in that it got the highest overall score 19,51%. 56,7% of respondents said that they often advised their students to ask for clarification, 23,3% always used this strategy and 16,7% said that they sometimes did so against 3,3% who answered "rarely". Item 3 "re-reading what they wrote to figure out what other ideas they can write about" was ranked second with a mean score of 17,89%. 40% said that they often recommended their students to rescan their drafts to help them generate ideas, 20% answered always, and 26,7% chose sometimes as opposed to 13,3% who rarely used this strategy.

Next, items 2 and 6 "I search for similar essays for inspiration" and "I read a classmate's paper to get inspired" were roughly scored the same overall percentage: 14,80% for the second item and 14,63% for the sixth strategy. Indeed, 40% reported that they advised their students to use these two coping strategies occasionally. For the second item, 13,3% said that they always asked their students to look for similar essays for inspiration and 16,7% said that they often recommended this strategy in comparison to 30% who did not opt for this strategy (20% chose rarely and 10% chose never). For item 6, 6,7% of the instructors said that they always asked their students to read their classmates' papers to get inspired, and 26,7% answered "often".

However, 26,6% reported that they did not advise their students to employ this technique to facilitate writing: 13,3% chose rarely and 13,3% chose never.

As for the three remaining items which were scored low, most of the participants did not recommend their students to deploy them when facing writing difficulties. For example, item 7 "seek help from another student who usually gets good marks" was ranked fifth with 13,33%. 44% of the students said that they did not advise their students to use this strategy: 23,3% answered rarely and 16,7% answered never. Only 3,3% reported that they always urged their student writers to use this technique. 23,3% said that they often targeted this strategy and 33,3% said that they sometimes advised their students to resort to their proficient peers when they face difficulties.

Items 1 and 5 respectively "use a bilingual dictionary" and "put off writing for later" had the same score (9,92%). For item 1, 6,7% claimed that they often recommended their students to use this strategy, and 23,% sometimes. In contrast, 70% said that they did not encourage their students to employ this strategy: 36,7% chose rarely and 33,3% chose never. As for the last item, few participants said that they advised their students to "put off writing for later" whenever they face difficulties. 3,3% reported that they always told their students to use this strategy, 33,3% claimed that they sometimes recommended their students to use it. However, 63,3% of the teachers said that they did not choose it: 23,3% answered rarely and 40% answered never (See Figure 16 below).
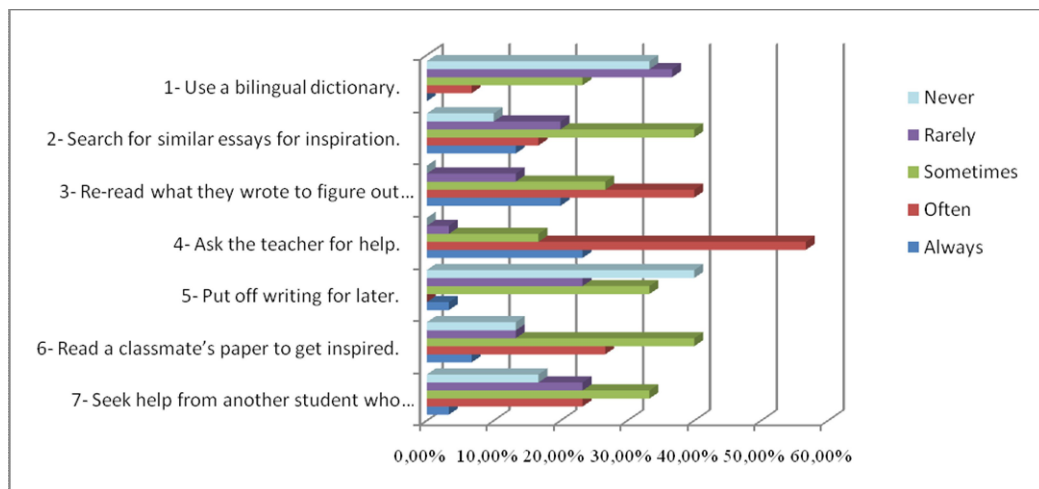
Figure 16: Frequency of the writing strategies teachers advise their students to use when they face difficulties

Before moving forward to present the data obtained for the last question enquiring about the overall frequency of six writing strategies that are thought to be conducive to good writing, it should be noted that, as is shown in Figure 17, almost all the items suggested scored high. Item 5 "reflect on how to attract the reader's attention from the start" was the most selected (93,3%). 60% of the instructors said that they always urged their students to employ this strategy, and 33,3% claimed that they often stressed it. 3,3% reported that they occasionally targeted it while teaching composition compared with 3,3% who said that they never did so.

Moreover, a large number of participants (86,7%) maintained that they prompted their students to use item 4 "review their own compositions to introduce changes": 36,7% chose always and 50% selected often. 13,3% claimed that they sometimes required their students to rescan their drafts for errors. None of the participants opted for the other two rating scales: rarely and never.

Item 2 "refer back to the feedback from their previous writing" was the next strategy selected most often. 83,3% of the teachers reported that they frequently urged their students to employ this strategy: 43,3% chose always and 40% chose often. 13,3% reported that they sometimes stressed it as opposed to 3,3% who said that they rarely encouraged its use. As for item 6 "remind the reader of the main points discussed in the body" it was ranked fourth with 83,4%. 56,7% of the students said that they always asked their students to provide a summary of the main points, and 26,7% said that they often urged their students to employ this strategy. 3,3% answered sometimes as opposed to 6,7% who answered "rarely" and 6,7% who said that they never asked their students to summarize what they wrote in the body.

Item 1 "read their lesson notes and handouts" was ranked fifth (80%). 46,7% of the teachers said that they always advised their students to "read their lesson notes and handouts", 33,3% often, and 16,7% sometimes. In contrast 3,3% reported that never asked their students to review their lesson notes and handouts. Lastly, item 3 "make a list of vocabulary words and expressions they can use" was the least selected item with 60% of teachers said that they encouraged the use of such strategy. 16,7% said that they always urged their students to create lists of vocabulary they can use in a variety of contexts, 43,3% said that they often did so and 23,3% chose occasionally. However, 6,7% said that they rarely asked their students to employ this strategy and 10% claimed that they never urged them to use it.
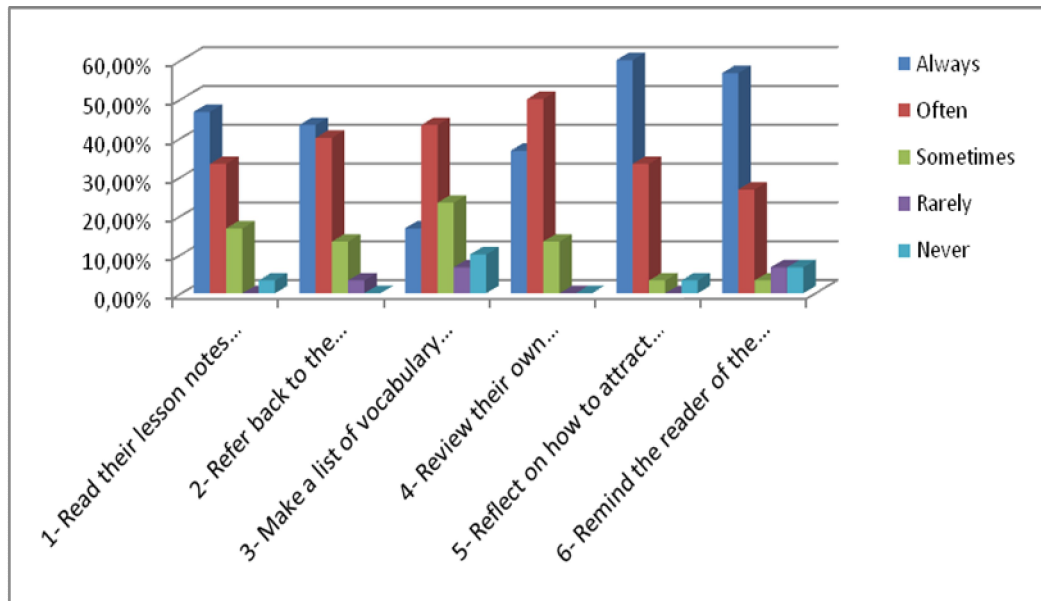
Figure 17: A list of the strategies teachers recommend their students to use

On the whole, a full account of the data reached and gathered from the teacher writing questionnaire was brought to the fore in the present section. In fact, participants seemed to favor certain strategies over others. Among the most selected strategies teachers largely opted for, one can cite the following strategies:

- asking the teacher for help (56,7% answered often),
- looking for interesting hooks to grab readers' attention and encourage them to read further (60% answered always),
- Writing conclusions (56,7% responded always),
- Re-reading one's draft to check for errors (50% answered often), and
- Referring back to former feedback and lesson notes (43,3% answered always).

Nevertheless, respondents seemed to underestimate the importance of other key writing strategies like planning and writing with a purpose in mind. Analysis of the data reached shows the tendency of the majority of participants to focus on modeling; i.e., they did not seem to perceive writing as a process which necessitates teacher involvement in every phase of writing. For example, most of the composition teachers (70%) reported that they did not "engage their students in planning, organizing, and reviewing their essays."

Furthermore, almost half of the participants stated that they never intervened during the writing process (41,4%) or told their students to "put off writing for later"

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(40%). Others said that they seldom helped students "analyze the audience to whom they will write" (36,7%) or advised them to "use a bilingual dictionary (36,7%). Similarly, 43,3% of the instructors did not consider concentrating on meaning over form as a good strategy. The following section compares and contrasts the results of compiled from the teacher and student questionnaires; i.e., see where they diverge and converge.

4.3. A comparison of teachers' and students' responses

As stated earlier in the methodology chapter, both teachers and students were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with a defined set of writing strategies. This section will be devoted to comparing and contrasting the two sets of results. But before proceeding further, I would like to outline the overall mean score for frequency of use derived regarding the six categories of composing strategies as identified in Oxford's (1990) model and illustrated in Table 10 below.

Broadly speaking, analysis of the results of the two questionnaires showed some correspondence between the responses of the two groups; i.e., students and teachers. Both groups obtained approximately the same frequency rate in terms of each category (See Appendices A and B for classification of items) except for the last two categories-affective and negative strategies-which displayed significant differences. As far as students were concerned, memory, meta-cognitive, compensation strategies were the most frequently used strategies in that they received the highest averages respectively followed immediately by cognitive, social, and affective strategies being used less frequently. As a matter of fact, a large number of the students reported that they rarely handed their drafts as they were or in a rough draft form.

Likewise, composition teachers reported to use the first three strategies: memory, meta-cognitive and compensation strategies more frequently compared to the other four strategies. With regard to the order of the remaining categories, teachers favored social and cognitive strategies in contrast to students who were prone to employ cognitive strategies and social strategies instead. As to affective strategies, both groups reported using them less frequently as they came sixth; yet, with significant differences as far as the mean score is concerned.

Table 10: Overall mean score of the seven categories

Strategy	M	C	CP	MC	S	A	N
Mean: Students	4.29	3.59	3.72	3.98	3.20	3.14	2.59
Mean: Teachers	4.20	3.49	3.67	4.11	3.50	2.03	3.87

Key: **M**= Memory strategies; **C**= Cognitive strategies; **CP**= Compensation strategies; **MC**= Meta-cognitive strategies; **S**= Social strategies; **A**= Affective strategies; **N**= Negative strategies.

Going back to the comparison established earlier, the two groups were first asked to express their opinions regarding a set of ten writing strategies that thought to be efficient in helping students when writing. This was done on purpose so as to measure both groups' appreciation of particular strategies; i.e., determine the degree to which they agree or disagree about what consists of 'good' techniques. Analysis of the data obtained, as indicated in Table 11 which comprised the highest and lowest percentages, revealed that there were not almost any significant statistical differences between the two groups as they shared nearly the same views. In fact, both teachers and students agreed to term seven items out of ten as good writing strategies with slight differences in counts. In what follows, the results reached from both sets of data will be examined and interpreted mainly with reference to the highest percentage.

With regard to the first item "underlining the key words in the assigned task" both teachers (50%) and students (74%) strongly agreed to label it as good but with differences in percentages and in order. While students ranked it first, teachers ranked it as fifth. As for the second item "reflecting on how to make their writing explicit", just as teachers, 53% of students considered it as an effective composing strategy but differed in the order. Teachers ranked it fourth compared with students who put it in the sixth position.

Equally, both teachers and students had almost similar scores but differed in the degree of agreement regarding item 10 "adding, omitting, substituting, and reorganizing when revising". 43,3% of the teachers just agreed with this item while 43% of students answered "strongly agree". Item 5 "collecting and organizing information before planning" was also viewed as efficient by the two groups. It got roughly the same rate of answers: 63,3% of teachers strongly agreed to consider this strategy as efficient and 55% of students agreed to term this strategy as effective.

Moreover, 73,3% of teachers were strongly in favor of item 3 "brainstorming and planning" which came first compared with students who ranked it fourth with 44% of the responses. The same applies to item 7. Indeed, 50% of the instructors and 36% of students viewed "considering revising and producing multiple drafts" as efficient. Lastly, both teachers (56,7%) and students (52%) strongly agreed to label item 9 "devoting time for organization and planning their essays" as a good strategy.

Turning to talk about the remaining items, both groups differed in the way they assessed them. Unlike writing teachers (40%) who regarded item 4 "writing whatever ideas come into their minds" as efficient when writing, 27% of the students disagreed with this claim and ranked this strategy in the last position. As for item 8, 56,7% of composition teachers viewed "getting peer feedback" as good; while, 31% of the students were undecided. Surprisingly, both teachers and students did not consider item 6 "concentrating more on meaning than on correctness of their sentences" as a good writing strategy and ranked it in the last positions ninth and eighth successively. 73,3% of the instructors (43,3% answered "disagree" and 30% answered "strongly disagree") viewed that strategy negatively compared to 41% of the students who did not perceive this strategy as efficient (26% disagreed and 15% strongly disagreed). As mentioned in the literature review, focus on meaning and generation of ideas over form was a behavior that was evidenced by skilled writers who did not seem to be preoccupied extensively with making surface-level edits to their writing assignment (Chenoweth, 1987; Zamel, 1983).

Table 11: Teachers' and students' assessment of a set of 'good' writing strategies

	Teachers		Students	
	Highest percentage	Lowest percentage in terms of extremes	Highest percentage	Lowest percentage in terms of extremes
1- Underlining the key words in the assigned task.	50% SA	13,3% D	74% SA	0% SD
2- Reflecting on how to make your writing explicit.	53,3% A	0% SD	53% A	1% SD
3- Brainstorming and planning.	73,3% SA	0% SD	44% A	3% SD
4- Writing whatever ideas come into your mind.	40% A	6.7% SD	27% D	14% SA
5- Collecting and organizing information.	63,3% SA	3.3% SD	55% SA	1% D
6- Concentrating more on meaning than on correctness of your sentences.	43,3% D	3.3% SA	36% D	19% SA
7- Considering revising and producing multiple drafts.	50% A	10% D	36% A	7% SD
8- Getting peer feedback.	56,7% A	10% D	31% U	12% SA vs 14% SD
9- Devoting time for organization and planning your essay.	56,7% SA	0% SD	52% SA	3% SD
10- Adding, omitting, substituting, and reorganizing when revising.	43,3% A	3.3% SD	43% SA	8% SD
Total of respondents	30		100	

Key: SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; U= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

Likewise, in order to identify the most often used strategies to facilitate writing, both teachers and students were enquired to state how frequently they employed the seven items suggested. Table 12 sums up the results related to the strategies teachers recommended their students to use and the techniques students utilized to tackle difficulties in writing. Before proceeding further, it should be noted that in some instances both groups opted for different approaches. As was mentioned earlier, only the highest and the lowest percentages among the five rating scales will be pointed out.

The first notable difference concerns item 1. Indeed, 36,7% of teachers said that they rarely advised their students to use a bilingual dictionary as opposed to 44% of students who reported that they used it most of the time. Likewise, item 6 displayed significant response differences between the two groups. While 40% of teachers stated that they sometimes advised their students to "read a classmate's paper to get inspired", 32% of participants indicated that they never opted for this choice.

On the other hand, they had almost similar responses as regards the remaining five strategies. 40% of teachers stated that they sometimes advised their students to search for similar essays for inspiration, while 39% of students said that they often deployed this strategy when encountering difficulties in completing a writing assignment. Furthermore, 40% of the instructors reported that they often recommended their novice student writers to "re-read what they wrote to figure out what other ideas they can write about". 62% of students stated that they always used this strategy. For item 4 "I ask the teacher for help", 56,7% of teachers and 39% of students opted for this social strategy most of the time. Next, 33,3% of teachers reported that they sometimes encouraged their students to "seek help from another student who usually gets good marks" which was approved of by 44% of students who reported that they were prone to deploy it when such a need arises. Lastly, 40% of the instructors said that they never told their students to "put off writing for later" and 32% of student writers reported that they rarely used this technique to tackle writing difficulties.

Table 12: Frequency of the strategies teachers recommended and students used to cope with difficulties while writing

	Teachers		Students	
	Highest percentage	Lowest percentage in terms of extremes	Highest percentage	Lowest percentage in terms of extremes
1- Use a bilingual dictionary.	36,7% Rarely	6,7% Often	44% Often	6% Never
2- Search for similar essays for inspiration.	40% Sometimes	10% Never	39% Often	8% Never
3- Re-read what they wrote to figure out what other ideas they can write about.	40% Often	13,3% Rarely	62% Always	4% Never
4- Ask the teacher for help.	56,7% Often	3,3% Rarely	39% Often	4% Never
5- Put off writing for later.	40% Never	3,3% Always	32% Rarely	4% Always
6- Read a classmate's paper to get inspired.	40% Sometimes	6,7% Always	32% Never	10% Always
7- Seek help from another student who usually gets good marks.	33,3% Sometimes	3,3% Always	44% Often	17% Never
Total of respondents	30		100	

Table 13 presents a brief synopsis of the results obtained with reference to the student and teacher questionnaires concerning the overall frequency of six common strategies. Both teachers (46,7%) and students (53%) had chosen more or less the

same rating scale as far as the first item is concerned: "always". Indeed, teachers asserted that they tended to stir up their students, who in turn reported to, "read their lesson notes and handouts" repeatedly.

In the same way, teachers and students perceived the following two strategies (the last two items) as efficient with slight rating differences: "reflecting on how to attract the reader' attention from the start" and "reminding the reader of the main points discussed in the essay". Actually, both groups said that they always used the above two strategies. For item 5, 60% of teachers and 49% of students chose "always". 56,7% of teachers and 41% answered "always" for the last item as well.

However, they partly disagreed regarding the remaining three items in that they chose different rating scales. For the second item, 43,3% of teachers maintained that they always urged their students to "refer back to the feedback from their previous writing" s to help them write efficiently. 41% of students said they employed this strategy from time to time. In comparison with teachers' scores (43,3%) which displayed how frequently (often) they asked their students to "make a list of vocabulary words and expressions they can use", only 32% of students said that they occasionally utilized this strategy so as to improve the quality of their texts. Next 50% of teachers reported that they urged their students to revise their compositions most of the time compared to 85% of students who answered "always". Notice that both groups shared positive views despite differences as far as frequency is concerned. Indeed, answers ranged between "always" and "sometimes".

Table 13: Teachers' and students' use of six common writing strategies

	Teachers		Students	
	Highest percentage	Lowest percentages in terms of extremes	Highest percentage	Lowest percentage in terms of extremes
1- Read their lesson notes and handouts.	46,7% Always	3,3% Never	53% Always	3% Never
2- Refer back to the feedback from their previous writing.	43,3% Always	3,3% Rarely	41% Sometimes	1% Never
3- Make a list of vocabulary words and expressions they can use.	43,3% Often	10% Never	32% Sometimes	9% Never
4- Re-read their drafts to check for errors.	50% Often	0% Never	85% Always	1% Never
5- Reflect on how to attract the reader's attention from the start.	60% Always	3,3% Never	49% Always	4% Never
6- Remind the reader of the main points discussed in the body.	56,7% Always	6,7% Never	41% Always	3% Never
Total of respondents	30		100	

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the results compiled from the two data collection procedures utilized in the present study. The results obtained were effective and fruitful as they provided valuable information on strategy use for both groups; i.e., teachers' teaching practices and students' writing techniques. To this effect, the first section was devoted to summarizing and examining students' responses; followed immediately by a report on the output of composition teachers. These were, in turn, thoroughly presented and described in tables and charts. Moreover, a contrastive analysis of the two sets of results was established which entailed a satisfactory correspondence between the responses of the two groups.

With respect to the student writing strategy questionnaire, results showed that the vast majority of students preferred to write in English. Furthermore, it was found that they were predisposed to employ several key strategies. These include re-reading, revising, asking the teacher for help, and looking for samples of good writing to follow very frequently in order to compensate for feasible gaps in the target language. Yet, some participants seemed to be unaware of the significance of strategies such as getting peer feedback, referring back to previous feedback, making lists of useful lexical items and linkers and cooperating with peers. This may be partly ascribed, as shall be discussed in the next chapter, to several factors including lack of strategy training.

Conversely, although composition teachers claimed that they targeted a number of important writing strategies like "encouraging peer discussion" before writing, "referring back to the feedback from their previous writing", "asking the teacher for help", and "reflecting on how to attract readers' attention from the start", they showed a tendency towards modeling as a writing strategy. Most of the participants reported that they neither "engaged their students in planning, organizing and reviewing their essays," "provided support during the writing process" nor did they "help students analyze the audience to whom they will write." This may partly explain the low frequency rate assigned to a number of strategies like planning on the part of some participants.

With reference to the results obtained, extra attention will be directed in the next chapter to discuss the key findings and compare them to the ones reported in the field of second and foreign writing research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, the main results reached in the student and teacher questionnaires will be discussed and with reference to the research questions addressed in this study. Then attention will be directed mostly to the examination and analysis of the key findings in terms of frequency of use and with reference to the findings obtained in composition research.

5.1. Summary of key results

The main research questions addressed at the start of this study were as follows:

1) What writing strategies do students say they use while performing writing assignments?
2) What writing strategies do teachers target in composition classes?
3) What areas of mismatch exist between learners' learning needs and preferences and the teachers' teaching practices?

In response to the first question, students seemed to overestimate particular writing strategies over others. For instance, when faced with difficulties when attempting to write, most of the participants reported that they employed a number of writing strategies very frequently. The following five items exemplify the strategies that students used most often:

- re-reading what they wrote to figure out what other ideas they can write,
- using a bilingual dictionary,
- asking the teacher for help,
- looking for similar essays for inspiration, and
- seeking help from another student who usually gets good marks.

However, some participants (37%) said that they often crossed what they wrote and started all over again. Others also reported that they infrequently employed strategies such as putting off writing for later (59%), reading their classmates' papers to get inspired (55%) or switching to the mother tongue (52%).

Next, when they were asked to indicate what changes they introduced most often while writing, the majority of participants said that they concerned themselves primarily with making changes at the grammatical, lexical and sentence levels. Getting ideas expressed coherently, organizing their essays, and using mechanics (spelling and punctuation) appropriately came second.

Another important remark concerns students' assessment of a set of ten 'good' writing strategies. Results show that most of the students labelled almost all of the suggested strategies as beneficial. Underlining the key words in the assigned task, collecting and organizing information before planning, spending sufficient time on organising and planning their written texts, and making their writing explicit were among the strategies that scored high. Nevertheless, 31% of the subjects seemed not to have a firm stance regarding the efficiency of item 8 "getting peer feedback"; i.e., they did not know how to assess it as an in/appropriate strategy. Still others (50%) did not consider "writing whatever ideas that come into their minds" as a good strategy to follow when writing.

In questions related to pre-writing strategies, more than half of the students reported that they always employed the following strategies:

- considering the instructions carefully (61%),
- searching for extra materials about the theme to develop ideas for one's writing (55%),
- reading one's lesson notes and handouts (53%), and
- brainstorming before starting to write their drafts (51%).

As for the other pre-writing strategies, 38% of the subjects said that they planned their essays most of the time. Others reported that they sometimes referred back to their feedback from their previous writing (41%), 32% said that they occasionally made a list of vocabulary words and expressions they can use. Still others who said that they sometimes discussed what they were going to write with other users of the target language (30%).

Another interesting concern was the composing strategies subjects claimed to employ while writing. 59% of students said that they always used an English monolingual dictionary to check spelling and meaning of words. Moreover, about half of the participants reported that they always utilised strategies such as reflecting on how to attract the reader's attention (49%), using a grammar book to check the

accuracy of their syntactic structures (48%), and summarising the paper's main points in the conclusion (41%). 37% of students said that they always edited their paragraphs to include topic sentences. 42% said that they sometimes used a thesaurus to vary their word choice. However, 52% of the respondents said that they never wrote incomplete sentences first or used words and expressions from Arabic or French first and then translated the ideas into English (36%).

As for the responses related to post-writing strategies, most of the students (85%) said that they always rescanned their initial drafts to check for errors. 35% of subjects said that they often reproduced a tidy copy of their essays to their composition teachers and 35% said that they often sought help from others to proofread their essays. 46% reported that they never handed over their essays without rereading and revising them.

With respect to the second research question related to the writing strategies teachers targeted as they taught composition, the following key points were uncovered. First, the following two strategies were the most often selected: asking students to read similar pieces of writing first (37,9% answered always), and drawing their attention to the use of particular strategies (46,4% answered often). Participants also reported that they occasionally encouraged peer-to-peer discussion prior to writing (36%) and modeled how to use the newly introduced writing strategy (30%).

However, most of the instructors seemed to underestimate the significance of a number of writing strategies. The majority of teachers (73,3%) said that they never engaged their students in planning, organizing, and reviewing their essays. Still others said that they never provided support during the writing process (41,4%), helped students analyze the audience to whom they will write (36,7%), or required their students to re-read their drafts and to re-submit them (40%).

Second, most of the participants were of the same opinion regarding a set of ten writing strategies thought to be conducive to good writing. These included using and adopting strategies such as underlining the key words in the assigned task, brainstorming and planning, collecting and organizing information, getting peer feedback and making one's writing explicit. Nevertheless, 43,3% of respondents reported that they did not consider "concentrating more on meaning than on correctness of your sentences" as a efficient to students when writing.

Third, analysis of the responses related to the strategies teachers advised their student writers to use when encountering difficulties reveal the tendency of a large

number of participants to encourage the use of the following two strategies most of the time: asking the teacher for help (56,7%) and re-reading what they wrote to figure out what other ideas they can write (40%). Moreover, 40% of the teachers reported that they occasionally advised their students to look for similar essays for inspiration and to read their classmates' papers to get inspired. However, some participants seemed not to favour strategies such as using a bilingual dictionary (36,7%) or putting off writing for later (40%) as they hardly recommended their use.

To help their students write better, almost half of the participants said that they often urged them to use strategies such as reading lesson notes and handouts, referring back to the feedback from their previous writing, using newly learned lexical items and expressions, and reviewing their essays. Moreover, more than half of the teachers said that they always urged their students to use strategies for writing introductions and conclusions as they can represent the most difficult parts when writing an essay. These include thinking of interesting hooks to grab the reader's attention and restating the main points discussed in the body.

As for the third research question, the data showed some satisfactory fit between students' and teachers' responses over a set of composing strategies that recurred in the two questionnaires. Indeed, both groups employed more or less a number of similar strategies. Actually, there were not many differences in the percentages. Some figures were the same, others were quite close. Both teachers and students shared approximately similar views regarding a set of strategies. For example, they considered the following strategies as beneficial when composing:

- planning how to approach a given task,
- collecting and organising information before planning,
- considering revising and producing multiple drafts, and
- underlining the key words in the assigned task.

In addition, 43,3% of the teachers and 31% of the students agreed that more emphasis ought to be placed on correcting one's sentences rather than on meaning. The results also showed that both groups opted for similar approaches. Reflecting on how to attract the reader's attention to read further, and asking the teacher for help exemplify some of the writing strategies that obtained favourable answers (For more details see the previous chapter).

However, in some other instances, there was a sort of discrepancy between the answers of the two groups. For instance, 44% of the students reported that they often used a bilingual dictionary while writing as opposed to 36,7% of the teachers who said that they rarely advised their students to employ this strategy when facing writing difficulties. Moreover, 32% of the students stated that they never read a classmate's paper to get inspired against 40% of the instructors who reported that sometimes recommended the use of this strategy. Moreover, they had different views concerning the following two strategies. 56,7% of the teachers viewed "getting peer feedback" as efficient against 31% of the students had no firm stance; i.e., they were undecided. Conversely, 73,3% of the teachers viewed "writing whatever ideas that come into one's mind" as beneficial 50% of the students had a different perspective. The above results will be discussed further in the next section.

5.2. Discussion of key results

This section is divided into two subsections. The first subsection will be devoted to discussing the findings reached from the student questionnaire. The second one will discuss the main findings obtained from the teacher questionnaire.

5.2.1. Discussion of findings from the student questionnaire

Analysis of the data related to students' writing preferences reflected subjects' strong drive to compose in English. Indeed, the majority of participants (70%) reported that they preferred to write in English primarily. This could be viewed as an asset. To put it simply, by being motivated to write in English, learners are very likely to be active and proficient student writers in the long run. As EFL learners, they are expected to choose English as the main tool for writing.

With regard to subjects' motivation for attending writing sessions, participants seemed to be interested particularly in improving the quality of their written products in order to prepare themselves for the demands of jobs in the future, together with getting good marks and learning about writing. However, most of them reported that they were not interested in learning about the different aspects of academic writing; i.e., master organizational and format conventions underlying written discourse. This does not coincide with their responses concerning the first item "learning about writing." Actually, participants seemed to be unaware of the importance and

helpfulness of attending composition courses to pass both language and content subjects.

Next, the main rationale for investigating the different types of writing tasks undertaken in the composition course was to gain further insights into composition teachers' current teaching approaches and to provide suggestions for enhancing or solving potential gaps. As it was expected, subjects reported that they were initially taught how to write paragraphs. That is to say, how to write things such as topic sentences, linking ideas and using appropriate transition words, along with dialogues (38%) since the beginning of the academic year. 81% of the subjects said that they were instructed to compose short and simple pieces of written discourse and not full essays. These were delayed until students managed to put into practice what they had been trained to do. For instance, 69% reported that they started to write full essays by the end of the year.

As for the other tasks, students reported that they were ordered to write summaries and responses less frequently. Only 24% and 35% students stated that they wrote summaries and responses respectively in the middle of the year. However, they said that they prepared and wrote research reports (36%) as well as commentaries (40%) throughout the year.

Conversely, 59% and 69% of participants said that they were never instructed to write letters and diaries. Given the fact that they were personal and subjective, asking students to write diaries was not deemed as a popular activity as far as participants in our study are concerned. This explains the low proportion of responses. Oxford (1990) contends that there is some truth in the former argument. Yet, she believes in the utility of this strategy. She assumes that language learners should be encouraged to write diaries and share them either with their classmates or teachers so as to record and/or change the strategies that they learned or employed inadequately while composing.

Commenting on the overall frequency of the writing strategies participants claimed to employ when attempting to write, "re-reading what they wrote to figure out what other ideas they can write" and "using a bilingual dictionary to search for a given word" were the two most often used strategies. Student writers mainly novices, as Oxford (1990) maintained, were very likely to resort to linguistic materials including dictionaries to compensate for gaps in their knowledge of the target language and to re-reading which may not seem for a while "creative, important, or

meaningful" (Oxford, 1990, p. 70). Yet, she argues that re-reading helps students to read for meaning and to revise their written texts.

Furthermore, 69% of the participants (30% answered always and 39% answered often) reported that they were prone to ask for clarification and assistance once the need arose. 66% said that they were predisposed to look for similar essays for inspiration (27% responded always and 39% responded often). According to Oxford (1990, p. 71), encouraging students to imitate L1 users of a given language and providing them with different written models to follow are beneficial. She argues that they can speed up command of literacy skills of the target language including appropriate use of idioms, lexical items, syntactic and structural rules. In fact, the previous two strategies were the next most valued since they can raise students' awareness as to how they can write better, monitor their learning, use appropriate strategies, and more importantly master the linguistic code (Oxford, 1990).

In the same way, cooperating with proficient writers namely peers is also favoured as it is conducive to skill development (Oxford, 1990; Belaid, 2004). Indeed, participants ranked it fifth with 11.28% of the total percentage. Belaid (2004) found that participants chiefly those in the experimental group, who practised peer and self-feedback techniques, benefited more compared to those in the control group who received teacher feedback. Belaid (2004) observed that the majority of "the students reacted more favourably to the practice of peer feedback than to that of self-feedback" (p. 280). She argues that by exchanging peer-feedback students will be more autonomous and will grow confident about their abilities. That is to say, they will not rely solely on teachers' feedback. They will rather be able to distinguish or decide which comments are constructive (Belaid, 2004). The following quote by Belaid (2004) sums up the benefits participants gained from practising peer-feedback techniques:

> The responses demonstrated that, apart from the enjoyment that they [participants] derived from the experience, there were four categories of benefits, namely development of rhetorical skills, of independent learning skills, of reviewing strategies, and of collaborative learning strategies. (pp. 281-282)

In the same vein, Cheng and Warren (2005) advocated the use of peer-feedback as "it provide[d] learners with the opportunity to take responsibility for analyzing, monitoring and evaluating aspects of both the learning process and product of their peers" (p. 94).

As for the remaining strategies, half of the participants reported that they tempted to cross everything out and start all over again when facing difficulties in completing a writing as opposed to 30% who said that they rarely employed this strategy, and 16% who chose sometimes. Furthermore, the majority of the students in the present study said they did not switch to their mother tongue or put off writing for later in an attempt to cope with writing problems. However, more than half o f the respondents preferred not to read their classmates' papers to get inspired. This may be attributed to the fact that they were not conscious of the significance of cooperating with peers in helping them improve their writing abilities; i.e., they underscored its role.

With regard to the overall changes made by student writers while composing, subjects seemed to attend primarily to language accuracy over content and organisation. This was reflected in their responses. 42% of students claimed that they were concerned predominantly with producing a written draft almost void of any grammatical errors. As such, they paid attention to local issues such as mechanics, choice of words, and sentence structure. Based on participants' responses, focus on form and accuracy was, accordingly, brought to the fore over emphasis on content and assessment of students' composing processes and strategies.

On the other hand, 35% of the students reported that they always made changes at the level of essay organisation compared to 26% who said that they were predominately concerned with easing the flow of their ideas. These results lend support to the findings reached by Berrima (2003) who aimed at examining the nature of teachers' feedback and undergraduate students' views and attitudes towards teachers' responses and its role in enhancing their performance.

Berrima found that EFL writing teachers had a confined perception of writing as they tended to view writing not as a process but mainly as a product by virtue of the fact that they were too preoccupied with detecting sentence level problems. She demonstrated that their comments were random and not instructive. Organisation and content, nevertheless, seemed to be out of the scope. This, according to Berrima (2003), contributed in reinforcing a negative attitude towards the essence of writing; i.e., teachers were very likely to teach writing solely as a product rather than as both process and product. Take, for example, ESL process researchers (e.g. Zamel, 1982) who emphasised the need to encourage writers to write in a free way and to delay editing for syntactic and rhetorical mistakes till they manage to communicate their

ideas. Zamel (1982) does agree that "syntax, vocabulary, and rhetorical form are important features of writing, but they need to be taught not as ends in and of themselves, but as the means with which to better express one's meaning" (p. 207).

To put it simply, within the process approach the main task of the composition teacher is to provide students with help and training throughout the composing process; i.e., from the gathering, planning, organisation, until the translation of ideas into written text. Only then can the teacher identify sources of difficulty that student writers face while composing and can provide them with appropriate strategies that would help improve their skills in writing at all stages (Zamel, 1983).

As outlined earlier in the previous chapter, both teachers and students shared similar views concerning the efficiency of a set of 'good' strategies that could be used for task completion with slight differences in order. For instance, most of the students agreed to classify the following strategies as good:

1. Underlining the key words in the assigned task.
2. Collecting and organising information.
3. Devoting time for organising and planning one's essay.
4. Planning how to approach the writing task at hand.
5. Adding, omitting, substituting, and reorganising when revising.

This ordering coincides with what has been found in some of the studies conducted within the field of second writing instruction. A case in point is the process studies carried out by researchers such as Zamel (1983), Richards (1990) and Raimes (1985) who investigated the writing strategies of both expert and less expert writers. Take for instance, the study of Zamel (1983) who viewed writing as a cyclical process where there was no cut between the different recursive stages involved during the very act of writing. Zamel (1983) and Chenoweth (1987) postulated that the fifth strategy was integral in the written products of skilled participants who were capable of monitoring their products. They argued that what distinguished skilled and less skilled writers was the effective use of global strategies such as editing, adding, and reorganizing during the act of writing.

In the same way, Oxford (1990) advocates the use of the above writing strategies in helping learners manipulate materials required for task completion. She argues that the first cognitive strategy "underlining" works best when it is used with other strategies as it serves to highlight the relevant information. The second and

fourth meta-cognitive strategies cited above are also the most valued in her view as they help writers identify task requirements and purposes, organise and monitor their written performance (Ibid).

In addition, Richards (1990) pointed out that the amount of time allocated for thinking about the topic and planning, which was ranked third in participants' classification of the suggested strategies, was a major factor that could be used to distinguish skilled writers from less skilled ones. With skilled writers devoting more time for the organization, gathering of pertinent information and generation of ideas compared with their less skilled counterparts.

"Reflecting on how to make one's writing explicit", another feature attributed to good writers, was also valued by the majority of students. 74% of the students stressed the need to take into account readers' expectations while writing. However, students had different views regarding the efficiency of the remaining strategies. 50% of the students did not consider free writing as beneficial to them when writing (23% responded strongly disagree and 27% responded disagree).

This finding contrasts one of the main principles underlying the process approach which emphasizes free expression of ideas. Zamel (1982), for instance, advocates using pre-writing strategies such as brainstorming, listing, talking or discussion to help writers especially "less proficient writers" stimulate ideas for writing. She along with other process researchers like Raimes (1985, 1987) argue that when students are ready to compose their first drafts, they should be encouraged to write in a free way. This involves letting ideas flow freely, writing whatever comes into mind without worrying about surface level features like spelling or grammar at least during the earlier stages of writing.

As for the sixth item, "concentrating more on meaning than on correctness of your sentences", participants divided themselves into three groups. While 41% of students reported that they took issue with this strategy, 47% said that they favoured it and 12% had no firm stance; i.e. they were undecided. Commenting on the use of this strategy, one would refer to L2 process-oriented studies which investigated the writing strategies of skilled and less skilled writers. Prioritizing high level concerns over form and accuracy during the earlier stages of the writing phase and saving editing until the end of the process exemplifies one of the most significant techniques that separated skilled writers from less skilled ones (Cumming, 1989; Zamel, 1983).

Lastly, unlike composition teachers (80%) who reported that they were in favour of "getting peer feedback" and regarded it almost as something imperative, 31% of the students disagreed and 31% were undecided. According to students' responses, it seems that they underscored the significance of peer assessment in helping them develop and learn effective writing strategies, improve their written performance and become autonomous as Belaid (2004) demonstrated in her experimental study.

In view of the results obtained concerning the frequency of the materials used for the course of composition, grammar books, guidelines from teacher, samples of good writing, and the Internet were the most often used teaching/learning materials. These activities could be viewed as an asset in that students will be introduced to diversified input and output. Mastering the linguistic code from the start, being introduced to and imitating efficient written models, along with teacher tips are very likely to help novice writers feel motivated to learn more about composition and feel confident about their abilities; i.e., express themselves successfully in the target language.

As for the other materials—a writing methodology text, a language workbook, newspapers and magazines, and audio tapes—a good number of students said that they used them less frequently if not rarely. This may be due to constraints such as time, curriculum requirements, absence of self-reports diagnosing students' strategies since the start of the academic year and implementation of a small range of writing activities relevant to students' actual needs.

The data collected in this survey on participants' attitudes towards composition teachers' way of teaching is also beneficial in that it would provide insights as to how they expect their teachers to behave. To put it simply, by assessing their views, one can study and analyse their actual needs and wants. Consider students' rate of responses (positive) regarding the five items proposed. The majority of respondents strongly agreed that teachers of writing should primarily:

1. Explain in details how a paragraph and/or essay should be written (74%).
2. Write comments on top of their essays showing how they can improve them (67%).
3. Provide models of writing for their students to follow (61%).
4. Provide corrections for their students' words and/ or sentences (55%).
5. Make their evaluation criteria explicit (50%).

However, one essential problem that may arise is that of responding to students' writing which is time-consuming and exhausting. Most teachers, if not all, concur that marking in details a large number of papers is difficult as it takes a lot of effort (Belaid, 2004). Belaid (2004) argues that "reading and commenting on the continuous flow of students' compositions is indeed a time-consuming enterprise, which takes up much of the responding teachers' time" (p. 1). She found that participants benefited more from practicing feedback techniques namely peer-assessment than teacher feedback.

In the same way, Zamel (1985) argues that providing student writers with teacher feedback does not necessarily result in improving the quality of their written products. In her examination of the nature of the responses of 15 ESL composition teachers, Zamel (1985) found that their comments were related mainly to local level problems. She (1985) maintained that "the marks and comments [participants made] are often confusing, arbitrary, and inaccessible" (p. 79).

The problem, thus, is no longer related to absence of feedback but to its quality which may result in either promoting students and encouraging them to improve their writing skills or inhibiting them and discouraging them to constructively act on their teachers' feedback. So what matters most is how students view writing (as a recursive or non-recursive process) and how teachers manage to create a learning environment which encourages students to learn more about writing and take initiatives to enhance their writing abilities. This involves providing students with constructive feedback and training them to respond to each others' comments (Belaid, 2004; Zamel, 1985).

With respect to the overall frequency of the strategies students employed across the three main writing stages, they reported that they were predisposed to use the following four pre-writing strategies most often:

1. I consider the instructions carefully.
2. I read my lesson notes and handouts.
3. I search for extra materials about the theme to develop ideas.
4. I brainstorm ideas and write them down.

This ordering echoes some of the main strategies skilled writers used before setting pen to paper. A case in point is Zamel's (1982, 1983) series of case studies in which she investigated the composing behaviours of advanced ESL students. For

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example, in the first study, she stressed the need to teach less skilled students how to use pre-writing strategies. Actually, all participants valued classroom discussion as it helped them develop ideas for their writing. In the second study, advanced students reported that they attempted to determine task requirements and to figure out how to proceed further, and brainstormed using various techniques including, lists, notes, or diagrams.

However, few students (8% answered rarely 6% answered never) seemed to underestimate the significance of planning their texts in guiding them uncover their ideas against 38% who reported that they always used this strategy. Commenting on this strategy, Zamel (1983) argues that instead of "asking them [students] to construct neatly developed ideas, our students should be encouraged to work with preliminary and tentative lists and notes" (p. 181). Her main argument is that when they start writing their first drafts, most of the writers have no clear idea of how they will proceed in their essays. On the other hand, 34% of participants said that they were not predisposed to create lists of words and expressions that they can use in other writing tasks. Moreover, 31% reported that they preferred not to hold discussions with others before starting to write down their ideas.

As for the strategies that they utilized while composing, students claimed to employ the forthcoming writing strategies more frequently compared with the other writing strategies proposed.

1. I use an English-English dictionary to check for spelling and meaning of words (59% always).
2. I reflect on how to attract the reader's attention from the start (49% always).
3. I use a grammar book to check things they are not sure of (48% always).
4. I include a brief summary of the paper's main points in the conclusion (41% always).
5. I edit my paragraphs to include topic sentences (37% always).

Although it may be argued that bilingual dictionaries offer the requested information easily, they can also hinder learners' development of their writing competences when overused; i.e., they may reinforce learners' dependence on the mother tongue. For this reason, encouraging and training students how to use monolingual dictionaries is recommended especially when writers need to check the

specific meaning and use of a word they know. Reflecting on how to attract the reader's attention from the start is the next most favoured strategy. Like some of Zamel's (1983) proficient ESL students, almost half of the participants in this study seemed to be aware of the significance of attending to the concept of readership while composing.

Moreover, 37% of students reported that they always concerned themselves with editing their drafts for syntactic errors. From the process perspective, though editing one's drafts for language problems is considered important. ESL process researchers argue that it should be delayed until writers finish organising their content and communicate their intended message (for more details see literature review chapter).

Lastly, revising, a technique that is often attributed to skilled writers, was the most selected item as far as post writing strategies are concerned. Indeed, the majority of subjects (85%) said that they tended to re-read and edit their later drafts frequently before handing them over. Reproducing a tidy copy of their first drafts to their teachers was the next selected strategy. Though some participants reflected an awareness of the need to make their writing explicit, others did not. For example, 35% reported that they always employed this strategy as opposed to 24% who said that they never did so.

Item 2 "I seek someone's help to proofread my essay" was the third strategy selected most often. 36% of participants reported that they were not predisposed to use this social strategy. This echoes the results mentioned in the data analysis chapter regarding students' assessment of the efficiency of peer-feedback; i.e., 31% were undecided and 31% did not consider it as beneficial. Item 4 " I hand my draft over as it is" was the least selected item. A large number of participants reported that they reviewed their drafts before submitting them against few students who reported that they tended not to edit their written texts when they finish writing.

5.2.2. Discussion of findings from the teacher questionnaire

Going back to discuss the outcomes obtained from the teacher questionnaire, results related to the first question showed the tendency of most of the instructors to focus on modelling as a writing stategy. For example, the majority of participants reported that they did not target the following strategies while teaching writing.

1. I engage students in planning, organising, and reviewing their essays (96,6%).
2. I provide support during the writing process (75,9%).
3. I help students analyse the audience to whom they will write (73,4%).
4. I require them to re-read their compositions and to re-submit them (73,3%).

From this perspective, most of the respondents seemed to underestimate the importance of the above strategies. To put it another way, they seemed to have a confined view of the concept of writing in that there was little teaching of writing as a process or of monitoring. L2 process researchers such as Zamel (1982) and Raimes (1987) argued that composition teachers should not only focus on the end product but they should also intervene and provide support throughout the writing process. This could be done by helping students reformulate their ideas, training them how to use pre-writing strategies (like note taking, mapping, talking and brainstorming), and engaging them in planning, organising and reviewing their essays recursively. Raimes (1991) postulates that "language teachers need to know about and how to take into account the process of how learners learn a language and how writers produce a written product" (p. 422) in order to help students develop their writing skills and improve the quality of their texts.

Moreover, the data showed the tendency of most of the respondents to focus on "modelling how to carry out a new writing task", "drawing their students' attention to the use of a given writing strategy" and "asking them to read a similar piece of writing first". No intervention on the part of the teacher is reported apart from item 1 "I encourage peer to peer discussion prior to writing" which was valued by a large number of teachers (76,7%); i.e., viewed it as helpful in generating ideas for writing.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, a large number of the teachers of agreed to label almost all the strategies proposed as beneficial. For example, the next five strategies were the most selected:

1- Brainstorming and planning.
2- Devoting time for organization and planning their essays.
3- Making their writing explicit.
4- Collecting and organising information before planning.
5- Adding, omitting, substituting, and reorganising when revising.

Notice that there is some sort of an unsatisfactory fit between participants' responses on this agreement scale and the frequency of the strategies they claimed to target in composition classes. Although most of the teachers said that they appreciated the above cited strategies (received positive scores), they did not seem to focus on them while teaching composition (See results above). Commenting on the appropriateness of these strategies, one can refer to the findings obtained in process-oriented studies which stressed the importance of the above-cited strategies along with other strategies. For example, Zamel's (1982, 1983) advanced students recursively went through planning, revising, and organising their written texts; therefore, producing several drafts before they finished writing drafts. As for the third strategy, Chenoweth (1987) maintains that composition teachers should stir up their students to write legibly and provide their students with a wide range of writing strategies for rewriting compositions.

Cumming (1989), similarly, suggests that a practical institutional methodology would be one that promotes the use of writing activities that prompt attention to both form and meaning, considers the expectations and needs of the audience rather than focuses on editing for mechanical, lexical and grammatical errors. Only then can student writers reach a high level of writing expertise. However, the results show the tendency of a large number of the teachers to attend primarily to language concerns rather than global concerns (content and ideas). 73,3% reported that they did not consider item 6 "concentrating more on meaning than on correctness of one's sentences" as a good tip to follow when writing as it was the case with process-oriented research.

Another important remark concerns the strategies teachers recommended their students to use most often when they face difficulties while writing. Results revealed the tendency of most of the participants to favour the following four strategies which received positive scores:

1. Ask the teacher for help.
2. Re-read one's written draft to figure out what other ideas they can write.
3. Search for similar essays for inspiration.
4. Read a classmate's paper to get inspired.

With respect to the first strategy, both Richards (1990) and Zamel (1982) argue that teachers should "act as facilitators". In other words, teachers should provide

their students with a set of effective composing strategies and demonstrate how they can use them; i.e., help them determine which strategies work best when performing given activities. Zamel (1982) believes that students especially less proficient ones often feel stuck for ideas before starting to write. She argues that "while more skilled writers have established certain methods that allow them to proceed with this exploration, less proficient writers need to be taught how to make use of prewriting strategies or invention techniques" (p. 203). For the second strategy, both Raimes (1987) and Zamel (1983) perceived re-reading as a significant tool for the generation of meaningful writing.

Nevertheless, Zamel (1982) cautioned against using the third and fourth writing strategies. She argued that teachers should not encourage their students to look for samples of good writing to follow because "the study of such models puts undue emphasis on the final and correct product and by doing so threatens students with the idea that they are expected to achieve the same level of competency" (p. 206). To put it another way, before writers manage to communicate their ideas successfully, they inevitably go through a recursive, chaotic process where primacy was given to content and organisation of ideas not to form and accuracy.

One final remark concerns the data related to the last question in the teacher questionnaire which sought to elicit information about the strategies that participants favoured most and regarded as conducive to effective writing. Almost all the participants appreciated the six strategies proposed in that they were assigned positive scores. Indeed, most of the instructors reported that they recommended their students to attend to the following six strategies which were arranged according to order of frequency:

1. Reflect on how to attract the reader's attention from the start.
2. Review their own compositions to introduce changes.
3. Refer back to the feedback from their previous writing.
4. Remind the reader of the main points discussed in the body.
5. Read their lesson notes and handouts.
6. Make a list of vocabulary words and expressions they can use.

This ordering lends further support to the findings reached in L2 composition studies. These strategies along with others are very frequently employed by successful writers and at the same illustrate the significance of every stage of writing. For

example, revising, editing and constructive feedback are said to be among the most effective strategies that extensively influence the quality of the end product; i.e., they distinguish good writers from bad ones. As for the last two strategies which were also valued, 46,7% of the participants reported that they always recommended their students to draw on previously learnt materials like handouts and lesson notes in order to help them develop their writing skills and improve their written performance. Moreover, 43,3% said that they often urged their students to create lists of vocabulary that they can when the need arises.

To sum up, the main findings reached in the two questionnaires were discussed in relation to research on second and foreign language composition. Indeed, the data have proved to be formative in providing insights into teachers' and students' different composing strategies, attitudes towards a number of writing strategies. Though the respondents favoured particular strategies, they differed over others. To this effect, the data compiled from the questionnaires could be used as a tool to assess overall strategy use, and to raise students' awareness to the very nature of writing; i.e., encourage and train them to choose and employ strategies appropriately when performing a writing task. In the next chapter, the findings reached in this study will be used to draw conclusions and pedagogical implications for the teaching of composition at university level and to propose recommendations for curriculum design and pedagogy.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

With the present chapter, the study comes to an end. The first section provides a summary of the main research findings compiled from the two questionnaires. The second section lists some of the pedagogical implications drawn from the current survey and proposes suggestions to improve the teaching and learning of composition. It ends by pointing out the contributions and discussing the limitations of the study.

6.1. Summary of main findings

The findings reached in the present study helped to shed light on a number of issues pertinent to university-level writing pedagogy and students' writing behaviors. The following points were uncovered. Starting with background information-particularly students' assessment of their level of proficiency-most students rated themselves as either 'fair' or 'good' while few participants rated themselves as either 'very good' or 'poor'. In terms of language preference, 70% of respondents chose English compared to the rest who were predisposed to write either in French or in Arabic.

Continuing in ascending order—from the data related to the first section of the student questionnaire —participants reported that their principal motives for attending composition courses were: preparing themselves for the demands of jobs in the future, learning about writing, and getting good marks. That shows that they were largely aware of the significance of mastering the conventions of written and spoken English as essential requirements for succeeding and getting jobs in the future. However, they seemed to underestimate the benefits gained from attending writing sessions in helping them pass language and content exams as they assigned these activities low scores. As for the overall frequency of classroom activities performed throughout the year, participants seemed to be familiar mostly with tasks such as paragraphs, dialogues, summaries, and full essays compared to the other tasks which received low percentages.

When students and teachers were asked about preferred strategies they chose to facilitate writing, results showed some correspondence between the responses of the two groups. Most of the students said that they often used the following four strategies when facing difficulties:

- re-reading what they wrote to figure out what other ideas they could write,
- using a bilingual dictionary,
- asking the teacher for help, and
- searching for similar essays for inspiration.

Similarly, the majority of composition teachers reported that they recommended their students to use some of the above-cited strategies. For example, most instructors said that they often encouraged their student writers to ask for help (56,7%) and to re-read for meaning (40%). Others reported that they sometimes advised their students to imitate samples of good writing (40%).

As for the least frequently used strategies, both groups opted for similar approaches. A large number of both students and teachers reported that they rarely employed or recommended their students to "put off writing for later" when facing writing difficulties.

Results showed that the two groups differed in their classification of particular strategies. In contrast to 75% of students who said that they used bilingual dictionaries most of the time, 70% of teachers reported that they did not consider this strategy as efficient when writing. Similarly, 55% of the students claimed that they preferred not to read their peers' papers to get inspired while 73,4% of the teachers said that they advised their students to employ this strategy when encountering difficulties in completing a writing task.

An examination of both students' and teachers' responses about how they assessed a set of efficient writing strategies indicated similar responses. Although some of the strategies were not ranked as 'good', both groups labeled eight out of the ten suggested strategies as 'conducive to good writing' with slight differences in percentages and in order (For details see chapter 4). These included strategies such as

- underlining the key words in the assigned task,
- devoting time for organization and planning one's essay,
- collecting and organizing information before planning,
- reflecting on how to make one's writing explicit, and
- considering revising and producing multiple drafts.

The two groups disagreed over the remaining two strategies. Most of the teachers agreed that getting peer-feedback (80%) and writing whatever ideas come

into one's mind (73,3%) were as beneficial as opposed to the students who were either undecided (31%) or disagreed (50%).

Another important concern was the teaching strategies which teachers targeted as they taught composition. As presented and discussed earlier, teacher responses showed the tendency towards modeling as a writing strategy. Apart from the first item in which 73,3% of the instructors said that they "encouraged peer-to-peer discussion prior to writing" most of the time, a large number of participants seemed not to make it clear to their students that they needed to focus primarily on content and organization rather than on form and accuracy while performing a writing task. Indeed, most reported that they did not train their students to use the following writing strategies:

- engaging students in planning, organizing, and reviewing essays,
- providing support during the writing process,
- helping students analyze the audience to whom they will write, and
- requiring them to re-read their compositions and to re-submit them.

Novice writers seemed to be preoccupied extensively with making surface-level edits to their writing assignments. Indeed, most of the student respondents claimed to make frequent changes at the syntactic, lexical, and sentence levels and paid little attention to global aspects of writing as content and organization. Interestingly, 29% of subjects reported that always attended to mechanics while writing. Excessive concern with local features could be ascribed as reflected in their answers (See question 12) to their strong desire to be provided with feedback on how they can correct erroneous words and/or sentences. In fact, most participants said that they wanted their writing teachers to

- explain in details the writing skills needed to write a good paragraph and/or essay,
- provide them with samples of essays to imitate,
- clarify their evaluation criteria, and finally
- make suggestions on how to become better writers.

With regard to the writing strategies students employed throughout the writing process; i.e., from the first draft until the last one, participants revealed that they used several strategies that corresponded to the ones used by skilled writers. Take, for

example, the results related to the overall frequency of pre-writing strategies. The study showed that a large number of the students used the nine suggested strategies frequently. The following pre-writing strategies were the most often used. Indeed, more than half of the respondents said that they always

- considered the instructions carefully,
- read their lesson notes and handouts,
- searched for extra materials about the theme to develop ideas for their writing, and
- brainstormed ideas and wrote them down.

Conversely, few participants reported that they rarely made lists of vocabulary (23%) or discussed what they were about to write with others (24%).

As for while-writing strategies, most of the participants reported that they always used monolingual dictionaries to check spelling and meaning of words (59%), looked for interesting hooks to grab the reader's attention (49%), utilized grammar books for accuracy (48%), and restated the paper's main points in the conclusion (41%). These four strategies received the highest scores. The student respondents also noted that they never wrote incomplete sentences (52%) or switched to translation (36%) while they were writing.

In questions related to post-writing strategies, revising the final draft was the highest frequency strategy. Indeed, 85% of respondents reported that they always checked their drafts for errors once they finished writing their final drafts. Moreover, most of the participants said that they frequently used the next two selected strategies: "I reproduce a tidy copy of my final draft to my teacher" and "I seek someone's help to proofread my essay". In contrast, few students reported that they submitted their papers as they were or in rough draft form (For details see the data analysis chapter).

Using Oxford's (1990) model of writing strategies and her SILL, the teacher and student questionnaires used in this study replicated earlier studies. The data showed that both composition teachers and students alike were predisposed to using memory strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, and cognitive strategies more frequently than other categories focusing on social and affective strategies. A finding similar to that of Baker and Bonkit (2004) who investigated the overall frequency of the writing strategies undergraduate students used while handling a writing task.

This accounts for the increasing emphasis placed, during the last decades, on cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies within the field of second/foreign writing instruction. Research has demonstrated the utility of these strategies in improving the proficiency level of students and monitoring their learning process. For example, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) as well as Oxford (1990) emphasized the importance of meta-cognitive strategies for succeeding in learning an L2. Both concur that students should be encouraged to use meta-cognitive strategies such as paying attention and making associations between previously learnt and new materials.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) necessitate the use of meta-cognitive strategies for learners to be able to regulate and plan their learning, attain their objectives, and evaluate their performance. Likewise, Oxford (1990) stresses the functional role of meta-cognitive strategies in helping learners cope with the massive amount of information exposed to—including new vocabulary, different teaching methods and social behaviours, and ambiguous situations.

The low frequency and moderate use recorded for social and affective strategies helps explain the tendency of subjects to not use these categories. This may be attributed to a number of factors. For one thing, Oxford (1990) demonstrated that students may not view social and affective strategies as supporting the other strategies. Moreover, insufficient strategy training along with teachers' differing attitudes and teaching approaches regarding certain aspects of language learning like group spirit, rivalry, promotion, self-esteem, and the educational system do influence learner development (Oxford, 1990). In other words, some of the respondents seemed to underestimate the importance of employing certain social strategies such as asking for correction and requesting help from competent writers and affective strategies like encouraging themselves in feeling confident, active, and autonomous.

It is worth noting that the questionnaire respondents are still novice writers. As they progress, they are very likely to develop and use more effective writing strategies. This explanation is in congruence with Gregersen, Martinez, Rojas, and Alvarado's (2001) pilot study which investigated the LLS used by six novice students and six advanced students; i.e., three successful and three poor at each level. It has been found that the advanced-level students supplemented memory strategies with more effective strategies as students developed. Novices, on the other hand, reported using memory strategies more frequently at their early learning stages so that the basics of the target language became more ingrained (Gregersen, Martinez, Rojas, &

Alvarado, 2001). They concluded that strategy choice is largely determined by the learner's stage of learning; i.e., basic or high. The next section relates the study findings to other ESL writing studies, draws some methodological implications, and offers suggestions for enhancement of curriculum design and pedagogy.

6.2. Recommendations

One sound recommendation to promote the use of and increase the frequency of employing various writing strategies is to provide novice student writers with explicit strategy instruction and inform them of the significant benefits of employing said strategies. This can be done by training both teachers and students. As Oxford (1990) put it, "learners need to learn how to learn, and teachers need to learn how to facilitate the process" (p. 201). Teachers of writing are therefore recommended to deliver a writing strategy questionnaire to students at the beginning of the academic year to diagnose and identify students' needs. In fact, a questionnaire of this type could help them develop a well-structured course design and narrow their scope of interest and specify their objectives at the same time.

By completing a needs analysis, the composition teacher's role as instructor will be facilitated. S/he will be able to select more appropriate teaching materials and design more focused and diverse strategy activities. Only then can students' needs be met by their becoming aware of the language acquisition process and all that comes with it: tools to help them progress, self-direction, and appreciation of the subject matter—in this case composition.

Another pertinent issue in the use of writing strategies is whether the already learned strategies can be changed or not. To answer this question, it is advisable to again cite the survey conducted by Gregerson, Martinez, Rojas, and Alvarado (2001). This group of researchers was interested in studying the difference between successful and unsuccessful language learners and the impact of LLS and the possibility of altering the strategies that learners have already engrained as they develop; i.e., replace the non-facilitative strategies by other efficient strategies. They found out that, unlike their less skilful peers, proficient-level students selected more effective strategies—cognitive and meta-cognitive—to complete their tasks. Beginners reported using memory strategies more frequently at the beginning of their learning experience compared to advanced level students. This implies that strategy use is interconnected with language proficiency. That is, the more learners progress, the

more frequently they use strategies belonging to certain categories and decrease the use of others.

Still another question is whether the implementation and integration of strategy training in composition classes in Tunisia can ensure the transfer of those strategies attributed to successful language learners to less skilful ones to use them in writing classes and to other content subjects. As Raimes (1987) demonstrated, "course design thus should include instruction and practice with strategies" (p. 460). This can be done by developing a comprehensive set of effective writing strategies and encouraging both teachers and students to put the newly-learned strategies into practice, working regularly on developing and refining them.

Peer feedback, one aspect of cooperative learning and one of the learning strategies suggested by Oxford (1990), is also valued by virtue of the positive effects it yields on students' written performance. For example, Belaid (2004) argues that students should be encouraged to cooperate with both peer and proficient writers since it has been proven that students benefit more from their classmates' comments—i.e., recalling their mistakes—than from their teacher's. In the same vein, Oxford (1990) suggests using diaries. She maintains that learners ought to be encouraged to record in diaries the effective strategies they used or learned and share them with either their friends or their teachers. She argues that this can help them develop a rich repertoire of writing techniques and track their strategy use. Similarly, "note-taking" could be a tool used to document the problems that they encountered on a writing task, record the frequency of strategy use, and note its effectiveness (Oxford, 1990).

Last but not least, the very nature of the writing act also emphasizes the need to   for instructors and students to view writing as a cyclical process. A process which covers the fulfilment of several recursive and complex activities beginning with pre-writing, planning, writing, editing and revising. In fact, this was clearly reflected in most process-centred studies which strongly advocated both the "what" (product) and "how" (process) in composition instruction without overemphasising or disregarding one of the entities (e.g. Kamimura, 2000; Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1983).

A case in point is the experimental study carried out by Kamimura (2000). She stressed the need to integrate product and process-based knowledge (essential conditions) for the production of a well-written piece of discourse. In other words, form and content are equally important in writing. When responding to student writing, teachers should not prioritize correction of surface-level features over content

and meaning. They should rather encourage students to concentrate initially on generation and formulation of ideas, consider the needs of readers, and deal with local issues such as grammar, word choice, and mechanics later. As Raimes (1985) put it, "some middle ground is called for. [. . .] Attention to process is thus necessary but not sufficient" (p. 250). Hence, both entities—product and process—should be taken into account while teaching composition.

6.3. Contributions of the study

One of the primary goals for conducting the present survey was to probe what writing strategies Tunisian EFL students and composition teachers claimed to utilize or recommend to produce a good piece of writing. It also aimed at finding out what writing strategies students claimed to employ frequently during the three main writing stages and see whether they were even familiar with key writing strategies as identified in the literature. Example strategies include brainstorming, planning, organizing, getting peer feedback, writing several drafts, and revising.

Furthermore, it sought to assess composition teachers' teaching attitudes and practices concerning a number of issues including peer feedback, classroom discussion, and teacher intervention during the composition process. Indeed, these propositions can bring about radical changes in the teaching of writing and provide a deeper understanding of students' actual needs and abilities.

Both groups were asked to rate the overall frequency of a common set of writing strategies that they use under different circumstances, i.e. to tackle given writing tasks. This provided further insights into students' needs and preferences and teachers' pedagogical approaches. Though the respondents favoured particular strategies, they differed over others. To this effect, the student questionnaire can be beneficial. For example, composition teachers can use this questionnaire as a tool for diagnosing the needs and known strategies of student writers on the one hand and as a tool for raising their awareness towards strategy use on the other hand.

6.4. Limitations of the study

All research studies have limitations, and one major limitation concerning this current research project is its research procedures. Only two questionnaires were used to elicit data: one on the writing strategies of first-year university students and the other of writing teachers recommended strategies in composition classes. It is true

that questionnaires are time-saving as they enabled the researcher to assess the strategies of a large number of participants which could not be achieved by the other research instruments. However, the use of questionnaires has some disadvantages. One major shortcoming of structured questionnaires is the inability of the researcher to probe responses in detail and investigate more deeply the specific aspects of writing. A better account could have been given using other research instruments to corroborate the findings obtained. These include providing a group of participants, for instance, with a writing task and then compare the writing strategies they reported to use in the questionnaire with the ones they actually used for task completion. The results obtained could be used as a tool to pinpoint potential areas of mismatch and propose an explicit strategy instruction that considers students' beliefs and goals.

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APPENDIX A

Faculty of Letters, Arts, and Humanities Manouba **Supervisor: Dr. Faiza Derbel**
English Department **Student: Kaouther Ferjani**
MA Research Project (2008-2009)

Questionnaire for Students

> *In this questionnaire you will be asked to provide information on the writing strategies you use when learning English. The ideas you will provide will be used for the purposes of my MA thesis. All your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research. The questionnaire will take about 20-25 minutes to complete. Thank you very much for your time and patience.*

1. Age (Tick the appropriate box) ☐ less than 20 ☐ 20-25 ☐ above 25

2. Gender (Tick the appropriate box) ☐ Male   ☐ Female

3. How long have you been studying English? (Put a tick)

 __7 years ___ 8 years ___10 years ___ more than 10

4. How do you rate your level in English? (Put a tick)

 __Very good __Good __Fair __ Poor __Very poor

5. If I had a choice, I would write in…
 a. **L1**: Arabic
 b. **L2**: French
 c. **L3**: English
 d. Other languages……………………………………………………………...............

6. I attend writing sessions in order to.... (You can tick more than one alternative)
 a. learn about writing
 b. get good marks
 c. prepare myself for the demands of jobs in the future
 d. simply to have an opportunity to express myself
 e. become a talented writer
 f. pass language exams
 g. pass other subjects like civilization, literature and linguistics courses
 h. enjoy writing in a target language
 i. Other, Please specify……………………………………………………………
 ....

7. In the composition class, we are required to write … (Tick the appropriate box)

	Beginning of the year	Mid-year	By the end of the year	Throughout the year	Never
1. full essays					
2. dialogues					
3. paragraphs					
4. diaries					
5. letters					
6. summaries					
7. research reports					
8. responses					
9. commentaries					

8. Tick the appropriate box. SA: Strongly Agree**; A:** Agree**; U:** Undecided**; D:** Disagree**; SD:** Strongly disagree.

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
When I face difficulties when attempting to write, I...					
1.cross everything out and start all over again (CP)					
2. use a bilingual dictionary to search for a given word (CP)					
3. switch to the mother tongue to deal with it later (C)					
4. search for similar essays for inspiration (MC)					
5. re-read what I wrote to figure out what other ideas I can write (MC)					
6. ask the teacher for help (S)					
7. put off writing for later (CP)					
8. read a classmate's paper to get inspired (S)					
9. seek help from another student who usually gets good marks (S)					

9. As I write, I make changes… (Tick the appropriate box)

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. at the word level (CP)					
2. at the sentence level (CP)					
3. at the level of grammar (CP)					
4. at the level of mechanics (spelling and punctuation) (CP)					
5. at the level of ideas (C)					
6. at the level of essay organisation (C)					

10. Which of these could consist of "good" advice to students when writing? (Tick the appropriate box)

	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. underlining the key words in the assigned task (C)					
2. reflecting on how to make your writing explicit (C)					
3. planning how you will approach the writing task at hand (MC)					
4. writing whatever ideas come into your mind (N)					
5. collecting and organizing information (MC)					
6. concentrating more on meaning than on correctness of your sentences (C)					
7. considering revising and producing multiple drafts (MC)					
8. getting peer feedback (S)					
9. devoting time for organization and planning your essay (MC)					
10. adding, omitting, substituting, and reorganizing when revising (MC)					

11. What kind of materials do you use for the course of composition? (Tick the appropriate box)

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. audio tapes					
2. grammar books					
3. a writing methodology text					
4. samples of good writing					
5. newspapers/magazines					
6. language workbook					
7. the internet					
8. guidelines from teacher					
9. Other:…………………					

12. Please indicate (SA: Strongly Agree**; A:** Agree**; U:** Undecided**; D:** Disagree**; SD:** Strongly disagree**) by ticking the option that applies to you.**

	SA	A	U	D	SD
I believe that teachers should...					
1. provide models of writing for students to follow					
2. explain how a paragraph and/or essay should be written					
3. make their evaluation criteria explicit					
4. provide corrections for students' words and/or sentences					
5. write comments on top of your essay indicating how you can improve it					

13. Tick the appropriate box.

Before writing, I	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. search for extra materials about the theme to develop ideas for my writing (MC)					
2. read my lesson notes and handouts (M)					
3. refer back to the feedback from my previous writing (MC)					
4. consider the instructions carefully (MC)					
5. discuss what I am going to write about with someone (S)					
6. brainstorm ideas and write them down (MC)					
7. make a list of vocabulary words and expressions I can use (C)					
8. make an outline in English (MC)					
9. make arrangements to write in a comfortable, quiet place (A)					

14. Tick the appropriate box.

As I write, I...	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. use words and expressions from Arabic or French first and then translate the ideas into English (C)					
2.write incomplete sentences first (C)					
3. build up full paragraphs (MC)					
4. edit my paragraphs to include topic sentences (CP)					
5. use an English-English dictionary to check spelling and meaning of words (CP)					
6. use a grammar book to check things I am not sure about (CP)					
7. use a thesaurus to vary my word choice (CP)					
8. reflect on how to attract the reader's attention from the start in order to encourage him to read further (MC)					
9. include a brief summary of the paper's main points in the conclusion (C)					

15. Tick the appropriate box.

When I finish my first draft, I...	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. re-read it to check for errors (C)					
2. seek someone's help to proof read my essay (S)					
3. hand it over as it is (N)					
4. reproduce a tidy copy of it to my teacher (C)					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Key: **M**= Memory strategies; **C**= Cognitive strategies; **CP**= Compensation strategies; **MC**= Meta-cognitive strategies; **S**= Social strategies; **A**= Affective strategies; **N**= Negative strategies.

APPENDIX B

Faculty of Letters, Arts, and Humanities Manouba   Supervisor: Dr. Faiza Derbel
MA Research Project (2008-2009)   Student: Kaouther Ferjani

Questionnaire for Teachers

This questionnaire has been designed to collect information about the strategies you target when teaching writing. All your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research. The questionnaire will take about 10-15 minutes. Thank you very much for your time and patience.

1. Tick the appropriate box. (Please make sure you answer all the items)

As you teach composition, you ...	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. encourage peer-to-peer discussion prior to writing (S)					
2. just model how to use the newly introduced writing task (MC)					
3. ask your students to read a similar piece of writing first (MC)					
4. draw your students' attention to a given writing strategy used by a given writer (C)					
5. engage students in planning, organizing, and reviewing essays (MC)					
6. help students analyse the audience to whom they will write (S)					
7. provide support during the writing process (S)					
8. require them to re-read their compositions and to re-submit them (C)					

1. Which of these could consist of 'good' advice to students when writing? Tick the appropriate box. (SA: Strongly Agree; A: Agree; U: Undecided; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly disagree.)

	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. underlining the key words in the assigned task (C)					
2. making their writing explicit (C)					
3. brainstorming and planning (MC)					
4. writing whatever ideas come into their minds (N)					
5. collecting and organizing information before planning (MC)					
6. concentrating more on meaning than on correctness of their sentences (C)					
7. considering revising and producing multiple drafts (MC)					
8. getting peer feedback (S)					
9. devoting time for organization and planning their essays (MC)					
10. adding, omitting, substituting, and reorganizing when revising (MC)					

3.Tick the appropriate box. (Please make sure you answer all the items.)

When my students face difficulties when attempting to write, I advise them to...	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. use a bilingual dictionary (CP)					
2. search for similar essays for inspiration (MC)					
3. re-read what they wrote to figure out what other ideas they can write about (CP)					
4. ask the teacher for help (S)					
5. put off writing for later (A)					
6. read a classmate's paper to get inspired (S)					
7. seek help from another student who usually gets good marks (S)					

4. To help my students write better, I urge them to…(Tick the appropriate box)

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. read their lesson notes and handouts (M)					
2. refer back to the feedback from their previous writing (MC)					
3. make a list of vocabulary words and expressions they can use (C)					
4. review their own compositions to introduce changes (MC)					
5. reflect on how to attract the reader's attention from the start (MC)					
6. remind the reader of the main points discussed in the body (C)					

Years of experience in teaching English:……………………………………............
Years of experience in teaching writing:………………………………………............
Levels previously taught:..
  Gender: Female ☐   Male ☐

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION