Does Service-Learning Training Make a Difference? An Exploratory Study of Jordanian EFL Teachers' Performance in and Attitudes towards Writing

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Abstract

This study examines the potential effect of service-learning training on 38 EFL teachers from the public schools of the North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Education, Mafraq, Jordan. A quasi-experimental design was used, and the participants were randomly assigned into an experimental group (n=18) and a control group (n=20). As part of the treatment, the participants of the experimental group were asked to serve their community through collecting paper waste, recycling, and planting trees. They were then asked to videotape their activities to use them in their writing tasks in the classroom. The control group did not receive any treatment and taught the writing tasks per the guidelines of the prescribed Teacher's Book. The findings revealed statistically significant differences in the overall writing performance of both the experimental

and control groups, in favor of the former. The findings also revealed that the use of service-learning training helped teachers form positive attitudes towards EFL writing.

Keywords: EFL teachers; service-learning, writing performance

1. Introduction and Background

Writing has always been a challenge to EFL teachers and learners alike. The intricacy of the writing process, a complex cognitive activity, requires the writer to simultaneously manipulate a number of multi-leveled variables. The writer manipulates format, structure, vocabulary, and punctuation at the sentential level and synthesizes information at the textual level (Bell & Burnaby, 1984). Nunan (1989) identifies several requisites for successful writing, namely mastering the mechanics of letter formation, mastering and adhering to the conventions of spelling and punctuation, using the grammatical system to convey one's intended meaning, organizing content at the paragraph- and text- levels, polishing and revising one's initial draft, and selecting an appropriate style for one's audience.

Writing has been reported as the neglected skill in language classrooms around the world (Duncan, 1991; Newkirk & Kent, 2007), more so in the foreign language classroom where it poses extra challenges for teachers and students alike. Moon (2008, p.398) claims that

> *[w]riting is not so much neglected in primary classrooms as not noticed and not adequately prepared for. It tends to take on a great deal of significance at later stages of primary and secondary education when it is increasingly used as a main vehicle for assessment or the demonstration of learning.*

Writing constitutes an added challenge because most learners have relatively less experience with written expression even in the native language (Duncan, 1991), which makes teacher's support and appropriate feedback potential catalysts for learners' participation in activities, motivation for writing, and growth as writers (Moon, 2008). However, teachers themselves do not often receive adequate training in writing and, thus, are often 'ill equipped' to help learners develop literacy skills. According to the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2003, p.1), despite a plethora of effective instructional models, "both the teaching and practice of writing are increasingly shortchanged throughout the school and college years", as students need "writing models if they are to become writers, and teachers must be those models" (Olness, 2007, p.177).

Writing is one of the central pillars of language learning which has been a major concern to teachers, students, and researchers alike. However, despite massive efforts by tertiary teacher education programs, the National Center for Curriculum Development (NCCD), and the

Ministry of Education (MoE) to foster writing proficiency through improved instruction, curricula, and pre- and in-service training, Jordanian EFL learners still suffer from weaknesses in writing (Al-Hamad, Al-Jamal, & Bataineh, 2019; Bani Younis & Bataineh, 2016; Bataineh, Al-Hamad, & Al-Jamal, 2018; Bataineh, & Obeiah, 2016; Bataineh & Salah, 2017; Obeiah & Bataineh, 2015).

Writing, like other language skills, is communicative albeit essentially a solitary time- and effort-consuming activity, which may be the reason for its lack of classroom appeal to teachers and learners alike. However, for the writing process to take place, three sets of processes have to be at play: *expressive skills* to enable fluent text production, *receptive skills* to support self-monitoring and revision, and *reflective skills* to support strategic planning and evaluation (Deane, 2010, p.7).

Deane, Odendahl, Quinlan, Fowles, Welsh, and Bivens-Tatum (2008) view writing as an integrated, socially situated skill comprising three distinct strands: *literacy and language skills, strategic writing process management,* and *critical thinking and reasoning. Literacy and language skills* is concerned with the use of vocabulary and written style, control of sentence structure, mechanics and spelling whereas *strategic writing process management* comprises planning, producing, and evaluating the written piece (e.g., generating content, devising an organizational plan, managing the drafting process). *Critical thinking and reasoning* concerns the underlying reasoning abilities that help the writer produce a viable written piece. However, like many all over the world, Jordanian EFL teachers are generally more concerned with teaching structure and mechanics (e.g., Abu Jaleel, 2001; Al-Damiree & Bataineh, 2016; Bani Younis, 1997; Bataineh & Mayyas, 2017) than with teaching writing (e.g., Al-Quran, 2002; Al-Sharah, 1988; Bataineh, 1993) which involves prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing (Ur, 1996; Zamel, 1985).

Nevertheless, EFL teachers are becoming more aware of the importance of writing and more interested in how to support students in learning how to write. Service-learning is an approach which lends itself beautifully to this end. It involves teaching that links community-based service with academic objectives through critical reflection (Albert, Gardner, Hollander, & Zlotkowski, 2000). Service-learning aims to allow learners to experientially learn subject matter while simultaneously beginning to question the status quo of society, work towards social change, and choose to engage in voluntary service for a lifetime (Fernandez-Balboa, 1998; Swick, 2001). Service-learning is a strategy believed to help espouse leadership and social responsibility, to prepare learners for a fast-changing economy, and to renew dedication to learning, both civically and experientially (Boyer, 1990).

Research out of the United States has reported superior outcomes brought about by specific service-learning program design characteristics (e.g., Billig, 2000; Billig, 2009; Furco & Root, 2010; Melchior, 1999; Perry, 1997). The characteristics found to be most highly informative of outcomes were reflected into the K-12 Standards for Quality Practice (National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC), 2008). Similarly, Fredericks (2012) reported that high school students in high-quality service-learning programs experienced notably advanced outcomes in terms of academic engagement, civic engagement, workforce readiness, and learning of civic skills than their counterparts in low-quality programs.

Similarly, Northup's (2011) evaluation of Schools of Success reported statistically significant gains in learners' academic and community engagement. Billig, Northup, and Jaramillo (2012) also reported that engaging students in service-learning has a small but significant effect on their development of social responsibility, academic engagement, and interest in careers related to service-learning projects. Similarly, Billig (2017), who examined self-perceived service-learning outcomes of International Baccalaureate students in Canada, the United States, and Central and South America, reported strong effect sizes for meaningfulness, links to the curriculum, student voice, and frequency and depth of reflection.

A review of related literature has revealed that service-learning programs potentially provide students with meaningful experiences, voice in selecting service activities, and opportunities for reflection. The review has also revealed a dearth of local and regional research on the potential utility of service-learning-based training in the foreign language classroom. To the best of these researchers' knowledge, this research may be the first in Jordan to examine the effect of service-learning-based training on EFL teachers' writing performance. Thus, this review is limited to research which seems to provide evidence that service-learning training significantly contributes to improved EFL teachers' writing performance.

Service-learning is a course-based educational experience in which learners participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity to gain further understanding of the course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995). Service-learning in the EFL context serves to fulfill the language-learning needs, as it helps overcome many of the problems faced as teachers and learners. Implementing service-learning in the EFL context allows teachers opportunities to better serve both their students and their community.

Service-learning is based upon a number of pedagogical approaches including experiential learning, transformation (or social constructivist) theory, comprehensive multicultural

educational theory, critical reflection theory, and education as preparation for civic responsibility (Anderson & Guest, 1995; Erickson & Anderson, 1997). Transformation theory concentrates on personal and social change. Service-learning involves learners in critical inspection of their own lives and of the society around them. The multicultural education approach focuses on human relations, among other things. Service-learning provides teachers with the awareness and abilities to affect change in their own lives and in their societies (Anderson & Guest, 1995).

Integrating service-learning projects in teacher education may encourage pre-service teachers to incorporate service-learning in their future instruction (Anderson & Pickeral, 1998; Wade & Yarborough, 1997). Anderson and Pickeral (1998) concluded that the challenges that may contribute to the difficulty of integrating service-learning into the curriculum relate to lack of time for teacher educators to plan and implement service-learning, overcrowded curriculum, and lack of alignment of service-learning with faculty roles, rewards, and institutional priorities.

A plethora of research reports that service-learning has been integrated into training programs (e.g., Oliver, 1997; Robinson & Barnett, 1996; Sagaria & Burrows, 1995; Stanton, 1994; Ward, 2000). However, the researchers could not locate any empirical research on service-learning training. Nonetheless, there seems to be a consensus among scholars that service-learning combines service and learning objectives to affect change in both the apprentices and the trainer of the service and, thus, espouse service tasks with structured opportunities which promote self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition of values, skills, and content knowledge.

2. Problem and Purpose, and Significance of the Study

Learning to write is difficult for most EFL learners. In the Jordanian EFL classroom, writing instruction is essentially traditional, which has been acknowledged as the major cause for poor student achievement (e.g., Al-Quran, 2002; Al-Sharah, 1988; Bataineh, 1993). As the concept of service-learning is new to Jordanian teachers, rigorous training is needed for them to use it for professional development and, eventually, for improving their instructional practices in the EFL classroom.

This study examines the potential effect of service-learning training on Jordanian twelfth-grade EFL teachers' writing performance. More specifically, it attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Are there any statistically significant differences (at $\alpha=0.05$) in Jordanian twelfth-grade teachers' overall writing performance which can be attributed to the training modality (conventional vs. service learning)?

2. Does service-learning training have any effect on Jordanian twelfth-grade teachers' attitudes towards writing?

The review of the relevant literature on service-learning has revealed no research on the use of service-learning training in the language classroom in general and the EFL classroom in particular. Thus, this research may very well be the first to examine service-learning training and its potential effect on EFL teacher's writing performance. This research is intended to inform EFL teachers who are constantly seeking alternatives for improving their instructional practices towards more effective teaching and learning of writing. The findings of the study may also inform curriculum designers and policymakers about the potential utility of service-learning training in catalyzing writing instruction in Jordan.

3. Method and Procedures

The participants are 38 Jordanian twelfth-grade teachers of English randomly drawn from the public schools in the North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Education, Jordan. A quasi-experimental design was used, as the participants were randomly assigned into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group (n=18) was trained through service-learning while the control group (n=20) received regular content- and pedagogy-related training per the guidelines put forth by the MoE. The independent variable of the research is service-learning training whereas the dependent variable is the participants' writing performance.

To achieve the purpose of the study, the data were collected by means of a questionnaire to gauge the participants' self-reported experiences with service-learning, a pre-test to assess the participants' writing before the treatment, and a post-test to assess the participants' writing after the treatment. The validity of the three instruments was established by an expert jury of Jordanian university professors in education, measurement and evaluation, and curriculum and instruction whose recommendations were all reflected in the final versions of the instruments.

To ensure the reliability of the pre-test, it was piloted on a group of 15 twelfth-grade EFL teachers from the North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Education. Three weeks later, the same group of teachers sat for the same test. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.84, which is deemed appropriate for the purposes of this research. Similarly, the reliability of the post-test was established through piloting it on a group of 17 twelfth-grade EFL teachers from the North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Education, which was later excluded from the main sample.

Three weeks later, the same group of teachers took the same test. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.89, which is appropriate for the purposes of this study.

The participants' essays were assessed by the first researcher and another EFL instructor from the Department of English at Al-Albayt University, Jordan, using an adapted version of Wang and Laio's (2008) scoring rubric (Appendix 1), along the aspects of *focus, development, organization, conventions,* and *word choice*. The second rater was trained on using the rubric prior to scoring the participants' essays. To establish inter-rater reliability, the two raters scored 15 of the participants' pre- and post-test essays using the rubric. The reliability coefficient amounted to 0.82, which was deemed appropriate for the purposes of the research. Similarly, the two raters were asked to evaluate the same sample of pre-test essays using the same scoring rubric. The intra-rater reliability was found to be 0.89 for the first rater and 0.86 for the second rater, which was also deemed appropriate for the purposes of the research.

3.1. Training the Experimental Group

The training spanned five eight-hour modules on Saturdays in October and November 2019. Before commencing the training, the trainer/first researcher sent an outline of the treatment to the participants by email. Table 1 shows the procedures of training the experimental group.

Table 1: Procedures of training the experimental group

DAY ONE
1. Self-introductions were exchanged to build rapport, after which the trainer/first researcher welcomed the participants and explained the rationale for the training and initiated an overview and brainstorming about service-learning.
2. An article about service-learning (Minor, 2001) was assigned for individual reading and subsequent discussion in groups of four or five participants.
3. The groups, each represented by a spokesperson, discussed service-learning and its utility for teachers and students.
4. The groups discussed process writing and, in light of the article they read and discussed in the first activity (i.e., Minor, 2001), how to best utilize it for improving writing. The trainer/first researcher then distributed the first service-learning lesson plan (Appendix 2, Plan 1), and announced that a visit to Alsalihyah, a nearby village, had been organized to execute the first service-learning activity which involved planting trees and interviewing the locals about the environment.
5. In preparation for Day 2, the participants were asked to read and summarize self-located research on service-learning to discuss during the first session.

DAY TWO
1. The participants' summaries were collected, discussed, and then kept in portfolios. The participants were also encouraged to keep journals for reflection.
2. The trainer/first researcher had previously arranged with the North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Agriculture for the provision of 50 pine tree seedlings and with the Municipality of Alsalihyah and Nayfeh for logistic support. He then distributed the

	seedlings and needed tools (e.g., shovels) to the participants who, in groups of four or five, chose different locations to plant their trees.
	3. The groups were asked to videotape the activity using their smart phones and to interview locals to explain the importance of trees for the environment.
DAY THREE	
	1. The trainer/first researcher distributed the first ongoing reflection worksheet (Appendix 3) and collected the videotapes which were then viewed as the participants took notes to use in writing an essay about cultivation (using the steps of process writing).
	2. The participants then exchanged essays for peer feedback/editing. The trainer/first researcher collected the essays, assessed them, and returned them to the participants each with feedback. The essays were then recollected and added to the portfolios.
	3. Towards the end of Day 3, the trainer/first researcher distributed the second service-learning lesson plan (Appendix 2, Plan 2), in preparation for the session the following Saturday.
DAY FOUR	
	1. The trainer/first researcher divided the participants into groups of four or five to carry out their second service-learning activity. He reiterated how important their reflections on their learning were, checked their journals, and engaged them in a discussion of issues of interest from these journals.
	2. The trainer/first researcher had previously arranged with the manager of Umm el-Jimal Paper-Recycling Factory to speak to the participants about recycling and with the Municipality of Umm el-Jimal to provide logistic support.
	3. The participants were divided into groups of four or five and were each given trash bags to collect paper waste from locations all over town. Just as they did in the first service-learning activity, the participants videotaped their work using their smart phones and conducted several interviews with locals about pollution and recycling.
	4. The trainer/first researcher participated in the service-learning activity, as he helped the participants collect paper waste and load it onto a truck to be taken to Umm el-Jimal Paper-Recycling Factory.
	5. The participants then visited the factory to see how the paper they collected was recycled and to listen to a presentation by the manager about recycling.
	6. The day concluded with plans to meet the following Saturday to discuss what they have learned throughout the day and to write an essay about recycling.
DAY FIVE	
	1. In the first and second activities of the fifth and final day, the participants filled the second ongoing reflection worksheet and turned in their videotapes of which some were viewed, and notes were taken to use in writing a 1000-word essay about recycling (using the steps of process writing).
	2. Essays were then exchanged for peer feedback/editing.
	3. Towards the end of Day 5, the questionnaire was distributed, filled, and collected.
	4. The training concluded with a certificate-award ceremony under the patronage of H.E. Director General of the North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Education.

3.2. Training the Control Group

The control group received conventional content- and pedagogy-related training per the guidelines put forth by the MoE. In each unit, participants were taught how to go about writing a particular type of essay. There were three writing tasks per unit, during which a discussion was held to clarify or demonstrate the essay type. The participants were allowed the opportunity to actively engage in the materials to better initiate, develop, and edit the essay during each

writing task. The trainer monitored and facilitated the writing tasks, helping where needed and making sure participants have had a chance to edit their work before he made any corrections. He encouraged the participants to display their work on the classroom walls, making use of 'writing strategy' boxes, each promoting an aspect of writing (e.g., *consequence, transition, linking words*), to facilitate each writing task.

4. Findings of the Study

To answer the first research question, which addresses potential statistically significant differences (at α=0.05) in the participants' overall writing performance which can be attributed to training, the researchers administered timed writing pre- and post-tests. The means and standard deviations of the participants' scores on these tests were calculated, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the participants' pre-/post-test performance per training

Group	n	Pre-Mean	SD	Post-Mean	SD	Adjusted Mean	Standard Error
Control	20	6.55	2.21	8.35	1.92	5.53	0.70
Experimental	18	2.50	2.64	6.94	6.16	10.07	0.75

Table 2 shows the mean scores, standard deviations, and adjusted mean scores of the overall writing performance of the participants in the service-learning group and the control group on the pre-/post-tests. Table 2 shows observed differences in the adjusted mean scores of the participants, in favor of those in the service-learning group. For better interpretation of these findings, ANCOVA was used to analyze the participants' scores, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: ANCOVA of the participants' overall performance on the post-test per training

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Overall Pre-	456.38	1	456.38	61.17	0.00*	0.63
Way	112.77	1	112.77	15.11	0.00*	
Error	261.10	35	7.46			
Corrected Total	736.21	37				

n=38   *significant at α=0.05

Table 3 shows a statistically significant difference in the participants' overall writing performance on the post-test (F=15.11, df=37, 1 P=0.00) which suggests that the participants' overall writing performance in the service-learning group was better than that of their counterpart in the control group. Significant statistical differences were also found in the

participants' performance on the sub-skills of *focus*, *conventions, word choice, organization,* and *development,* in favor of the service-learning group.

To answer the second research question, which seeks to identify any potential effect of the service-learning training on the participants' attitudes towards writing, means and standard deviations of their responses to the items of the questionnaire were calculated, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Means and standard deviations of the participants' responses to the questionnaire

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
14	The service-learning training promotes knowledge and skill acquisition, which fosters leadership and decision-making.	3.91	0.80
24	Participants in service-learning training can communicate evidence of progress and goal-attainment with the community (e.g., policymakers, educational leaders) to promote understanding and sustainability.	3.91	0.80
1	Service-learning training has clearly articulated learning goals.	3.76	0.71
4	Service-learning training is appropriate to participants' age and abilities.	3.67	1.05
13	The activities of the service-learning training are practical and easy to implement.	3.64	0.93
23	The modelling of the service-learning is clear and helps trainees understand and implement service-learning.	3.64	0.93
16	Service-learning training enables participants to actively understand and value diverse perspectives of service providers.	3.55	0.97
18	The reflection section of the service-learning training allows participants shared understanding of the assets and needs of the school and community.	3.55	0.87
19	Service-learning training encompasses verbal, kinesthetic, and aesthetic activities to affect change in the participants' knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes.	3.55	0.87
3	Service-learning training helps participants transfer knowledge and skills from one context to another.	3.52	1.06
17	Service-learning training promotes the acquisition of shared vision and goals to address community needs.	3.52	1.06
7	Service-learning training enables participants to frame their service experiences in the context of relevant societal issues.	3.48	0.65
6	Service-learning training provides participants with engaging service activities.	3.45	1.06
11	Service-learning training involves trainees in creating a conducive environment for free expression, trust and exchange of ideas.	3.42	1.03
5	Service-learning training addresses issues that are personally relevant to the participants.	3.39	1.09
10	Service-learning training involves trainees in decision-making throughout the service-learning experience.	3.39	0.86
21	Service-learning training yields attainable outcomes which are valued by those being served.	3.39	0.97
15	Service-learning training helps participants identify and understand multiple perspectives.	3.37	0.48

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
25	The structure of the current service-learning training is clear and easy to implement.	3.37	0.48
12	The activities of the current service-learning training are meaningful and relevant.	3.36	1.17
22	The requisite knowledge for the service-learning training is readily attainable.	3.36	1.17
9	Service-learning training engages participants in generating ideas during planning, implementation, and evaluation.	3.24	1.00
20	Participants in service-learning training collect evidence of progress towards meeting specific service outcomes from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.	3.18	1.01
2	The current service-learning training is aligned with the curriculum.	3.12	1.24
8	The objectives of the current service-learning training are well-articulated and easily replicated.	2.64	1.25
Overall		3.51	0.32

Table 4 shows that the means of the participants' responses range between 2.64 and 3.91, with an overall mean score of 3.51 which indicates a moderate level of agreement amongst participants that service-learning training positively affects teachers' attitudes towards writing.

5. Discussion of the Findings

The findings revealed that the service-learning group participants' writing performance, both overall and on the sub-skills of *focus*, *conventions, word choice, organization,* and *development*, was superior to that of their counterpart in the control group. One potential reason for the superiority of the experimental group was the meticulous design and implementation of the service-learning training. At the onset of training, the participants reported not being familiar with service-learning, but, as the treatment progressed, their familiarity and reported comfort with the procedure catalyzed both their knowledge of and attitudes towards writing. Many reported how they personally experienced the utility of service-learning training in their teaching and learning alike.

Service-learning training seems to have promoted the participants' interaction and transformed them from passive reception of knowledge to active engagement and ownership of their learning. The interaction among the participants seems to have raised their awareness and allowed them different perspectives into writing their essays. In their collaborative writing activities, each participant was responsible for his own part of the essay in an atmosphere of collaboration and collective dedication, as they served as scaffolds for one another both in process and product.

During the training, the participants were afforded a conducive environment for both individual and collaborative learning. Incorporating service-learning training in writing

instruction seems to have not only developed the participants' writing-related knowledge and skills but also raised their awareness of authentic venues of self-expression, as they engaged in and developed effective writing routines and realized that writing is a personal endeavor which different people do differently.

Unlike in the mainstream trainer-centered and essentially lecture-styled training offered to the control group by the MoE, group-work was a salient feature of service-learning training. As they collaborated in groups, the participants reportedly realized the more efficient, yet less taxing, nature of the task compared to writing individually.

The participants were keen on sharing ideas and working collaboratively (rather than competitively), which may have catalyzed their performance relative to that of the control group. The service-learning participants were allowed opportunities to share their ideas with other members of the group who alternated in serving as writers and editors for one another. On the other hand, the participants of the control group were asked to write individually, as is the case in all MoE training.

The amalgamation of the trainer/first researcher's feedback and that of peers not only doubled the amount of feedback received by the participants but also allowed them to practice a range of skills important in the development of language and writing proficiency. The meaningful interaction with peers further allowed the participants greater exposure to ideas and perspectives on the writing process, which was instrumental to their progress over the course of treatment.

Peer involvement may also have created opportunities for improved interaction and assessment. Peer assessment has been integrated into the training, as peers responded to, edited, and helped with the revision of other participants' essays (Cheng & Warren, 2005). Peer review sessions may have been instrumental for teaching important writing skills, such as *audience awareness, generating ideas,* and *sensitivity to perspectives other than one's own* (Paulus, 1999).

The service-learning group benefited from peer feedback, which also helped the participants focus on task, develop critical skills, and engage in formative self- and peer assessment. The participants worked both individually and collaboratively on their essays to make them better suited for the intended audience. Immediate feedback was exchanged and essays honed and made more informative, as questions were addressed and multiple interpretations discussed.

Furthermore, the analysis of the participants' responses to the questionnaire showed a moderate level of agreement that service-learning training positively affects teachers' attitudes

towards writing. The participants' responses seem to suggest that the treatment comprised a well-matched mixture of service-learning training and teacher education. As they engaged in community services, the participants began to declare how pleasantly surprised they were by the potential of service-learning training for their individual and professional development.

With each phase of the service-learning training, the participants demonstrated learning more about writing. However, considering the gain brought about by service-learning training, one may conclude that incorporating service-learning training in in-service training programs requires meticulous planning and perseverance on the part of stakeholders and teachers alike.

Through their reflections, the participants reported that service-learning does not necessarily succeed by imitating models or pre-designed outcomes but rather by working for the good of all. The participants also reported that service-learning training not only improved their attitudes towards writing but also fostered their growth and reflection in authentic learning contexts.

6. Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

Even though the researchers do not seek to generalize the findings of the research, which is seen as more exploratory than definitive, several considerations may limit their generalizability. The treatment targeted only a sample of 38 twelfth-grade teachers of English from the public schools of the North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Education over a period of five weeks. A larger sample and longer duration may have provided more conclusive data. The location of the treatment itself, North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Education, may have limited the generalizability of the findings. A remote area for non-residents, no volunteers were found to train the experimental group that the first researcher could not but train the teachers himself. However, the fact that the control group received mainstream training by the MoE negates any treatment bias for either group. Furthermore, the sessions of the treatment were video-taped to facilitate reflection and later discussions. However, due to the conservative nature of the community, the participants asked that the tapes be erased immediately after the training. Even though nothing has escaped documentation, the researchers would have felt more confident with the evidence those videotapes would have provided.

In light of the findings of the research, which is most likely the first of its kind in Jordan, further research is recommended on the utility of service-learning training, probably on a larger sample and for a longer duration. Service-learning seems to lend itself readily to social studies and other related disciplines, which may constitute fertile ground for confirmatory research and more readily generalizable findings. A mixed-method design in which quantitative and

qualitative instruments (e.g., observation, interview, focus group) may add significantly to the tentative contribution of the current research.

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Appendix 1

The Writing Scoring Rubric

Adapted from Wang and Laio (2008)

Criteria	Descriptors	Score
Focus	a. Failure to address the writing task	**0**
	b. Inadequately addressing the writing task	**1**
	c. Having problems in addressing the writing task	**2**
	d. Addressing the writing task adequately but sometimes straying from the task	**3**
	e. Addressing the writing task but with frequent errors	**4**
	f. Precisely addressing the writing task	**5**
Development	a. Using irrelevant details to support topic or illustrate ideas	**0**
	b. Using few details to support topic or illustrate ideas	**1**
	c. Using fair details to illustrate ideas	**2**
	d. Limited development of topic and use of inappropriate details to illustrate ideas	**3**
	e. Using appropriate details to support topics or illustrate ideas	**4**
	f. Using specific appropriate details to support topic or illustrate ideas	**5**
Organization	a. Illogical and unclear flow of ideas	**0**
	b. Lack of acceptable topic, evidence, logical order, or introductory, supporting and concluding paragraphs	**1**
	c. Poor statement of topic, poor evidence of logical order, and limited supporting paragraphs	**2**
	d. Reasonable amount of development with little details to support topic	**3**
	e. generally clear and connected logical flow	**4**
	f. Clear progression of ideas and use of specific details	**5**
Conventions	a. Serious and consistent errors in punctuation, grammar, capitalization and spelling	**0**
	b. Inappropriate conventions with obvious errors	**1**
	c. Frequent errors impeding readability	**2**
	d. Errors not impeding readability	**3**
	e. Fair conventions with minor errors	**4**
	f. Perfect or near perfect conventions	**5**
Word Choice	a. Containing severe errors	**0**

	b. Inappropriate, incorrect, unclear and distracting inconsistencies	**1**
	c. Vague, redundant use of words with frequent errors	**2**
	d. Occasional errors of word choice but meaning not obscured	**3**
	e. Almost effective word choice	**4**
	f. Effective word choice	**5**
Total		**25**

Appendix 2

Sample Service-Learning Lesson Plans

(1)

Trainer: (withheld)

Materials: Axes, shovels, forest tree seedlings, truck, bus, water tank

Participants: Eighteen twelfth-grade teachers of English

Objectives:

1. to plant forest trees in the village of Alsalihyah
2. to foster the trainees' academic and cognitive development
3. to value helping others, working as a team, and taking social responsibility
4. to develop the trainees' writing skills

Pre-lesson Reading: Minor, J.M. (2001). Using Service-Learning as Part of an ESL Program. *The Internet TESL Journal, VII*(4). Retrieved 29 November 2018 from http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Minor-ServiceLearning.html.

Funding: The trainer raised a small fund from an NGO to cover amenities, and the Municipality of Alsalihyah and Nayfeh provided a water tank and a place for lunch.

Transportation: The North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Education provided a bus and a truck.

Procedures:

1. The trainer pre-arranged with concerned entities to make sure that everything was set up to start the activity.
2. The trainer officially contacted North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Agriculture to supply the workshop with 50 forest tree seedlings.
3. The trainer got the approval and facilitation of the Municipality of Alsalihyah and Nayfeh to implement the service-learning activity.
4. The trainer divided the participants into groups of five.
5. The trainer and trainees rode the bus to the village of Alsalihyah.
6. Axes, shovels, and seedlings were distributed to the groups.
7. The trainees chose the locations to plant their trees.
8. Each group videotaped their activity with their smart phones.
9. Each group interviewed some locals and exchanged information about desertification.
10. The trainer supervised and participated in planting the trees.
11. All had lunch after the service-learning activity.
12. The trainer thanked the trainees and briefed them about the next meeting during which they will discuss what they have learned and write an essay about desertification.

(2)

Trainer: (withheld)

Materials: Waste bags, truck, bus

Participants: Eighteen twelfth-grade teachers of English

Objectives:

1. to collect paper waste in the village of Umm el-Jimal
2. to foster the trainees academic and cognitive development
3. to value helping others, working as a team, and taking social responsibility
4. to develop the trainees' writing skills

Funding: The trainer raised a small fund from an NGO to cover amenities, and the Municipality of Umm el-Jimal provided a place for lunch.

Transportation: The North-Eastern Badia Directorate of Education provided a bus and a truck.

Procedures:

1. The trainer pre-arranged with concerned entities to make sure that everything was set up to start the activity.
2. The trainer officially contacted Umm el-Jimal Recycling Factory to get someone to brief the trainees about the process of recycling.
3. The trainer got the approval and facilitation of the Municipality of Umm el-Jimal to implement the service-learning activity.
4. The participants were divided into groups of five.
5. The trainer and trainees rode the bus to Umm el-Jimal.
6. The trainees were reminded to write their own journals to keep record and reflect upon their learning experiences.
7. Waste bags were distributed to the groups.
8. The trainees collected paper wastes from different locations.
9. Each group videotaped their activity with their smart phones.
10. Each group interviewed some locals and exchanged information about pollution.
11. The trainer supervised and participated in collecting paper waste.
12. All had lunch after the service-learning activity.
13. The trainer thanked the trainees and briefed them about the next meeting during which they will discuss what they have learned and write an essay about recycling.

Appendix 3

Ongoing Reflection Worksheet

1. What did you do for your service-learning project?
2. How did you feel about participating in a service-learning project?
3. What is the best thing that happened to you during your service-learning experience? Was it something someone said or did or a special feeling you had?
4. What did you learn?
5. Did it help you to think about how you can help your community?
6. Have you shared your service-learning experience with your family? If yes, how did that feel?
7. Did you get along with the other trainees?
8. Did anyone thank you or give you a compliment? How did that make you feel?
9. Would you like to do the project again? Why (not)?
10. Would you do anything different to make the project better?
11. What did you learn about other people?
12. Do you think it is important to work with other people? Why?
13. How did participating in a service-learning project help you with your schoolwork?
14. Do you think other teachers should participate in a service-learning project? Why?