Teachers' Views on Using the Writing Process Approach to Improve ESL Learners' Writing Skills

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Abstract

Despite intensive essay writing courses at Saudi universities, ESL students are unable to develop their English writing skills. Finding an appropriate teaching approach, such as the process approach, may help them improve their writing abilities and enable them to do so more successfully. This research aims to find out how and what Saudi ESL English language teachers think about using the process approach to writing instruction in the classroom. According to the study's findings, teaching and motivating students to write is critical by engaging them in prewriting activities, drafting, revising, and editing. The majority of participants thought that the student's writing process strategy helps students write critically and analytically. This is clear when students do activities and use methods that help them write in a critical way, like coming up with ideas together, talking with other students, collecting ideas, and making outlines.

Keywords: process approach; controlled and guided composition; genre approach; brainstorming**.**

1. Introduction

Many English teachers worldwide believe that the fundamental purpose of teaching English is to prepare students to use and practice language effectively. According to the natural order hypothesis, writing is the last language skill learned but is just as important as the others (Bailey, 1974). It is a complicated cognitive activity that looks to be a demanding task, and "most of us seem to have difficulties in getting our thoughts down on paper." (Widdowson, 1983, p. 34). However, writing is one of the English language skills that has received a lot of attention from researchers and teachers alike. The most prominent role is played by writing, which serves as a medium for conveying information and knowledge. To achieve a satisfactory level of competence in writing, both teachers and students must put in a lot of effort.

Although English language teachers in Saudi universities paid special attention to teaching writing skills, the majority of students did not meet the aspired goals at the end of each year. They continue to struggle with writing effectively and successfully. As a result, one possible solution to their writing problems could be to use more effective methods of teaching writing skills, such as the process approach to writing.

2. Review of Literature

Three principles and approaches to teaching writing: focusing on form, the writer, and the reader (Tribble, 1996). The first is a traditional text-based approach in which students are given authoritative texts to imitate and corrections are left to the teacher, who ensures students follow the rules of form. The process of writing is the second approach, which views the writer as an independent text producer. It entails implementing a cycle of writing activities that guide students through the writing evolution process. The genre approach, the third approach, focuses on the reader of the written texts.

The product and genre approaches won't be talked about in more detail. Instead, the writing process approach will be talked about in more detail, with a focus on the theoretical foundations, phases, and activities that make up this approach and research done in this area in the past.

2.1. Product Approach (controlled and guided composition)

Pincas (1982) mentions that the product approach, which can be controlled or guided, is more concerned with form knowledge than with overall communication and content. It considers writing to be linguistic knowledge and focuses on the proper use of vocabulary, syntax, and spelling. This method assists students in reinforcing grammar, vocabulary, and

syntax by directing their attention to specific aspects of the language. Controlled composition, defined by Raimes (1983) as "all the writing your students do for which a great deal of the content and/or form is supplied," is a useful tool for all levels of learners. Furthermore, the guided composition is similar to the controlled composition in that students do not focus on content or form.

This approach was viewed positively because it improved the grammatical accuracy of learners, particularly beginners (Zamel, 1983). However, it had some flaws because it gave a relatively minor role to process skills, such as text planning, and the knowledge and skills that learners bring to the classroom are undervalued (Badger and White, 2000). Moreover, it does not consider the reader, and the only person who reads it is the teacher, who also acts as an editor for the students (Silver and Leki, 2004).

To sum up, this method is good for beginning language learners because it aims to boost their confidence by making them more aware of grammatical details and helping them learn more words.

2.2. Genre Approach

In teaching the genre approach, three stages have been advocated. The first stage involves introducing a model text and analyzing it in terms of social purpose and linguistic features. In the second stage, learners construct a text with the assistance of the teacher, which includes researching and gathering information. Finally, students are asked to create their text based on what they have learned (Badger & White, 2000). This means that teachers begin by assigning a genre, then students complete tasks to express that genre, and finally, they produce their writing.

The genre approach focuses on how to construct specific types of text. It refers to various types of social activities through spoken or written texts that are used for a variety of writing situations, such as letters, reports, recipes, and articles (Badger and White, 2000). As a result, the text written by doctors differs from that written by economists. The genre approach differs from the process approach in that it is more academic than freewriting. Teachers and students should collaborate to discuss and negotiate the genre with the class, and once decided, students should conduct research and draft a piece of writing in the chosen genre. Brindley (1994) said that the most important thing a teacher does in the genre approach is to give input to the students at the start.

The genre approach's strongest point is that it places a high value on authentic situations. Because learners think about the audience and readers of the text, they will gain a sense of their

surroundings and become more aware of their writing abilities. Furthermore, because it immerses students in various texts, it fosters both creativity and the ability to think critically about their writing (Kay & Dudley-Evans 1998).

Several criticisms have been leveled at the genre approach, claiming that it deals with the learner passively. According to Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998:311), "the genre-based approach is restrictive, particularly in the hands of unimaginative teachers, and this is likely to lead to a lack of creativity and demotivation in the learners." "If overdone or done incorrectly, it can become boring and stereotyped."

2.3. The Writing Process Approach in the Second Language Classroom

Before the development of the process approach, researchers regarded writing as linguistic knowledge, with emphasis on the proper use of vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive devices. "This approach existed as a reflection of the prevalence of the audio-lingual method in language teaching in the early 1950s and 1960s, and writing served to achieve the grammatical and syntactic forms" (Ibrahim, 2006, p. 3). This implies that the learner must be proficient in grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling (Pincas 1982). The product approach, on the other hand, is unconcerned with readers or the goal of writing because the context for this writing is the classroom and the only reader is the teacher, who serves as an editor for the students (Silver and Leki, 2004). Furthermore, "the product-based approach sees writing as primarily concerned with knowledge of language structure" (Badger & White, 2000, p. 154). So, the main concern is to practice grammar and learn to avoid errors effectively.

By the mid-1960s, the transition from the traditional to the process approach had begun. Rohman (1965) was the first researcher to shift from a product-based to a process-based approach. The study he conducted included three stages of the writing process. The first stage was pre-writing, which included any activities that occurred before writing. The actual writing took place in the second stage. The final stage was rewriting, which was solely concerned with checking for and correcting grammatical and spelling errors. Rohman's research was insufficient to explain the nature of the writing process approach in greater depth (William, 1998). At the time, second language writing instruction focused on some aspects of L2 written text, such as sentence and discourse structure (Kroll, 2003; Hyland, 2002; William, 2003).

At the beginning of the 1970s, the research started illuminating additional explanations of the process approach and providing more details about it. "Although Janet Emig (1971) is rightly credited with pioneering process pedagogy in composition, it is important to recognize that the late 1960s saw an intellectual shift toward process in many fields" (William, 2003,

100). Emig discovered through case studies that writing is a recursive process that requires stages and activities such as pre-writing, writing, and post-writing. These activities can be used however the writers see fit (Emig, 1989, cited in Hyland, 2002). As a result, the writing process is recursive and cyclical, capable of generating new ideas and thoughts (Zamel, 1983:165). This approach focuses on writing linguistic skills such as planning, revising, and drafting rather than English linguistic knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling (Badger & White, 2000). Furthermore, the writing process approach differs from the conventional approach. It is top-down, not bottom-up, which means that attention should be paid to all aspects of writing, not just grammar, rules, or literature. As a result, to help students write well, they must be taught the writing process and stages such as planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing (Belinda, 2006). Furthermore, one of the most important findings of the process approach was that writing entails a continuous effort to discover what one wants to say.

2.3.1. Previous studies for the process approach to writing

Many previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of the process approach to writing. Jones (1982) compared the outcome to the process of writing. He only examined two L2 writers: good and poor ESL writers. He discovered that the poor ESL writer focused on the written form's service level, whereas the good writer focused on ideas and organization. He came to the conclusion that the main challenge for the poor ESL writer was not linguistic competence but skillful competence.

Some new and updated studies on the effectiveness of using the process approach to teaching writing have been conducted. Belinda (2006) investigated the use of the writing process in six primary classrooms in Hong Kong. These investigations included pre- and post-questionnaires, pre-and post-tests, post-interviews, and pre-and post-observations of techniques used by students. The findings indicated that the "writing process" approach was a successful strategy. It is more appropriate and convenient for students who are fluent in English because it can improve their writing skills and make them more confident students.

Only a few studies have been found to compare the effectiveness of self-assessment of writing processes versus products on L1 or L2 students' writing. El-Koumy (2004) used the product approach to compare the writing processes of ESL students and their scores with those of other students. His hypothesis, which stated that "there would be no statistically significant difference in the post-test mean scores between the process group and the product group on the quantity or quality of EFL students' writing" (p. 2), was rejected because EFL students in the

product group scored significantly lower than students in the process group. He found that the writing process approach helps students improve their thinking skills (like coming up with ideas and thoughts) and wiring skills.

Writing was also used in the field of technology. Some Quebec Francophone high school students were enrolled in an information and communication technologies (ICTs) program to determine whether the writing process would be appropriate in the context of ESL language arts courses over four years. The information was gathered through qualitative research methods such as document collection, observation videotaping, and interviews. One of the study's findings was that students could describe the writing process (meta-linguistic knowledge). Before entering Grade 7, students were unfamiliar with the writing process. According to some interview excerpts, researchers discovered that students could not only describe the steps and processes of the writing approach, but they could also use labels to identify some of these steps, which are considered indicators of meta-linguistic knowledge (Parks, Huot, Hamers, and Lemonnier, 2005).

Furthermore, Chang, Sung, and Zheng (2007) used a quasi-experimental study on junior high school students to understand the effects of the writing process based on a hypermedia authoring system on the presentation of web page creations. They discovered that, while some of the five stages of the writing process, which are setting the topic and goals, planning the outline, organizing the structure, building the content, and reviewing, did not show a significant difference in some indexes and categories, the experimental group who used a "hypermedia authoring system" generally had better scores than the control group who only used a 'web page editing area,' and it is helpful to overcome some difficulties and challenges.

Few studies were concerned with the self-monitoring strategy of annotating drafts with comments or questions on trouble areas before turning them in. Charles (1990) used excerpts from three student works to talk about the kinds of problems that might arise and how the self-monitoring method is utilized to solve them. He found that self-monitoring is a useful strategy that enables students to mark their drafts with comments or questions about their problem areas before submitting their papers to the teacher. Self-monitoring is a strategy that helps learners improve their critical thinking skills.

2.3.2. Stages and activities characterizing the writing process

Writing processes such as planning, writing, and revising were the first stages that L2 writing teachers accepted (Flower, 1989; Flower and Hayes, 1981, cited in Hyland, 2003). The process approach to writing is concerned not only with development and organization but also with meaning. In many L2 writing classes, for example, pre-writing activities (invention strategies), drafting and re-drafting stages, and feedback from either teachers or peers are essential components of writing activities (Kroll, 2003). Furthermore, when writing in L1 and ESL classes, students continue to engage in activities such as planning, brainstorming, organizing, drafting, re-reading, editing, and revising (New, 1999). According to William (2003), to effectively apply the process-based approach, writers should engage in stages of writing such as invention (discussion, brainstorming, outlining, etc.), planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. The four most important stages of the process approach are prewriting, composing or drafting, revising, and editing. Furthermore, these stages may appear multiple times and in different sequences (Tribble 1996).

2.3.2.1. Prewriting

One of the most important aspects of the writing process is the learners' ability to form and organize their thoughts before putting pen to paper (Zamel, 1982). Prewriting techniques such as brainstorming and discussion can assist students in gathering ideas and information (Hewings and Curry, 2003). Most studies discussed the importance of discussion at the start of each topic and how these discussions can help students effectively develop and generate their ideas (William, 2003; Zamel, 1982). Planning is one of the prewriting techniques that help students establish and tackle their writing effectively (Peacock, 1986). It is a thinking activity that allows students to focus on it as much as they want while writing (Zamel, 1983; Flower and Hayes, 1981). On the other hand, outlining is a technique that is considered the framework of the writing activity. Outlines, when used correctly, can be a very useful strategy. Writers can include the most important ideas and points in their outlines by beginning with general points and progressing to more specific ones (William, 2003).

2.3.2.2. Composing/drafting

Getting started with writing is one of the most difficult tasks (Hedge, 2000). Students begin writing and composing after defining the topic, developing a plan, and gathering data (William, 2003; King and Chapman, 2003). As a result, various pedagogical methods, such as working in pairs to understand the topic by questioning each other and sharing the first draft of the

writing, may assist students in getting started (Gebhard, 2000; Hedge, 2000). Another method is to have students do one-sitting writing, in which they are encouraged to write a draft of the entire essay in one sitting, from beginning to end (Gebhard, 2000). Students should focus on content and organization at this stage and ignore spelling and mechanical errors because they can be checked in the final stages of the writing process. Furthermore, this method can prevent students from stopping or losing their train of thought (King and Chapman, 2003).

2.3.2.3. Revising

Many rhetorical writers believe that revising is the most important stage of the writing process because it allows them to focus on specific aspects such as sentence level, changing some inappropriate vocabulary, and reorganizing some sentences (William, 2003). To organize the composition effectively, writers in the revision stage must be willing to do any undesirable activities or tasks, such as cutting unnecessary paragraphs and sentences and moving some sections or paragraphs from one location to another (William, 2003; Hedge, 2000; Zamel, 1981; King and Chapman, 2003). Revisions are classified into two types: Internal revision, in which the writer focuses on thoroughly exploring what has been discovered on the page and then reworks the subject, information, arguments, and structures until they are satisfied that the meaning has been successfully communicated; External revision, which is the shorter final process of preparing the essay for an external audience, is concerned with style, tone, language, and mechanics (Murray, 1978).

2.3.2.4. Editing

Editing is an essential skill for all writers, whether they are international or native speakers, experts, or novices. This stage focuses on writing mechanics such as references and formatting, as well as linguistic accuracy such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling (Hewings and Curry, 2003). This stage is concerned with writing mechanics such as references, formatting, and linguistic accuracy issues such as spelling and grammar, and students in this stage can work individually, with peers, or in small groups to find and correct errors and mistakes. They can use all available resources, such as dictionaries, computers, and textbooks, to check and correct their errors (King and Chapman, 2003; Hewings and Curry, 2003).

To summarize the findings of previous studies, the process approach to writing develops the skillful competence, thinking skills, and writing strategies of ESL learners and assists them in overcoming writing difficulties and problems such as a lack of overall organization and structure. The purpose of this study was to determine whether using the process approach to

writing in English classes would produce better results than using traditional approaches such as the writing product approach. One of the primary reasons for selecting the process approach to writing was to enable ESL students to write essays effectively and accurately. It also had steps and activities to help students express their ideas in writing and learn how to write by describing people, places, things, and processes step by step.

2.4. Feedback in ESL classes

One of the most crucial roles of an ESL writing teacher is to provide constructive written feedback to students. Hyland and Hyland (2001) Hyland, 2003 collected all of the written comments made by teachers during a 14-week intensive English course at a New Zealand university for six ESL writers of varying linguistic origins. They have found that students will not learn how to write successfully until they receive feedback from their professors. Hyland (2003) ensured that teacher-written response remains crucial in most L2 writing programs, despite growing recognition of the value of oral response and peer sources of feedback.

Ferris (1995) polled 155 first-year college students enrolled in one of two English as a Second Language (ESL) writing classes offered by a single university. The results of the survey show that students like teachers' words of encouragement and respond to their comments in different ways. Most students also agree that their teachers' comments help them become better writers. Feedback can be received not only from teachers but also from peers. Ferris (2003) and Storch (2004) claimed that students can benefit from self-awareness, introspection, and expression, as well as decision-making, through peer feedback.

As a result, the current study aims to answer the following research questions:

1.	What are Saudi English teachers' attitudes toward using the writing process approach in the classroom?

2.	How do ESL teachers view their students' attitudes toward their writing abilities?

3.	What are the teachers' practices for assessing and giving feedback on their students' writing?

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

The study gathered information from 55 ESL teachers who previously taught English at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia, with 40 males and 15 females participating. They were chosen at random. An explanatory study would be appropriate for the research because the researcher is interested in the perspectives of English teachers on the effectiveness of using the

process approach to improve the writing skills of Saudi students. The instrument intended for use in this study was simply a questionnaire. The logical process of questionnaire construction was a planned series of steps, each of which required specific skills, resources, time, and decisions to be made (Czaja and Blair, 2005). As a result, the research instrument for this study was a questionnaire in the form of a survey. The survey's indirect study of population characteristics was one of its positive implications. Furthermore, the survey could help determine the frequency and pay attention to the participants' attitudes, opinions, and preferences (Salkind, 1194). Table 1 lists the research questions, their numbers, and the teachers who took part in the study.

Table 1: Research questions, questions, and target participants

N	Research questions	Numbers of questions	participants
1	What are Saudi English teachers' attitudes toward using the writing process approach in the classroom?	(Questions 1,7, and10)	55 teachers
2	How do ESL teachers view their students' attitudes toward their writing abilities?	(Questions 2,3,4and 5)	55 teachers
3	What are the teachers' practices for assessing and giving feedback on their students' writing?	(Questions 6, 8, and 9)	55 teachers

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

A closed rather than an open questionnaire was used because the researcher wanted to know ESL teachers' opinions and perceptions of using the process approach to writing. Respondents only needed to place a circle on the appropriate answer because the questions were clear and simple. Closed questions were simple for both the researcher and the participants. Closed questions "reduce the possibility of variability in structured interview response recording" (Bryman, 2004, p. 148). This means that after the respondents answer the questions, the researcher must write exactly what they chose, with no ability to change their answers.

According to Trochim (2005), descriptive statistics provided a clear view of both the population and the measurements; hence, SPSS statistical software was used to generate the data. Based on the frequency distributions of various variables, the researcher used descriptive statistics to generate statistical and graphical displays. Building charts can also be used to predict where the average score for each question will fall.

4.   Results

4.1 Answering research question #1: *"What are Saudi English teachers' attitudes toward using the writing process approach in the classroom?"*

Table 2 and Figure 1 show that the majority of respondents (85%) agreed with the opinion that the writing process approach, which included prewriting activities, drafting, revising, and editing, was important to use in English writing classes. Only 15% of respondents were unsure whether the approaches to the stages of the writing process were significant. On the other hand, Figure 1 showed that the mean, or average value, of the collected data, was 1.82. With a mean score of 3.91, it was clear that the majority of participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the opinion that they do not enjoy teaching writing skills. This means they didn't mind teaching writing or other skills like listening, reading, and grammar. Finally, nearly 73% of participants agreed with the statement that students should know how to write critically and analytically, while 23% did not believe that writing critically and analytically is recommended for ESL writers. Furthermore, Figure 1 showed that the mean was 1.69.

Table 2: Perceptions of ESL teachers towards using the writing process approach

| N		Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I think that it is important to use the process approach to writing in English classes.	18	29	8	0	0
7	Most English teachers do not like teaching writing skills.	1	2	5	40	7
10	Students should know how to write critically and analytically.	25	15	2	10	3

Figure 1: Simple Bar Mean of Questions 1, 7, and 10
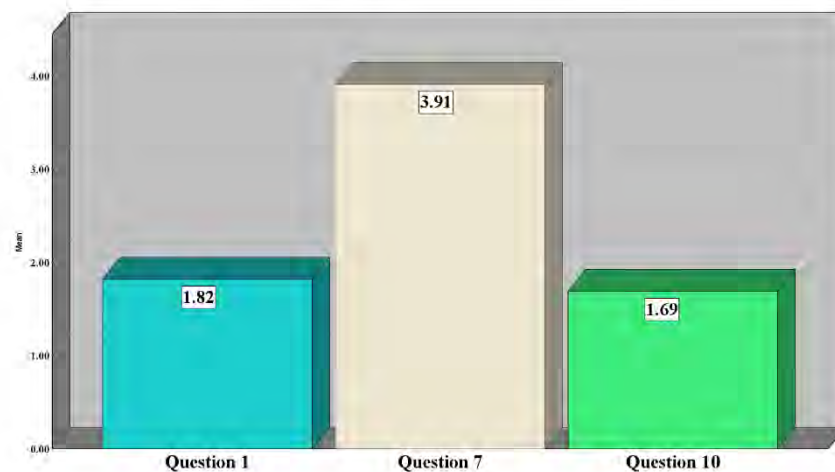
4.2 Answering research question #2: *"How do ESL teachers view their students' attitudes toward writing abilities?"*

Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 concerned ESL teachers' perceptions of students' attitudes toward writing skills, and the responses are shown in Table 3 and Figure 2. The questions were developed based on the participants' previous experiences teaching writing skills. Table 3 shows, for example, that the majority (87%) agreed that they believed students did not practice and use writing processes and activities such as prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing outside of the classroom. Figure 2 depicts the mean score of 1.58. Regarding question 3, it was clear that 87% of the participants' responses indicated that grammar was the most important aspect of writing skills, with a mean score of 1.58. This result demonstrated that when students begin writing, they pay more attention to grammar. With a mean score of 1.79, participants in Question 4 believed that their students feel bored when they begin writing. According to the responses of the participants, writing is not an interesting skill for ESL students. Finally, in response to question 5, all participants agreed that their students needed to be motivated to write effectively.

Table 3: Perspectives of ESL teachers on their students' feelings about their writing abilities

N		Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2	I think that students do not practice writing outside the classroom.	30	18	7	0	0
3	Most students believe that grammar is the most important part of the writing process.	28	20	7	0	0
4	Most students think that writing is boring.	33	16	6	0	0
5	Students need to be motivated to write effectively.	18	37	0	0	0

Figure 2: Simple Bar Mean of Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5
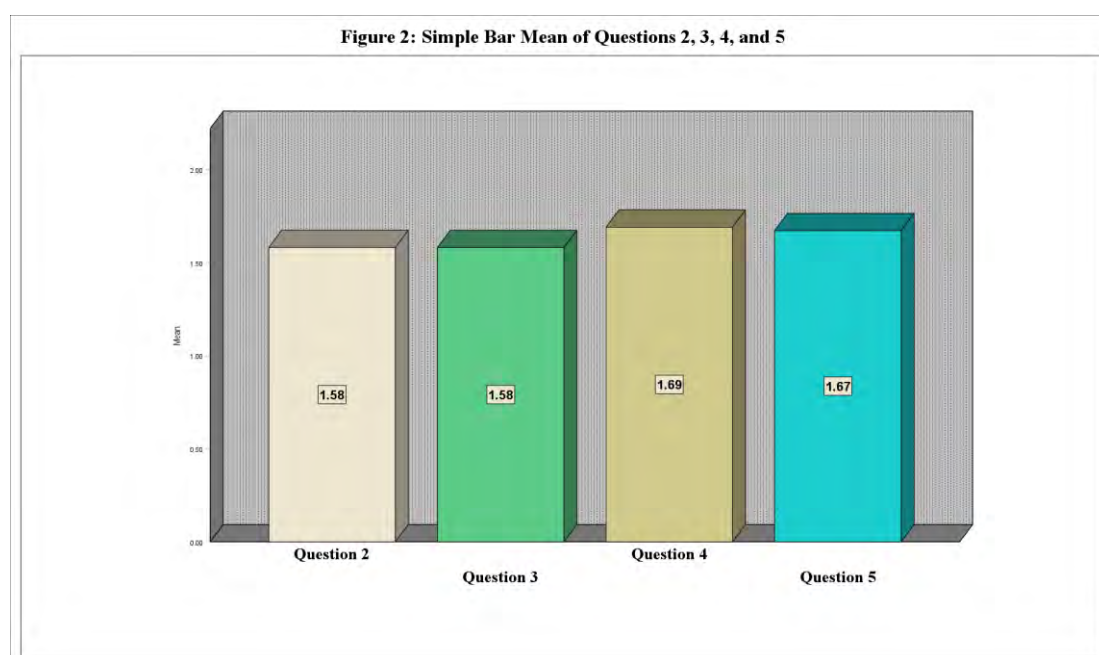
4.3 Answering research question #3: *"What are the teachers' practices for assessing and providing feedback on their students' writing?"*

As shown in Table 4 and Figure 3, questions 4, 6, 8, and 5 were about how teachers grade and give feedback on their students' writing. Question 6 in Table 4 asked whether teachers allow their students to practice writing both inside and outside of class. Figure 3 shows that 85% of responses did not agree with the statement that teachers do not give students enough time to practice writing skills, with a mean score of 3.84. Question 8 sought teachers' perspectives on the module's difficulty in assessing students' writing skills. With a mean score of 1.82, the findings indicated agreement with the statement. However, 15% of those polled were unsure whether assessing writing was difficult or not. Regarding question 9, which was

about providing feedback to students, 70% of respondents agreed with the statement, while 30% were unsure of the significance of providing feedback to students. Figure 3 depicts the mean score of 1.69.

Table 4: Teachers practice assessing and giving feedback on their students' writing

N		Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6	Teachers do not give students enough time to practice writing skills.	1	3	4	43	4
8	It is difficult to assess students using the writing process approach.	18	29	8	0	0
9	Many teachers believe that feedback is important in ESL writing skills.	33	6	16	0	0

Firgure 3 Simple Bar Mean of Questions 6, 8, and 9
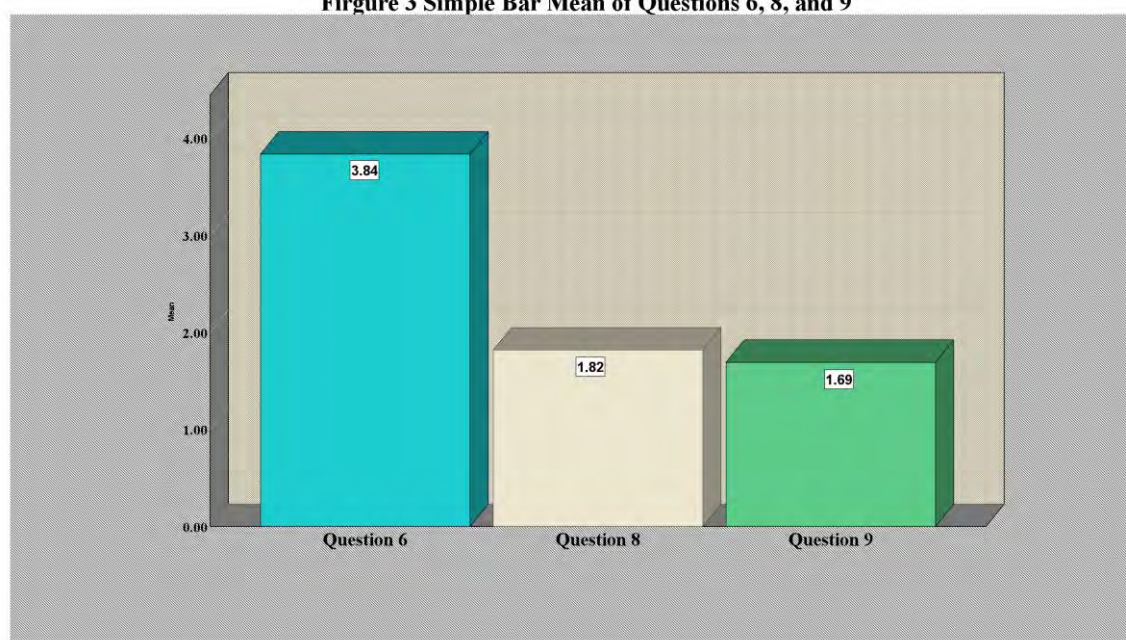
5. Discussions

The research's findings can be summarized as follows. It is critical to teach the process writing approach in ESL classrooms, which includes prewriting activities, drafting, revising, and editing. This finding is the same as what Wasson (1993), Kroll (2003), Williams (2003), EL-Koumy (2004), and Belinda (2006) found in their studies, which showed how important the process approach to writing is in ESL writing classes.

Grammar correction is the most common category when students are involved in the writing process approach. This finding is in agreement with Zamel's statement (1982) that

"writing assignments are made for the sole purpose of testing the mastery of specific grammatical structures and few involve invention techniques or writing strategies" (p. 196). This is because ESL teachers place a high value on grammar instruction in their classrooms. This method is praised since it enhances the grammatical correctness of students, particularly novices (Zamel, 1983). This concern is accepted when students are beginners and involved in the product approach to writing that focuses more on vocabulary, syntax, and spelling (Pincas, 1982; Zamel, 1983). Therefore, teachers need to focus on activities and exercises that enable their students to write within different meaningful contexts instead of focusing only on grammatical rules. This can be achieved if the teachers train their students about how to use activities and stages of the process approach to writing, such as brainstorming, discussing with peers, collecting ideas in groups, revising, and editing essays.

Assessing and evaluating the students' written drafts was difficult. To facilitate assessment, teachers should use rubrics that divide essay marking into categories such as content, organization, charity, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The rubric, according to Lee and Van Patten (1995), provides a holistic and analytical assessment. Analytical scoring gives a full description of how each part of the writing was graded, while holistic scoring gives a grade for the whole thing.

Giving students feedback is essential for raising their achievement levels. According to Hyland and Hyland (2001), one of the responsibilities of ESL teachers is to provide feedback. It is critical to raise a learner's achievement level and recognize that students will not learn how to write effectively unless their teachers provide them with feedback. Students may become confused if they do not receive feedback, as they will be unaware of the aspects of their writing that must be considered (Hyland, 2003). Researchers looked at how students reacted to their teachers' answers and found that most students expect and value feedback from their teachers about their writing (Ferris, 1995). However, with large numbers of students in some ESL classes, teachers may claim that providing feedback takes a long time to correct or even discuss some mistakes with students. Thus, peer feedback helps students become more self-aware, engage in self-reflection and self-expression, and contribute to decision-making (Storch, 2004; Ferris, 2003).

Writing critically and analytically is crucial for ESL writers. This can be done through a self-monitoring technique that assists the learners in developing their critical thinking skills. According to Charles (1990:292), self-monitoring "encourages students to look critically and analytically at their writing and to place themselves in the position of readers" and "makes it easy for students to express uncertainty about any part of the text and to receive direct answers

to their queries." Furthermore, ESL teachers should instill in their students what educational philosophy refers to as "critical thinking and writing." Because students should write analytically and critically, this technique can assist them in developing mental processes to observe and argue the meaning of statements. They can use this method to put themselves in the shoes of the readers.

6. Conclusion

The research was exploring Saudi English teachers' attitudes toward using the writing process approach in the classroom and their practice in assessing and providing feedback on their students' writing. The findings demonstrate the benefits of the process approach to writing in ESL writing classes. This study found that teaching writing skills in steps, like prewriting activities, drafting, revising, and editing, can help students improve their writing effectively.

6.1. Implications and recommendations

Based on the review of the literature and the results of this study, which is about how ESL teachers in Saudi universities feel about using the process approach to writing to improve the writing skills of ESL students, the following implications and recommendations were made:

Teachers should make their students aware that writing is not only a solitary act but is rather a social activity that requires discussing with peers to collect ideas and negotiate the meanings of some unknown vocabularies. Students' writing skills could be improved, and their attitudes about writing could become more positive, if they took part in process activities like prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing.

Students who are learning to write in English can make many mistakes, which is an indication that they are progressing successfully, so the teacher should not embarrass or frustrate them by using certain correction strategies. In other words, teachers should praise their students when they write correctly and avoid criticizing or insulting them when they write incorrectly because making mistakes is a positive thing and students can learn from them. So, one of the issues that have an impact on an educational experience is the kind of reaction that the student receives from their teachers, such as being supportive and using positive comments such as "I am happy that you made a mistake to learn from this mistake."

Teachers should not be the sole source of information. According to Moran (1981), "teachers have been found to apply uniform, inflexible standards to their students' texts and to respond based on the extent to which these texts conform to or deviate from these standards." He means that some teachers dislike encouraging their students to organize their work. These

educators believe that what their students say is unimportant. In other words, students must listen to what their teachers want to say rather than what they should discover and establish on their own. However, students should spend the majority of their time talking to each other to gain input and knowledge, with the teacher serving as a monitor. To be successful in this new role, the teacher must be able to ask open-ended questions to students, allowing them to use their prior knowledge and become active learners. Questions with a single correct answer should be avoided because they do not stimulate students' minds and curiosity. As a result, the burden of learning is then placed on the students, who will become better learners. Also, it's important to stress that the teacher's role as a monitor does not give him or her the right to stop a student when he or she thinks the student is thinking wrong.

Due to a lack of vocabulary, some ESL students prefer to translate some words from their first language into English while writing essays. This is most common when students are learning to write and don't know how to write certain words or sentences in English. In this case, they prefer to write in their native language first and then translate it into English, so teachers should not discourage their students from using this method to produce written material. When students are stuck in English, this approach can help them express themselves in their native language. In other words, the teacher should encourage students who have new ideas to write them down as soon as possible, even if it is in their native language so that they do not lose or forget them.

6.2. Suggestions for further research

Suggestions are made to researchers who plan to conduct similar studies in the future to investigate the effectiveness of using the process approach to writing. The questionnaires, implications, and results we talked about above need to be looked into more to help ESL students in Saudi universities and all students around the world. In many ways, the process approach to writing, which includes activities and stages such as prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing, is the strategy, but it cannot solve all of the problems that ESL writers face. Further research may be conducted to compare the effectiveness of this process to other approaches such as the product approach, the teacher-centered approach, and so on. Using these studies may help researchers understand the benefits of the process approach to writing, particularly when compared to other traditional approaches. As a result, experimental methodologies may be appropriate for applying this additional research.

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