THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WRITING CONFERENCES AND PEER

RESPONSE GROUPS STRATEGIES ON THE EFL SECODARY

STUDENTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE AND THEIR SELF

EFFICACY

(A comparative study)

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WRITING CONFERENCES AND PEER RESPONSE GROUPS STRATEGIES ON THE EFL SECODARY STUDENTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE AND THEIR SELF EFFICACY
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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at identifying the necessary writing performance skills for the first year secondary stage students. These skills are necessary for writing the compositions. In this study, the writing conferences and peer response groups strategies were used to develop the students' writing skills, improve their achievement and performance in and enhance their self efficacy. To achieve these purposes, the study designed activities based on writing conferences and peer response groups strategies. In addition, a teacher's guides were prepared to help English language teachers handle writing compositions.

The study made use of a performance writing test to measure the students' development in the writing skills, a self efficacy scale and a holistic scoring rubric. The researchers adopted the experimental design. Two classes were assigned to be the experimental groups, studying writing through the *Writing Conferences* Strategy and Peer Response *Groups Strategy*. Another class was assigned to be the control group, studying through the steps suggested by the ministry of education in hello! 7 Teacher's Guide.

Results of the present study showed that writing conferences and peer response groups strategies improved students' writing skills and self efficacy. Thus, it was observed that the students who were the sample of the study enjoyed writing the compositions. In addition, the writing

conferences and peer response groups strategies were effective in developing the writing performance and self efficacy of the students.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

There are four major skills of English. These skills are: listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are divided into receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (writing and speaking).Writing is one of the most important skills in English as EFL (English as a Foreign Language).Writing allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, and encourages thinking and learning, motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed. Writing is most likely to encourage thinking and learning when students view writing as a process.

Writing for EFL students is not an easy matter, especially when the students' English competence is not very well developed. There are two approaches for teaching and learning writing: the "product-focused approach" and the "process -focused approach". The product approach is a traditional approach to teaching writing in which students typically are provided by the teacher with a model and encouraged to mimic it in order to produce a similar product. The process approach focuses more on using techniques such as brainstorming, exploring ideas, peer editing, and rewriting.

Reviewing literature indicates that Prior to the 1970s, most teachers approached writing instruction with the emphasis on only the final product. In this "product-focused approach," instruction primarily emphasized sentence structure and grammar and little on the thinking.

Holmes (2004) explains that the use of a process-oriented approach to facilitate the planning and production stages of writing for adult students of English as a foreign or second language and identifies some features of this approach and provides some suggestions to develop activities in order to humanize and make a more positive and effective experience from writing.

Stanley (2007) explains that the learner is the center of the process. So he emphasized that learner's previous knowledge, needs, interests should be taken into consideration in writing. Tompkins (1990) assured that this current emphasis in writing instruction focuses on the process of creating writing rather than the end product.

STAGES OF THE WRITING PROCESS

Gardner and Johnson (1997) describe the stages of the writing process as follows:

Prewriting. *Students generate ideas for writing:* brainstorming; reading literature; creating life maps, webs, and story charts; developing word banks; deciding on form, audience, voice, and purpose as well as through teacher motivation.

Rough Draft. *Students get their ideas on paper.* They write without concern for conventions. Written work does not have to be neat; it is a 'sloppy copy.'

Reread. *Students proof their own work* by reading aloud and reading for sensibility to be aware of what he is writing.

Share with a Peer Reviser. *Students share and make suggestions for improvement:* asking who, what, when, where, why, and how questions

about the main ideas the peer does not understand; looking for better words; and talking about how to make the work better.

Revise. *Students Improve what the narrative says and how it says it*: they write additions, imagery, and details. They take out unnecessary words.

Editing. *Students Work together on editing for mechanics and spelling.* The main purpose of this stage is to come up to a composition free from mistakes and misspelling.

Final Draft. *Students and peers finally produce their copy* to discuss with the teacher and write a final draft.

Publishing. *Students put piece of writing in the class to be read by the whole class or present the product orally*. This is a time to celebrate.

By the 1980s, the emphasis had changed from a product-focused approach to a process focused approach. So the researcher tends to investigate two strategies that arisen from the process model. These two strategists are the one-on-one writing conferences strategy and the peer response groups strategy where.

FIRST WRITING CONFERENCES STRATEGY

Carnicelli (1980) stated that the writing conference is a one-on-one strategy that takes place between the student writer and the teacher. She also mentioned that the best opportunity for direct and immediate teaching of the complex processes and skills involved in writing is conferring. Individual conferences generally are short, about two to five minutes, and occur while the other students are involved in their own independent writing composition.

PURPOSES OF WRITING CONFERENCES

Artman (2007) agreed with Carnicelli (1980) that the purposes of writing conferences are:

- To encourage writers to reflect, examine, and evaluate their own writing to "re-see" it.
- To assist learner in improving the quality of their work.
- To engage students in talking in order to learn from themselves and others.
- To give teachers a chance to zero in(to aim one's attention direcly towards) on what each student needs as a writer.
- To help students let the teacher know about what they know so that he can help them more effectively with their writing.
- To help students take a deeper look at their writing.
- Teachers can address each student's weaknesses and strengths.
- Teachers can discuss the student's ideas.
- Teachers can explain individual issues with grammar, punctuation, and usage.
- Students learn much more about thinking critically, planning, working with sources, organizing, assessing, revising, and editing.

Carnicelli (1980) Darsie, (1995) recommend that conferences can occur at any stage of the writing process. As a result, they can be an avenue for one-on-one instruction covering a wide range of writing skills, strategies, and concepts. She mentioned that questions are often the most helpful feedback, as they lead writers to reflect upon their meaning and craft. Sue (2008) claimed that it is verbal feedback rather than written comments that make the difference to the quality of student's writing. She added that the strategy of writing conferences can be used with students throughout the different school stages.

TEACHER'S ROLE IN WRITING CONFERENCES

Artman (2007) & Carnicelli (1980) asserted that during most of sustained writing time the teacher should be circulating throughout the classroom, conducting brief informal conferences and providing instructional scaffolds for each student as needed. As well, the teacher must build in time for extended student-teacher conferences.

Artman (2007) explained teacher-student conferences that while students are writing, the teacher circulates throughout the classroom, conducting conferences. During such a conference, the teacher spends only a few moments with each student, asking questions or building needed scaffolds so that students can continue their writing.

RELATED STUDIES TO WRITING CONFERENCES

Julie (2002) describes instructional strategies to improve the revising and editing skills of sixth grade students during the writing process. The workshop began with mini-lessons, teacher modeling, peer editing and teacher/student conferencing. This researcher focused specifically on peer editing and teacher/student conferencing. The post achievement data obtained from rubrics indicated a significant improvement in students' revising and editing skills in the areas of content and mechanics.

Jana (1999) concluded that conferencing can extend and enrich the dialogue established in writing while allowing teachers to observe the student's relationship to the writing task. He also said that conferencing can accomplish two things: (a) encourage the student to negotiate the role of writer, and (b) help the teacher predict whether the student will successfully assume the role or not.

Thomas (1998) conducted children's writing and focused on the role of the student-teacher writing conference. He concluded that (1) students progressed in their writing skill level and grew in their confidence as writers. (2) The individualized nature of writing and conferencing within these classrooms allowed each student to progress at an individual rate of comfort. (3) Ten distinct categories of responses that teachers used in writing conferences with their students were found. (4) student-teacher conferences added to the teachers' knowledge of each individual student's language development and to their personal understanding of each student.

Brenda (1997) assured that an effective way to conduct writing conferences and support students in writing is to find questions that encourage more thinking and writing as they work. She introduced four strategies include: avoiding yes/no questions, encouraging students to value work, evaluating many writing samples, and refocusing in conferences.

William (1996) proposed the individual teacher-student writing conference for special writing problems. He explained the four conference components that can be utilized by the teacher and the students during writing conference; they are oral interaction; engaging the student in dialogue before reading the writing sample; reading the student's text; and negotiation of revisions.

Zamel (1985) and sokman (1988) discovered that students often find written comments difficult to understand. Thus, Zamel suggested that teacher need to hold conferences with students because dynamic interchange and negotiation is most likely to take place when the writer

and the reader work together face- to-face. Sokman stated that responding in conferences is more effective than in writing because the teacher can interact dynamically with the students to understand the intent.

Freedman and colleagues (1985) surveyed 500 teachers to identify the writing strategies students use in writing conferences and describe the strategies writers use. In addition to helping students develop the metacognitive awareness necessary for critical reflection on their own work, such activities can provide the basis for discussion of students' roles as peer readers and make students better able to support other writers in the classroom.

Carnicelli (1980) reviewed students' evaluative comments towards their conferences. He concluded that conferences are a more effective means of feedback than are written comments because conferences allow students to express their opinions and needs and to clarify teacher's comments when they are understood.

To conclude it is clear that the benefit of holding conferences is that students learn from the discussion with the teacher. By discussing more than one composition, students learn what works well and what to avoid because each composition has different strengths and weaknesses. This conference is also interactive. It is not simply a matter of the teacher talking to one student at a time while the others sit passively. The students and the teacher discuss the same paper at the same time, the teacher asks questions about the composition, and the teacher asks for input from all of the students.

SECOND PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

Peckham (1996) said that one productive way that teachers can provide formative feedback for student writing is through the use of Peer Response Groups. In these groups, students read and respond to each other's drafts of a particular assignment and may understand the assignment better.

Gayle (1997) indicated that teachers can also help students organize their own peer response groups. These groups can be particularly helpful for graduate students who typically have few opportunities to process their writing in class or with the teacher.

Sima (2001) assured that in order for peer groups to be productive whether time is given in class or they are set up outside of class the teacher needs to train the students set up specific procedures and objectives.

- Peer Group response has other names like 'peer editing' or 'peer review' or 'peer critique' or 'peer work shopping' or 'peer revision'.
- Peer group response helps in generating a rich source of information in matters of content enhances inter cultural communication
- Provides the learners a strong sense of group unity
- Develops values of caring and sharing among students.

RELATED STUDIES TO PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

Steendam (2006) studied the effect of training in peer revision on revision and writing ability. He explained that there are two forms of trained revision. The First form the practice of letting students discuss each other's written work in progress. The Second form is training in peer

response when revising texts. The main research question was which form of trained revision leads to better writing and revision. The findings showed that the two forms led to better writing.

Zhu (2001) investigated the interaction among the students in terms of turn-taking behaviors, language functions, and similarities/differences on comments during the peer review session, in a mixed classroom. They were small groups having one ESL student in each group- are supposed response each others' essays first orally and then fill out a response sheet. He found out that as writers, ESL students took fewer turns and never initiated the conversation. As readers, although they try to provide sufficient amount of response they are more likely to be interrupted by native speakers. They also used a limited number of language functions, basic categories of which are announcing, reacting, questioning, advising, and justifying.

Catherine (1999) discussed how effective the trained peer response is in revision types and in writing quality. The participants are separated into two groups and half of them are trained in how to response a paper. The results showed that training seems to have a significant effect on the improvement of writing, because the essays reviewed by trained peers improved much more than the ones reviewed by untrained peers.

Sima (1998) discussed the perceptions of secondary school students of collaborative construction. She wanted to see whether evaluation sheets – self and peer evaluations indicate textual changes in written products or not. She found out that students did not see each other as potential readers and they believed that the only reader is the teacher who has the right to evaluate their papers.

Olga & Maria (1998) studied how revisions made in peer review sessions are incorporated in the final drafts. The data analyzed come from peer-review sessions, first drafts, final versions and comments written on revision sheets. The results showed that peer assistance has a significant effect on writing process because most of the comments and comments done by fellow students are included in the final version.

Chou (1998) examined the negotiations of the peer response groups in an EFL writing classroom in order to understand what actually happens when students tutor one another on their writing products. The negotiations were analyzed. The result showed that students resorted to different language functions (inform, elicit, direct, restate) to achieve their purposes of communication.

Carson & Nelson (1996) investigated Chinese students' interaction styles and reactions to one particular technique: peer response groups. The analysis indicated .That Chinese students were reluctant to initiate comments and, when they did, monitored themselves carefully so as not to precipitate conflict within the group. This self-monitoring led them to avoid criticism of peers' work and to avoid disagreeing with comments about peers' or their own writing.

Goldberg& Sherr (1995) said that both recent research and practitioners' classroom experience affirm that the opportunity to obtain peer response and revise rough drafts helps writers to improve their texts. Results of a study analyzing students' peer response feedback and subsequent revisions through comparison of rough and final draft suggest that within this testing context, students' peer response is helpful.

Connor& Asenavage (1994) investigated the impact of peer responses on subsequent revisions, comparing comments from the teacher with other sources. The revisions in essays from two groups of freshmen ESL students were evaluated over several drafts. The peer collaboration was audio taped; written comments by the teacher or others were noted.

DiPardo & Freedman (1988) asserted that the peer response group saying that it is commonly used in the writing classroom, from kindergarten through college. This review examines the pedagogical literature on response groups. Suggestions are made for reconceptualizing peer response to writing, with an emphasis on moving away from the teacher-initiated and controlled response group toward encouraging spontaneous peer talk during the writing process.

The previous studies showed that there is a relation between the development in students' writing performance and their self efficacy. It is clear that also that the increase in the students' self efficacy leads to the increase in students' writing performance.

SELF EFFICACY AND WRITING

Self-efficacy is the Power or capacity to produce a desired effect. Many students resist academics because they do not believe they have the ability to succeed, regardless of their effort. These students have a low level of self-efficacy. Teachers can reverse this perspective by encouraging students to take on more challenging tasks, and take a greater interest in academics, stressing the development of higher self-efficacy.

Frank (2007) analyzed the properties of a scale assessing the writing self-efficacy of 1,258 students from Grades 4 to 11. Two factors emerged, one designating basic grammar skills and the other designating more advanced composition skills. The Writing Self-Efficacy Scale was used. Research findings showed that writing self-efficacy beliefs and writing performances are related.

Ellen (2006) examined of the relationship between teachers' writing self-efficacy and writing performance. The Low Self-Efficacy scale which measures adults' beliefs regarding writing competence was used. Two raters were trained to evaluate the writing sample according to two measures: a holistic rubric designed to reflect general writing competence and a deep and surface rubric which measured writing structure, audience and personal involvement. Results support the relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing performance as measured by both rubrics.

Kim and Lorsbach (2005) examined young students' perceptions of writing self-efficacy .They illustrated most research studies find a significant relationship between self-efficacy and achievement in older students. They added Research has also shown that children are affected by personal perceived self-efficacy. Therefore, self-efficacy can affect young learners as well. This study was conducted to determine if young learners could describe their writing self efficacy. The results showed that students participating could describe their writing self efficacy.

Maimon (2002) explored the relationship between expectations of success or failure in college students and the functions of writing. Two questions were addressed. First, do high, medium, and low self-efficacy writers differ in terms of the range of the possible functions and usage? Second,

do high, medium, and low self-efficacy writers differ in terms of reported writing activities performed in school as opposed to nonschool contexts? The quantitative analysis demonstrated a direct correlation between the degrees of self-efficacy and the dimensions measured. The qualitative analysis further confirmed the hypothesis that states that students who consider fewer functions of writing have lower self-efficacy. These findings are important because they based on Bandura's social cognitive theory; students who consider fewer functions of writing have lower expectations for success.

THE PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to determine students' performance in writing composition. The pilot study included 23 students' first term marks of first year secondary stage students control in Elsatmooni institute for girls) table (1) below show the results**.**

Results indicate that the sample's mean scores on the writing were below the average score (50%).This shows that the students had a relatively low achievement level in the section of writing. Comparing the mean score in English, it was evident that their performance level in writing's was weak.

Components	Dialogue	Situation	Vocabulary	Structure	Comprehension	Reader	Writing	Translation	Total
Test marks	3	1.5	3	2	4	2	2	2.5	20
mean	2.21	.5	2.478	.2826	2.652	.3043	.521	1.847	10.78

percentage	66.52%	33.3%	74.34	14.13	66.30%	15.21%	26.08%	73.91%	53.913

Results in the table above indicate that students' achievement in writing was one of the lowest skills among test items. Hence, investigation is needed.

The results of the above table indicate that the students' achievement in writing is low (26%).This shows that the students lack the necessary skills to handle writing. Hence, it is rather essential to study this problem and find a proper remedy.

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The students at Al-Azhr secondary institutes are not good at writing and their self efficacy in writing is low. As a result their writing skills are weak. They need to be trained in the skill of writing and there is a dire need to use the writing process. That is why the two strategies' writing conferences' and 'peer response groups' will be used in the writing process. The previous related studies showed that the two teaching strategies' writing conferences' and 'peer response groups' are effective in improving writing performance.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research included the following questions:

1- To what extent is using writing conferences strategy effective in developing the writing performance of EFL secondary students?

2- To what extent is using peer response groups strategy effective in developing the writing performance of EFL secondary students?

3- To what extent is using writing conferences effective in enhancing self efficacy of EFL secondary students?

4- To what extent is using peer response groups effective in enhancing self efficacy of EFL secondary students?

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The present study aimed at:

1- Using writing conferences strategy to develop the writing performance of EFL secondary students.

2- Using peer response groups strategy to develop the writing performance of EFL secondary students.

3- Using writing conferences strategy to enhance self efficacy of EFL secondary students.

4- Using peer response groups strategy to enhance self efficacy of EFL secondary students.

SIGNIFICACE OF THE STUDYY

The present study contributed to:

1- Using writing conferences strategy in teaching writing.

2- Using peer response groups strategy in teaching writing.

3- Paving the way for other studies to use these strategies to improve students' performance in other specializations and fields of study.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study was limited to:

1- Three classes of first year secondary students

2- First term as the duration of the application of the two strategies.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The study verified the following hypotheses:

1- There is a statistically significant difference in the writing performance in the students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of writing conferences strategy.

2- There is a statistically significant difference in self efficacy of students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of writing conferences strategy.

3- There is a statistically significant difference in the writing performance in the students' mean scores on the pre-test and the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of peer response groups strategy.

4- There is a statistically significant difference in self efficacy of students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of peer response groups strategy.

METHODS

Sample of the study:

This study contained three classes in Satamooni secondary institutes as two experimental groups studying through writing conferences strategy, peer response groups strategy and the other group works as a control group studying through the traditional method.

Instruments of the study:

The following instruments were developed by the researcher.

1- A writing performance test (pre and post). (By the researcher)

2-Preparing a rubric for assessing writing performance. (By the researcher)

3- A writing self efficacy scale for measuring self efficacy. (By the researcher)

Design of the study:

The study adopted the quasi-experimental design.

Procedures of the study:

1- Reviewing literature to specify the required writing skills needed for the target students.

2- Preparing a writing performance skills list.

3- Presenting the writing skills list a group of jurors for validation.

3- Constructing a pre post writing performance test.

4-Preparing the scaffolds that will be used with the two strategies a) topic lists b) peer response sheet for peer response groups

5- Presenting a pre-post writing performance test to a group of jurors for validation.

6- Presenting the writing self efficacy scale to a group of jurors for validation.

7- Preparing a writing performance rubric based on Hello! 6writing skills and presenting it for validation.

8- Administering the performance writing test as a pre test to measure the students' performance in writing.

9- Administering the writing self efficacy scale as a pre scale to measure the students' self efficacy in writing.

10- Implementing the two strategies "writing conferences& peer response groups "to the experimental groups.

11- Administering the post performance writing test, the same form of the pre test, as a post test to measure the students' performance in writing.

12- Administering the writing self efficacy scale as a post scale to measure the students' self efficacy in writing.

13- Analyzing data statistically.

14- Reaching conclusions and providing recommendations.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

WRITING CONFERENCES

Grabe and Kaplon (1996) defined the writing conferences as:
"A conversation about writing the author's ideas, structures, successes, and difficulties".

THE OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE WRITING CONFERENCES:

Writing conference is a conversation between the teacher and the student about students' writing; including topics, ideas, sequence, structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation according to the stages of writing providing the student with reinforcement and feedback.

PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

Connor& Asenavage (1994) defined as "the use of learners as sources of information, and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken by a formally trained

teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing "

SELF-EFFICACY

Bandura (1994) has defined self-efficacy as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the sources of action required to manage prospective situations". The researcher will adopt this definition.

Key words

"Responding" means talking about how you felt as you heard the essay; and it also may mean giving advice for revision. In your response, be specific; refer to specific passages in the essay.

"Conferring" means the dialogue occurs between the teacher and the student, the comments of the teacher to the student and any advice the teacher gives to the student.

Research Method

Design of the Study:

The present study adopts the experimental design, in terms of using two experimental groups and another control group. Three classes were randomly selected to represent the two experimental groups (writing conferences group, peer response group) and the control group. The two experimental groups' students received training on the two different strategies of feedback and were taught writing subskills through the two strategies activities. On the other hand, the control group students were taught writing subskills through the traditional method. A writing pre-post test was given to the three groups before and after the experiment. In addition, a pre-post student self efficacy scale was given to the three

groups before and after the experiment.

Subjects of the study and research setting:

Subjects in the present study were first year secondary stage female students. Three classes were randomly selected from two different Al-Azhar institutes in the academic year 2012-2013.

The two experimental groups consisted of four classes of second year secondary stage students at Satamooni Al-Azhar Secondary Institute for Girls at Satamooni and El mostaamaraAlazhr secondary institute for girls. The control group consisted of 39 second year secondary stage students at Satamooni Al-Azhar Secondary Institute for Girls at Satamooni. All the institutes are located in Dakahlia Governorate. Students' age in all the groups ranged from 15 to 16 years old. All the students have started learning EFL in the fourth year in the Primary Stage and Arabic is their mother tongue.

Throughout the duration of the experiment, the researchers taught the experimental groups through the two different types strategies in order to develop their writing subskills. On the other hand, the control group received the traditional method by their regular classroom teacher which included the following steps:

1. The teacher assigns a topic for writing from Student's Book (Hello! 6) to write on.

2. The students are provided with either notes or questions to answer.

3. Students are provided by one or two models of feedback to correct weekly.

It was decided that the researchers should teach the two experimental groups for two reasons:

- To have better control over the study variables.
- To make sure that the different feedback strategies were being

carried effectively.

The researchers taught the four experimental groups himself because he could have a better control over the study variables.

Holistic scores of the writing pre-test for the control group and the first experimental groups:

To control variables before implementing the experiment, the results of the writing pre-test were subjected to statistical treatment to find whether there were statistically significant differences between the three groups (the control group and the two experimental groups) in terms of the overall writing performance. Consequently, t-test for independent homogenous groups was used to compare the mean scores of the five groups, as shown in Table (3).

Table (3)

T-test results of the writing pre-test comparing both control and the first experimental group in overall writing performance according to holistic scoring

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	39	4. 7949	2. 3190	.3713	1. 84419	77	.072
First Experiment al group	40	3. 875	2. 112	. 33393			

Table (3) shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control and the first experimental group on the writing pre-test in overall writing performance according to holistic scoring, t value (1. 84419) is not statistically significant at (&.

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05) level. As a result, the two groups are homogenous at the beginning of the experiment according to holistic scores.

Table (4)

T-test results of the writing pre-test comparing both control and the second experimental groups (peer response group) in overall writing performance according to holistic scoring

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	39	4. 7949	2. 3190	.3713	1. 00930	76	.072
Second Experimental group	39	5. 323	2. 302	.3686			

Table (4) shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control and the second experimental group on the writing pre-test in overall writing performance according to holistic scoring, t value (1. 00930) is not statistically significant at (α. 05) level. As a result, the two groups are homogenous at the beginning of the experiment according to holistic scores.

Table (5)

T-test results of the writing pre-test comparing both control and the two experimental groups in overall writing performance according to holistic scoring

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean Error	t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					t-test for Equality of Means		
Control	39	4. 7949	2. 3190	.3713			
First Experimental group	40	7. 625	6. 07	. 33393	1. 827	7 7	.072
Second experimental group	38	6. 79	2. 63	.3686	1. 00930	7 6	.072

Table (5) shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control and the four experimental groups on the writing pre-test in overall writing performance according to holistic scoring, t value (1. 827) is not statistically significant at ($\alpha \leq .05$) level. As a result, the five groups are homogenous at the beginning of the experiment according to holistic scores.

scores of the self efficacy pre-scale for the control group and the two experimental groups:

Controlling variables before implementing the two strategies, the results of the self efficacy pre-scale were subjected to statistical treatment to find whether there were statistically significant differences between the three groups (the control and the two experimental groups) in terms of their self efficacy. Consequently, t-test for independent homogenous groups was used to compare the three groups.

Table (6)

T-test results of the self efficacy pre-scale comparing both control and the first experimental group (writing Conferences) on the student writing attitude scale

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	39	109. 025	21. 521	3. 446	1. 018	7 7	2. 2626
First Experimental	40	113. 775	19. 91	3. 148			

Table (6) shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the student self efficacy scale, t value (1. 018) is not statistically significant at (α ≤. 05). Therefore, the two groups are homogenous at the beginning of the experiment regarding self efficacy scores.

Table (7)

T-test results of the self efficacy pre-scale comparing both control and the second experimental group (peer response groups) on the student self efficacy scale

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	39	73. 974	20. 549	3. 290	.6291	76	2. 2626
second Experimental	39	76. 599	16. 02	2. 565			

Table (9) shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the student self efficacy scale, t value (. 6291) is not statistically significant at ($\alpha \leq$. 05). Therefore, the two groups are homogenous at the beginning of the experiment regarding self efficacy scores.

Results & Discussion

Hypotheses explanations:

Hypothesis one

1- There is a statistically significant difference in the writing performance in the students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of writing conferences strategy.

In order to specify that there is no relative extent of change resulted from using the traditional method from the writing pre-test to the writing post-test for the control group, t-test for paired samples was used.

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As for holistic scoring:

The t-test for paired samples aims at comparing the mean scores of the control group and the first experimental group on the writing pre-post-test in overall writing performance according to holistic scoring. The results of t-test proved to be consistent with hypothesis one as shown in Table (13).

Table (8) the first experimental group and the control group in the post writing performance test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	39	5. 0513	2. 2355	o. 3580	6. 1458	77	
First Experimental	40	8. 575	2. 819	0. 4457			

To compare the mean scores of the control group and the direct teacher feedback experimental group-test for independent samples was used. Table (8) shows that the calculated t value (6. 1458) is statistically significant at (≤. 05) level.   This indicates that there is statically significant difference between the first experimental group and the control group in writing performance on the post writing performance test. This significant difference is in favor of the first experimental group. In other words, the first experimental group which uses the writing conferences strategy outperformed the control group in increasing the size of writing.

The past results agree with previous research results (i. e., Clements et al, 2010; Randloph&Lea, 2010; Courson&McCoy, 2001; Ibrahim &Liu, (2002); Place &Lovike, 2003) that writing conferences strategy led to improvement in the first experimental group students' post-performances in writing.

The positive change in writing performance that the first experimental group students had in the post-results may be attributed to the following:

Students were trained on writing conferences strategy which takes students step by step towards mastering writing subskills. The success that the students had the direct teacher feedback strategy helped to improve their performance in writing. Additionally, strong emphasis on using positive feedback helped students in the change of performances. Celebrating writing day and distributing gifts to distinguished students in the "honor List" encouraged and motivated students to write better. Frequency and duration of writing opportunities for students increased from the usual practice.

The results also support hypothesis one: There is a statistically significant difference in the writing performance in the students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of writing conferences strategy.

Therefore, these significant differences between the first experimental post and pre results can be ascribed to training the first experimental group on the direct teacher feedback strategy.

Table (9)

T-test results of the writing pre-post-test in overall writing performance in relation to holistic scoring for the control group

Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Paired Differences			t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pre-test	40	3. 875	2. 112	.3713	. 2564	1. 9018	. 3045	.842	38	405
Post-test	40	8. 575	2. 819	.3580						

Table (9) shows that there no were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group on the writing pre-post-test in overall writing performance respecting holistic scoring, t value (5. 657) is not statistically significant at (α ≤. 05) level.

These findings show that the traditional way of learning writing led to some improvement but not significant in the control group students' overall writing performance on the post-test when compared to the pre-test. These findings are confirmed by the studies of Monteith (1991) and Hassan (1994).

The above results might be attributed to the following:

 Topics for writing are not chosen by students but imposed by teachers.

Students aren't provided with suitable feedback.

Students aren't trained on how to write compositions.

The focus is on the finished product, not on the process of writing.

Students write for the teacher as their only audience.

No collaboration among students during the stages of writing (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing). Storch (2005) found out that collaboration afforded students the opportunity to pool ideas and provide each other with feedback.

Students usually have a chance to write single draft with focus on the mechanics of writing such as spelling, handwriting, grammar and

punctuation which students receive no feedback during writing from their teacher.

Hypothesis two:

2- There is a statistically significant difference in self efficacy of students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of writing conferences strategy.

As for holistic scoring:

Table (10) shows the holistic scoring of the second experimental group and the control group in the post writing test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	39	5. 0513	2. 2355	.358			
Second Experimental Group	39	12. 231	3. 092	.4951	15. 7644	76	.000

To compare the mean scores of the control group and the second experimental group-test for independent samples was used. Table (10) shows that the calculated t value (15. 7644) is statistically significant at (α ≤. 05) level. This indicates that there is statically significant difference between the second experimental group and the control group in writing performance on the post writing performance test. This significant difference is in favor of the second experimental group. In other words, the peer response experimental group which uses the peer response strategy outperformed the control group in increasing the size of writing.

The past results agree with previous research results (i. e., Hawthorna& Rice, 2010; Du et al, 2009; Gracia& Pratt, 2004; Duppenthaler et al, (2002); Kim &Schallart, 2002) that peer response groups strategy led to improvement in the second experimental group students' post-performances in writing.

The positive change in performance that the second experimental group students had in the post-results may be attributed to the following:

Students were trained peer response groups strategy which takes students step by step towards mastering writing subskills. The success that the students had peer response groups strategy helped to improve their performance in writing. Additionally, strong emphasis on using positive feedback helped students in the change of performances. Celebrating writing day and distributing gifts to distinguished students in the "Honour List" encouraged and motivated students to write better. Frequency and duration of writing opportunities for students increased from the usual practice.

The results also support hypothesis two: There is a statistically significant difference in self efficacy of students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of writing conferences strategy.

Therefore, these significant differences between the second experimental post and pre results can be ascribed to training the second experimental group on the peer response groups' strategy.

Hypothesis three:

3- There is a statistically significant difference in the writing performance in the students' mean scores on the pre-test and the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of peer response groups strategy.

To specify the relative extent of change resulted from using the writing conferences strategy from the writing pre-test to the writing post-test for the experimental group, t-test for paired samples was used.

As for holistic scoring:

The t-test for paired samples aims at comparing the mean scores of the first experimental group on the writing pre-post-test in overall writing performance with respect to holistic scoring. Results of t-test verified hypothesis three as shown in table (11).

Table (11)

T-test results of the post writing attitude scale given to that holistic the first experimental group and the control group

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	39	109. 025	21. 521	3. 446	1. 018	76	2. 2626
First Experimental	40	113. 775	19. 912	3. 148			

Table (11) shows that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the first experimental group on the post-self efficacy scale in overall writing performance with reference to holistic scoring in favor of the post-test, t value (1. 018) is statistically significant at (α ≤. 05) level.

Hypothesis four:

4- There is a statistically significant difference in self efficacy of students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of peer response groups strategy.

In order to find out the relative extent of self efficacy change resulted from using the writing conferences strategy from the self efficacy pre-scale to the self efficacy post-scale for the experimental group, t-test for paired samples was used.

The t-test for paired samples aims at comparing the mean scores of the second experimental group on the self efficacy post-scale. Results of t-test proved to be consistent with hypothesis four as shown in Table (12).

Table (12) shows T-test results of the self efficacy pre-post-scale for the second experimental group and the control group

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	39	109. 025	21. 521	3. 446	1. 713	76	2. 2626
second Experimental	39	118. 62	24. 76	3. 964			

Table (12) shows that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of peer response experimental group on the post-self efficacy scale in overall writing performance with reference to holistic scoring in favor of the post-test, t value (1. 713) is statistically significant at (α ≤. 05) level.

The past results agree with previous research results (i. e., Pierce et al, 1997;Hunt, 1998; Hill, 2000; Robertson, (2001); Buhrke et al, 2002 &Gau et al, 2003) that indirect teacher feedback strategy led to improvement in the second experimental group students' post-self efficacy towards writing as compared to pre-self efficacy.

The positive change in self efficacy that the second experimental group students had in the post-results as compared to pre-results may be attributed to the following:

Students were trained on teacher's peer response groups' strategy which takes students step by step towards mastering writing subskills. The success that the teachers had used per response groups strategy helped to improve the students' self efficacy. Additionally, strong emphasis on using positive and immediate feedback helped students in the change of self efficacy. Celebrating writing day and distributing gifts to distinguished students in the "Honour List" encouraged and motivated students to write better. Frequency and duration of writing opportunities for students increased from the usual practice.

The results also support hypothesis four that there is statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the second experimental group students on the self efficacy pre-post-scale favoring the post-self efficacy score. Therefore, these significant differences between the second experimental post and pre results can be ascribed to training the experimental group on the peer response groups' strategy.

Conclusions &Recommendations

One of the most important aspects of recent educational reform efforts is the increased attention to the skill of writing. Writing is a powerful instrument of thinking because it provides students with a way of gaining control over their thoughts. It shapes their perception of themselves and the world. It aids in their personal growth and it affects change on their environment.

It is claimed that writing strategies (writing conferences, peer response groups) assist students whatever their ability level. Once students understand the process and trust that the teacher will accept and approve of their writing after they are provided with different types of feedback, the ability to write improves dramatically. Xiaoging (2009) asserts that many students do not enjoy writing because they feel that if they cannot do it correctly the first time then they will never get it. Therefore, all students are capable of becoming excellent writers given enough practice and suitable feedback strategies.

Statement of the problem:

The students at Al-Azhr secondary institutes are not good at writing and their self efficacy in writing is low. As a result their writing skills are weak. They need to be trained in the skill of writing and there is a dire need to use the writing process. That is why the two strategies' writing conferences' and 'peer response groups' will be used in the writing process. The previous related studies showed that the two teaching

strategies' writing conferences' and 'peer response groups' are effective in improving writing performance.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research included the following questions:

1- To what extent is using writing conferences strategy effective in developing the writing performance of EFL secondary students?

2- To what extent is using peer response groups strategy effective in developing the writing performance of EFL secondary students?

3- To what extent is using writing conferences effective in enhancing self efficacy of EFL secondary students?

4- To what extent is using peer response groups effective in enhancing self efficacy of EFL secondary students?

Hypotheses of the Study

The study verified the following hypotheses:

1- There is a statistically significant difference in the writing performance in the students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of writing conferences strategy.

2- There is a statistically significant difference in self efficacy of students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of writing conferences strategy.

3- There is a statistically significant difference in the writing performance in the students' mean scores on the pre-test and the post-test in favor of the post test as a result of the application of peer response groups strategy.

4- There is a statistically significant difference in self efficacy of students' mean scores on the pre-test and their mean scores on the post-test in favor

of the post test as a result of the application of peer response groups strategy.

METHODS

Sample of the study:

This study contained three classes in Satamooni secondary institutes as two experimental groups studying through writing conferences strategy, peer response groups strategy and the other group works as a control group studying through the traditional method.

Instruments of the study:

The following instruments were developed by the researcher.
1- A writing performance test (pre and post). (By the researcher)
2-Preparing a rubric for assessing writing performance. (By the researcher)
3- A writing self efficacy scale for measuring self efficacy. (By the researcher)

Design of the study:

The study adopted the quasi-experimental design.

Procedures of the study:

1- Reviewing literature to specify the required writing skills needed for the target students.
2- Preparing a writing performance skills list.

3- Presenting the writing skills list a group of jurors for validation.

3- Constructing a pre post writing performance test.

4-Preparing the scaffolds that will be used with the two strategies a) topic lists b) peer response sheet for peer response groups

5- Presenting a pre-post writing performance test to a group of jurors for validation.

 6- Presenting the writing self efficacy scale to a group of jurors for validation.

7- Preparing a writing performance rubric based on Hello! 6writing skills and presenting it for validation.

8- Administering the performance writing test as a pre test to measure the students' performance in writing.

9- Administering the writing self efficacy scale as a pre scale to measure the students' self efficacy in writing.

10- Implementing the two strategies "writing conferences& peer response groups "to the experimental groups.

11- Administering the post performance writing test, the same form of the pre test, as a post test to measure the students' performance in writing.

12- Administering the writing self efficacy scale as a post scale to measure the students' self efficacy in writing.

13- Analyzing data statistically.

14- Reaching conclusions and providing recommendations.

Results:

The following results were reached:

There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the first experimental (writing conferences) group students and that of the control group students on the writing performance post- test favoring the first experimental group.

There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the second experimental (peer response groups) group students and that of the control group students on the writing performance post- test favoring the second experimental group.

There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the first experimental (writing conferences) group students and that of the control group students on the self efficacy post- scale favoring the first experimental group.

There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the second experimental (peer response groups) group students and that of the control group students on the attitude post- scale favoring the second experimental group.

Conclusions:

Upon reviewing the data and analyzing the results, the following points were concluded:

Instructions in writing conferences improve students' writing performance. This conclusion adds to the validity of other studies such as that of Clements et al (2010), Randolph &Lea (2010), Altena&Pica (2010).

Instructions peer response groups improve students' writing performance. This conclusion adds to the validity of other studies such as that of Du et al (2009), Nakazawa&Wei (2006), Rosenthal &Eckert (2006).

This conclusion is consistent with the conclusions of other studies such as that of LaRoche, (1993), Adams et al (1996), Robertson, Cumberworth& Hunt (1998), Suzie (2001), Ensio&Boxeth (2000) and Gau et al (2003). This conclusion can be elaborated as follows:

A. Since a positive self efficacy change occurred due to the introduction and implementation of writing strategies in this study, it is important to realize that teaching writing strategies encouraged students to become

writers. Students learned by being active participants rather than by passively absorbing information. Writing and Feedback strategies forced students to become participants in their learning. They were required to take charge of their writing by selecting their own topics to write about, by deciding how their topics would be developed and what the finished product would be. A focus on feedback strategies provided the natural development of written language. It focused attention on the process of learning and not the finished product. It is concluded that all students can write and that they have something worth writing. It allowed for the growth of writing subskills because feedback activities took place in a non-threatening climate where students were not afraid to take risks. It was within this environment that students developed their own style and choices.

B. Through making writing purposeful, students became better writers because they had a sense of audience. The sense of audience developed through various aspects: constructive presenting writing to an audience (Author's Chair) and posting writing on pocket bulletin boards; these things were powerful incentives. Additionally, the purpose is motivated by writing on topics that affect them (friendly letter, describing one's goal in the future, describing their dream houses and for and against the computer), it was then that their writing became purposeful. Hence, proposing writing that is real and meaningful was essential in creating a writing-rich environment. The researcher hoped to make writing an everyday reality for students by making feedback on their writing usual for them and feedback will be provided continuously it will not stop. Other studies reached the same conclusion such as that ofAdipattaranun (1992), Goldstein & Carr (1996), Loudermilk (1997) and Ensio&Boxeth (2000).

The change in the writing teacher's role from the traditional role which has been evaluating the learner's first draft as if it were the final product, and assuming the role of a consultant, facilitating the learner's step-by-step creation of the piece of writing, is crucial in helping students write better.

Providing safe, encouraging, non-threatening environment, i. e. creating settings that motivate students' writing, helps them improve their writing performance. Student-writers need to feel support and acceptance from the teacher and the computer assisted feedback (the software program and the intranet program) to take the kind of risk involved in the process of producing good writing. When they feel safe from criticism, they become eager to write and to share their writing. Therefore, the class becomes a community of writers and students respond positively to a supportive writing atmosphere. This is consistent with the results of other studies such as Littleton et al (2011), Rymanowski et al (2011), Powers &Potts (2011) and Cotos et al (2010).

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the results and conclusions drawn in this study:

Teachers need more training in writing, especially on feedback strategies. For those unfamiliar with writing as a process and implementing the feedback strategies in any stage of the process writing, it would be advisable to read books by experts in the field. Teachers should talk to other teachers who use the process approach to become familiar with what is happening in the field of writing. They will have a stronger base for discussions concerning what writers do and how they feel when writing. These types of discussions are important to the development of the students' writing subskills.

Teachers should also provide students with frequent and lengthy opportunities to write. Teacher's direct and indirect feedback is highly valued and encouraged at every step of the writing process, especially during the revising and editing phases.

In successful writing classes students need to be reminded of the purpose for their writing: publishing and communicating. Teachers are expected to help students make connections between writing in the classroom and in the world at large.

Teachers need to encourage their students, guide and support their hesitant steps, reassure them it is acceptable to make mistakes on first drafts and remind them the purpose of the initial writing is to communicate ideas.

Teachers need to encourage their students to accept their feedback and not to consider them criticism for them in addition not to neglecting the teacher's direct and indirect feedback.

Students, whatever their age or level of ability, need to feel that writing is fun and feedback on writing is very important and not a type of criticism

As mastering the writing subskills can be achieved gradually, students need periodical experiences to practice it. Frequency of writing increases fluency. Therefore, sufficient time to writing instruction is needed before starting providing feedback.

 As an interested audience is helpful and effective, it is recommended to adopt a sense of audience other than the teacher such as classmates, schoolmates and family members.

Student-writers should choose their own topics of writing that are of interest to them and their lives.

Teachers should view students as authors and real writers and give them the opportunities to engage in writing as "professionals" do.

The use of student-teacher conference is recommended as the teachers ask key questions (such as what kind of help might you need now?) and students raised their problems about using different feedback strategies in the process writing stages (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing) and the teacher responded to these problems and at the same time invited the whole class for a discussion in some points of feedback. The conferencing was effective in tackling students' writing problems and discussing the most popular problems with the whole class.

The students' audiences should be real and interested in reading what the writers have to say (peers, friends from other classes, family members and so on).

When all teachers are encouraged to use the same scoring rubric, this will greatly enhance the consistency of assessment.

Suggestions for further research:

Further research is needed to seek the effectiveness of using feedback strategies (direct teacher feedback, indirect teacher feedback, software program feedback and intranet programs feedback) in developing writing subskills for university, preparatory and primary stages.

Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of feedback strategies in developing reading subskills for different stages.

Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of feedback strategies in developing translation subskills for different stages.

Further research is needed to seek the effectiveness of other different types of feedback (coded, uncoded, delayed and immediate).

Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous programs for primary, prep, secondary and university stages.

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APPENDIXES

THE STEPS OF A TEACHER WRITING CONFERENCE
BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

The teacher prepares the following scaffolds:

1- The teacher prepares "monitoring or taking notes papers" for every student to help him know the learners and to plan for the future learning.

2-"I am learning to/I can" pages to keep track of what individual students is taught. The teacher teaches them that convention in an editing conference within the context of the written piece. Then the teacher records the convention on the "I am learning to" side of the sheet and dates it. When he sees evidence of the student using the new skill independently, he puts the date of this observation on the "I can" side of the sheet.

3-The teacher arranges the chairs in the class so that he is able to sit next to the student.

4- Preparing a mini lesson to be explained before the conference.

DURING THE CONFERENCE:

1- The teacher circulates around the class and sits beside a student who has a problem during the writing process.

2- The teacher scaffolds to the area of the problem. These scaffolds may be in the following forms:

A-Presenting a checklist to every stage of process writing

B-Making a dialogue with the student having the problem

C-Giving examples

D-Referring the student to any source

E-Rereading the piece of writing again

3-Students begin solving the problem using any of these scaffolds

4-the teacher checks what the student has done.

AT THE END OF THE CONFERENCE:

1- The teacher asks the student what his or her action plan for revision is. He lets the student write out a few bulleted points to guide the revision.

2- The teacher uses "editing conferences"&" Revision Conferences" with every student during the conference to allow students to edit what they have written.

3- The teacher goes over briefly what the student learned during the conference.

4- He reminds student that the paper might need further revision than what could be covered during the conference.

5-The students write down what they have written then the piece of work is put in a magazine or on the wall.

A SUGGESTED TIME FRAME TO THE WRITING CONFERENCE

Within a 50 minute block of time:

10 minutes: introducing a mini lesson and the topic list to the whole class

35 minutes: students write their piece of work and the teacher confers (the conference lasts for three or four or five minutes according to the level of the student).

5 minutes: share session (1or2).

STEPS FOR PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

BEFORE USING PEER RESPONSE GROUPS (10 MINUTES)

1-Theteacher explains writing process stages to the whole class.

2-The teacher prepares a mini lesson to the whole class.

3-The teacher introduces the mini lesson to the class.

4-The teacher prepares supplementary materials to the class

A) Checklists for every stage of process writing

   B) Peer response blank sheets

c) Note taking notes

5-The teacher explains the peer response groups instruction and he gives students specific guidelines for each peer response session as follows:

- The teacher explains how students should monitor their time in the group and/or in pairs.
- The teacher suggests a set amount of time they should spend on each peer's draft.
- The teacher makes students responsible for turning something in at the end of the peer review session, both writer and reviewer.
- The teacher acknowledges and respects the advice students give one another even though you may not fully agree.
- The teacher explains that they are free to use or ignore their peers' advice based on their own best judgment.

ORGANIZATION

Chairs of peer response groups:

a. The teacher Keep the members in a face-to-face group, sitting very close together, not in a line, and not spread apart.
b. The leader of each group keeps the timetable moving so that all members' papers are heard. He Stops a reader or a response if time has run out, and moves on to the next writer under the guiding of the teacher of the teacher.

DURING USING PEER RESPONSE GROUPS (35 MINUTES)

Steps for peer response groups:

1- The leader of the group orders the members of the group to begin the discussion to choose the most suitable topic to write about from the list the teacher prepared.

2- After choosing the topic the leader tells the members of the group to begin writing the related main ideas to the topic chosen. Every member writes their own ideas.

3- The leader tells every member to read their ideas then the whole group discusses the ideas chosen.

4- The leader tells the editor of the group to write down the ideas the members of the group agreed up on.

5- The leader every member of the group to begin writing their own draft.

6- The writer reads the paper aloud; meanwhile, the readers just listen, without taking notes or talking.

7- The readers jot down their first impressions in 30 seconds!

8- The writer reads the paper again. Meanwhile, readers take notes.

9- The writer listens and takes notes while each reader responds. (While a reader responds, neither the writer nor the other readers talk or argue).

10-   Then, the group can talk together, if time permits.

After peer review: The writer considers his readers' comments and advice and makes his own decisions about revision. He may decide to follow some or all of the readers' advice. When readers' impressions are at odds with the writer's intentions, if, for example, the readers did not understand what the writer's main point was, the writer might consider revising in order to make the point clearer, for readers' misunderstandings are often a signal of textual ambiguities.

AFTER USING THE PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

1-The writer writes the final copy of the piece written from the group comments.

2-He offers it to the leader then the leader gives it to he teacher to mark.

THE TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR THE WRITING CONFERENCE STRATEGY

THE STEPS OF A TEACHER WRITING CONFERENCE

 BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

The teacher prepares the following scaffolds:

1- A topic list to help students generate writing ideas.

2- The questions list about the topic.

3- Some sketch, webs, lists and any graphic organizers to plan for their writing and to help organize their thought.

4- Planning conferences (**Quick Conferences**); the teacher holds one-on-one conference about how to develop the plan of the piece of writing.

5- The teacher prepares "monitoring or taking notes papers" for every student to help him know the learners and to plan for the future learning.

6- A plan paper for each student to make sure all of their original ideas included in their writing

7-"I am learning to/I can" pages to keep track of what individual students is taught. Each student has a blank sheet in the back of their draft book. The teacher teaches them that convention in an editing conference within the context of the written piece. Then the teacher records the convention on the "I am learning to" side of the sheet and dates it. When he sees evidence of the student using the new skill independently, he puts the date of this observation on the "I can" side of the sheet.

8-The teacher asks the student to bring 2 copies of what he or she is working on.

9-The teacher arranges the chairs in the class so that he is able to sit next to the student. This encourages a collaborative approach to the paper. It also means that the student doesn't hand over the paper, as if to be judged, but instead looks at it with the teacher.

10- Preparing a mini lesson to be explained before the conference.

BEGINNING OF THE CONFERENCE:

1- Introducing the mini lesson to the whole class

2- Introducing the topic list to the students whether on the board or on cards.

3-The teacher sets a goal for the conference. Usually there is only enough time to target one writing area. He asks the student what he or she is most concerned about with the paper. He emphasizes the role of the audience by asking, "What do you want me to pay attention to when we read?" If

the student doesn't have an answer, he asks what he or she usually struggles with as a writer. Or, what writing trends have surfaced in draft workshops or teacher comments?

4-If the student hasn't written anything or seems especially frustrated/overwhelmed, the teacher takes some time just to talk about the paper or the writing process. The teacher can use the entire conference to brainstorm, he suggests ways to jumpstart the writing process, or motivate the student. It also can be fruitful to ask the student to tell the teacher about his or her paper because sometimes a disconnect exists between what a student intends to convey in a paper and what makes it to the page.

5-The teacher considers reading the paper aloud. Reading aloud can help the student detect awkward or sentence structure, choppiness, or wordiness. It also reinforces the importance of writing for an audience. Ideally, reading aloud underscores the importance of *voice* ; writing a paper becomes as much about making and communicating meaning as it does fulfilling a class assignment.

DURING THE CONFERENCE:

1- The teacher sits beside a student who has his work in front of him during writing.

2- (The editing conference begins) the teacher has a quick glance at the work and decides on a particular teaching focus that explained before holding the conference or in previous sessions. For instance if he sees the student has not included full-stops, then this may well be the primary focus.

3-The teacher asks the student to begin reading his work aloud to him.

Note: How much the teacher asks him to read depends on the standard of the piece of work and the number of errors and the teacher restricts the first four sentences providing a good focus for beginning the discussion.

4- At this point it is a good idea for the teacher to offer genuine praise for something the student has done well. Not only is the teacher reinforcing good features, but he is establishing a positive tone which is vital.

5- To address the issue of missing punctuation where the sentences are there, but just not delineated, the teacher asks the student to just read the first sentence again. Hopefully he will be able to do this.

6- Then the teacher asks, "Has this sentence got the two things a sentence needs?" namely a full stop (or alternative punctuation mark) and a capital letter. This gets the student to think for himself. If he says not, ask him to add these.

7-The teacher asks the student to repeat the same thing with the next few sentences, remembering to praise. Should the student not be able to identify the end of the first sentence, the teacher could use the strategy of reading the sentence aloud him self but tag on a few words of the next so that it doesn't make sense. This can help even young students to find the end of the sentence.

8- Where a student has missed punctuation altogether by using too many 'ands', the teacher can read the whole passage quickly without pausing for breath, at the same time stressing all the 'ands' too so that afterwards he can ask if there was a word that the student had used a lot.

9- Once the student identifies it as 'and', follow up with, "How many 'ands' should you have in a sentence?" and then he discusses ways that they can be removed.

10-The teacher asks the student to make the changes.

11- Having established the correct punctuation, the teacher turns his attention to other things like incorrect tenses, inadequate use of adjectives

or poor grammar. Instead of telling the students they have the wrong tense, he asks, "Do we say, 'They was going to the park?'" Hopefully the student will know what it should be and make the necessary correction himself.

13- Other common errors include capital letters in the wrong place. The teacher points to the line where the error is and say, "Can you see a capital letter that is in the wrong place along this line?" or "Somewhere along this line there is a capital letter missing. Can you find it?" Only resort to showing them if they fail to find the error.

Through the teacher's careful questioning he is getting the student to do the thinking.

14- Similarly, where high frequency words are spelt incorrectly the teacher indicates the error in accordance with his marking policy.

15- The teacher will need to make a judgment as to how far to continue with the same approach through the work. If the piece is so full of errors that it isn't feasible to discuss them all, then he focuses on a section of the writing. It is quality that counts, not quantity, while skills are being developed.

The teacher will probably have come across the student who writes pages of repetitive sentences, for the purpose of making it seem they have been working hard. The student needs to be told to restrict the amount that he or she writes before showing the teacher.

16-the teacher focuses on achieving good quality, well punctuated, grammatical sentences. Obviously when the teacher has a class, he will only be able to conference for short periods with each student, the rest of the work being conventionally marked.

17- The teacher aims to conference with all types of writing whether it is in literacy lessons or cross-curricular work as students need to transfer their skills to other subjects. The teacher shouldn't be in a hurry to begin

new work every day. By returning to work from the previous day, it gives further opportunities to provide feedback.

AT THE END OF THE CONFERENCE:

1- The teacher asks the student what his or her action plan for revision is. He lets the student write out a few bulleted points to guide the revision.

2- The teacher uses "editing conferences"&" Revision Conferences" with every student during the conference to allow students to edit what they have written.

3- The teacher goes over briefly what the student learned during the conference.

4- He asks the student if she or he has any questions.

5- He reminds student that the paper might need further revision than what could be covered during the conference.

6-The students write down what they have written then the piece of work is put in a magazine or on the wall.

A SUGGESTED TIME FRAME TO THE WRITING CONFERENCE

Within a 50 minute block of time:

10 minutes: introducing a mini lesson and the topic list to the whole class

35 minutes: students write their piece of work and the teacher confers (the conference lasts for three or four or five minutes according to the level of the student).

5 minutes: share session (1or2).

To prepare, it is also beneficial if students have a pool of self-selected topics to choose from

Conferencing is a central means of assessing the writing process. A student-teacher conference is a meeting to discuss work-in-progress. As teachers listen to students talk about writing, they can learn how to help students work through the process. A conference can occur at various points of the writing process. Teachers' questions can lead students to discuss what they know, what they are doing, what they find confusing, or of what they are proud. Teachers should balance the amount of their talk with the students' talk and allow the students to take responsibility for discussing and thinking about their own writing.

The key to success in any conference lies in asking **questions that teach.** The following are examples:

As students begin to write:

- What will your topic be?
- How did you choose (or narrow) your topic?

- What pre-writing activities are you doing?

- How are you gathering ideas for writing?

- How might you organize your writing?

- How might you start writing your rough draft?

- What form might your writing take?

- Who might be your audience?

- What do you plan to do next?

As students are drafting:

- How is your writing going?

- Are you having any problems?

- What do you plan to do next?

As students revise their writing:

- How do you plan to revise your writing?

- What kinds of revisions did you make?

- Are you ready to make your final copy?

- What kinds of mechanical errors have you located?

- How has your editor helped you proofread?

- How can I help you identify (or correct) mechanical errors?

- What do you plan to do next?

After students have completed their compositions:

- With what audience will you share your writing?

- What did your audience say about your writing?

- What do you like best about your writing?

- If you were writing the composition again, what changes would you make?

- How did you engage in the phases of the writing process in writing this composition?

(Adapted from Tompkins, 1994, p. 375)

Using **anecdotal records** and **checklists**, teachers can chart students' development and gather information that will help them determine grades and quality. Anecdotal records provide teachers with details about students' writing. Over time, these records provide comprehensive pictures of the students as writers. Teachers can use or adapt the checklist on page 97 to assess students during the phases of the writing process.

When students assess their own writing and writing processes, they develop a sense of responsibility. In **self-assessment**, students assess their own writing and decide which pieces will be shared or evaluated. As students work through the writing process, they may address the quality and effectiveness of the writing. They may also judge if they have met the requirements for the given assignment. Early in the course, teachers can introduce students to the concept of self-assessment by creating a handout with questions such as the following:

Sample Self-assessment

Does my composition make sense?
Does it say what I want it to say?
Does it say it clearly?
Can the reader follow my thinking (i.e., my organization)?
Are there any details that need to be deleted? Added?
Am I happy with this composition?
What makes this piece of writing strong? Weak?

Students' reflections and insights are an important element of evaluation. Most classes, with practice, are capable of assisting the teacher in establishing evaluative criteria. Teachers should clearly communicate to students their expectations regarding evaluation. An example follows:

Choose five compositions from your writing folder/portfolio that you wish to submit for evaluation. Each composition should have gone through the following steps:

Step 1: Pre-writing plans
Step 2: Rough draft(s)
Step 3: Edited, proofread, and initialled by a peer or other person
Step 4: Revised and rewritten.

Work from each step must be submitted. You will be assigned/may choose a submission date.

Record keeping with the teacher during the conference

THE TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR PEER RESPONSE GROUPS STRATEGY

These Procedures are based on the model in Hale, Connie, and Susan Wyche-Smith. *Student Writing Groups: Demonstrating the Process.* Tacoma, WA: Wordshop Productions, 1988.

Organization

Chairs of peer response groups:

a. The teacher Keep the members in a face-to-face group, sitting very close together, not in a line, and not spread apart.

b. The leader of each group keeps the timetable moving so that all members' papers are heard. He Stops a reader or a response if time has run out, and moves on to the next writer under the guiding of the teacher of the teacher.

Steps for peer response groups:

1- The leader of the group orders the members of the group to begin the discussion to choose the most suitable topic to write about from the list the teacher prepared.

2- After choosing the topic the leader tells the members of the group to begin writing the related main ideas to the topic chosen. Every member writes their own ideas.

3- The leader tells every member to read their ideas then the whole group discusses the ideas chosen.

4- The leader tells the editor of the group to write down the ideas the members of the group agreed up on.

5- The leader every member of the group to begin writing their own draft.

6- The writer reads the paper aloud; meanwhile, the readers just listen, without taking notes or talking.

7- The readers jot down their first impressions in 30 seconds!

8- The writer reads the paper again. Meanwhile, readers take notes.

9- The writer listens and takes notes while each reader responds.2 While a reader responds, neither the writer nor the other readers talk or argue.

10- Then the group can talk together, if time permits.

After peer review: The author considers her readers' comments and advice and makes her own decisions about revision. She may decide to follow some or all of the readers' advice. When readers' impressions are at odds with the author's intentions--if, for example, the readers did not understand what the author's main point was--the author might consider revising in order to make the point clearer, for readers' misunderstandings are often a signal of textual ambiguities.

Key words

"Responding" means talking about how you felt as you heard the essay; and it also may mean giving advice for revision. In your response, be specific; refer to specific passages in the essay.

THE GROUP RECORD ORGANIZATION

THE GROUP

NUMBER:………………………………………………..

THE GROUP MEMBERS: 1-………………... 2-……………………..3-

.... …..4-…………………..

Date of Workshop	Leader's Name	Title of the composition	Organization inside the Group	The members' response	Students Progress	Notes

COMMENTS:……………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………..

....

I AM LEARNING FRAME

THE STUDENT'SNAME:…………………………………………

DATE	I AM LEARNING……….	I CAN ………………

TEACHER'S COMMENTS:…………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

RECORD KEEPING WITH THE TEACHER DURING THE CONFERENCE

serial	Date of conference	Name of the student	Conference length	Type of the conference	Title of piece of writing	Stage of writing process	Mini lesson explained	Comments on student progress	Notes

GENERALCOMMENTS:……………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………….

Sample Writing Process Checklist

	Dates					
Student: _____						
Pre-writing Can the student identify the specific audience to whom he/she will write?						
Does this awareness affect the choices the student makes as he/she writes?						
Can the student identify the purpose of the writing activity?						
Does the student write on a topic that grows out of his/her own experience?						
Does the student engage in pre-writing activities before writing?						
Drafting Does the student write rough drafts?						
Does the student place a greater emphasis on content than on mechanics in the rough drafts?						
Revising Does the student share his/her writing in conferences?						
Does the student participate in discussions about classmates' writing?						
Does the student make changes to reflect the reactions and comments of both teacher and classmates? If the student chooses not to						

incorporate suggestions, can he/she explain why not?						
Between first and final drafts, does the student make substantive or only minor changes?						
Does the student proofread his/her own papers?						
Does the student help proofread classmates' papers?						
Does the student increasingly identify his/her own mechanical errors?						
Publishing Does the student publish writing in an appropriate form?						
Does the student share this finished writing with an appropriate audience?						

Comments:

A Student self efficacy Scale

Dear student:

How confident are you right now that you could write different types of compositions 3 times per week for 20 minutes if:

<div align="right">
Not
Very
Confident   Confident
</div>

1. You were worried writing would cause further pain 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. You were bored by the program or writing activities 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. You were not sure exactly what writing exercises to do 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. You had to write alone   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. You did not enjoy writing   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. You were too busy with other activities   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. You felt tired during or after writing exercises   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. You felt stressed   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. You felt depressed   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. You were afraid the writing exercise would make you mistakes or errors

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. You felt unhappy when exercising   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

A holistic scoring Rubric

A questionnaire of holistic scoring rubric

Dear professor,

Name…………………………. Position………………………………. .

This rubric is a part of a study entitled "THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WRITING CONFERENCES AND PEER RESPONSE GROUPS STRATEGIES ON THE EFL SECODARY STUDENTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE AND THEIR SELF EFFICACY"

(A comparative study)

.The study aims at developing the writing skills of first year secondary school students and their self efficacy towards writing. Kindly respond to the following points :

	Criteria for validating the rubric	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	The rubric relates to the outcomes being measured .			
2	The rubric addresses extraneous points .			
3	The rubric covers important dimensions of student writing performance .			
4	The criteria reflect current conceptions of "excellence" in the field of writing .			
5	Each scale point validly reflects students' tasks .			

6	The rubric can be applied consistently by different scorers .			
7	It is suitable for the teacher to write comments after using the rubric .			
8	The six points are scaled well .			
9	A six point rubric is adequate .			
10	The rubric contains all the dimensions (such as content, organization and writing conventions) of the product to be assessed .			
11	The students can understand the rubric .			
12	The rubric is developmentally appropriate .			
13	The rubric can be applied to a variety of writing tasks .			
14	The rubric is fair and free from bias .			
15	The rubric is clear and easy to use .			

If there is something else to be added, omitted, modified, from your point of view, would you provide it, please?

I think the following should be added:

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………

I think the following should be omitted:

………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………….

I think the following should be modified:

………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………….

Holistic scoring rubric

Dear teacher, following is a holistic scoring rubric. Please read the compositions for a general impression and, according to this impression, award a numerical score for each. Please take into consideration components of the composition – syntax, Content, Purpose writer's process, word choice, organization, mechanics, and grammar

 A six point holistic scoring rubric follows, with scores ranging from 5 to 1for the entire composition; with 5 the highest score and 1 the lowest.

Teacher: ……………………. .

Date submitted: …………….

Name of student: …………………….

Title of composition: ………………………

Score point	Criteria

5	The composition accomplishes the following: ● Effectively addresses the topic and the task. ● Is clearly well-organized and well developed using clearly explanations, examples, support or details. ● Displays unity, progress, and coherence .
4	The composition accomplishes the following: ● Addresses the topic and the task well, though some points may be fully elaborated. ● Is generally well-organized and well developed, using appropriate and sufficient explanation, examples or details. ● Displays unity, progression, and coherence though it may contain redundancy, digression, or unclear corrections .
3	The composition is marked by one or more of the following: ● Addresses the topic and the task using somewhat developed examinations, example, or details. ● Displays unity, progression, and coherence, though connection of ideas may be occasionally obscured .
2	The composition may reveal one or more of the following: ● limited development in response to the topic and the task. ● Inadequate organization or connection of ideas. ● Inappropriate or in sufficient examples or details to support or illustrate generalizations in response to the task .
1	The composition is seriously flawed by one or more of the following: ● Serious disorganization or underdevelopment ● Irrelevant specifics or questionable responsiveness to the task. ● Little or no detail

0	Any composition at this level merely copies words from the topic, rejects the topic, is otherwise unconnected to the topic, or is blank .

Teacher comments: …………………………………

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT TEST IN THE FIRST TERM

Ser ial	Dialo gue	Situa tion	Vocab ulary	Struc ture	Compreh ension	Rea der	Writ ing	Transl ation	To tal
1	2.5	.5	3	1.5	4	1	1	1.5	15
2	2.5	zero	3	zero	zero	M	1	1.5	8
3	2.5	.5	3	zero	1.5	zero	1	1.5	10
4	2.5	.5	3	.5	3.5	zero	1	2	13
5	3	1.5	3	2	4	2	1	2.5	19
6	2	.5	.5	zero	zero	zero	zero	2	5
7	2.5	.5	2.5	zero	3	1	1	2	12. 5
8	2.5	.5	3	zero	4	zero	1	2	13
9	2	.5	2.5	zero	2	1	zero	2	10
10	2.5	.5	3	.5	1.5	zero	1	2	11
11	3	.5	2.5	zero	3.5	zero	1	2	12. 5
12	2.5	1	3	zero	3.5	zero	1	2	13
13	2.5	.5	3	zero	3.5	zero	1	2	12. 5
14	2.5	.5	3	zero	3.5	zero	zero	2	11. 5
15	zero	zero	.5	zero	2.5	1	zero	1.5	5.5
16	2	.5	1	2	3.5	zero	1	2	12
17	2.5	.5	3	zero	2	zero	zero	2	10
18	2.5	.5	3	zero	3.5	zero	zero	2	11. 5

19	2.5	.5	3	zero	3.5	zero	zero	2	11.5
20	2.5	.5	2.5	zero	3.5	zero	M	2.5	11
21	zero	M	1	zero	1	zero	M	zero	2
22	2	.5	2	zero	1	zero	M	1	6.5
23	2	.5	3	zero	3	1	zero	2.5	12

Table 2 -- Rubrics for Peer Response Sheet Ratings

Questions	Response Categories
Thesis and plan	3 - accurate identification of the thesis statement; examples of subpoints supporting the thesis OR suggestions for improving thesis 2 - accurate identification of the thesis statement with no clear indication of how subpoints support reasons given for answer OR no suggestions given if subpoints are not clear in thesis 1 - inaccurate identification of the thesis statement; irrelevant comments/suggestions made 0 - no response
Body paragraphs	3 - answers given with explanations; suggestions related to ideas supporting/not supporting the argument 2 - answers given with vague or no explanations/reasons

	1 - inaccurate or irrelevant comments/suggestions 0 - no response
General impression	3 - general impression given with evidence of additional comments 2 - general impression given with little explanation or supporting comments 1 - vague general impression given with no explanation, no supporting comments 0 - no response
Main idea, topic sentences clearly stated	3 - accurate identification of the main idea and explanations about clarity of subpoints 2 - accurate identification of the main idea but no explanations about clarity of subpoints 1 - inaccurate or no identification of the main idea; irrelevant comments/suggestions 0 - no response
Transition to the previous paragraph	3 - answer with supporting comments/suggestions 2 - answer with no suggestions 1 - inaccurate answer/irrelevant comments 0 - no response
Order of paragraphs	3 - answer with supporting comments/suggestions 2 - answer with no suggestions 1 - inaccurate answer/irrelevant comments 0 - no response
Subject-verb	3 - answer with supporting

agreement	comments/suggestions 2 - answer with no suggestions 1 - inaccurate answer/irrelevant comments 0 - no response
Verb tenses consistent and appropriate	3 - answer with supporting comments/suggestions 2 - answer with no suggestions 1 - inaccurate answer/irrelevant comments 0 - no response
Complete sentences	3 - answer with supporting comments/suggestions 2 - answer with no suggestions 1 - inaccurate answer/irrelevant comments 0 - no response
Spelling, punctuation, other grammar problems	3 - answer with supporting comments/suggestions 2 - answer with no suggestions 1 - inaccurate answer/irrelevant comments 0 - no response

General impression	3 - general impression given with evidence of additional comments 2 - general impression given with little explanation or supporting comments 1 - vague general impression given with no explanation, no supporting comments 0 - no response