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Prompting Brainstorming to Improve the Students' Writing Skills: The Study Case of Third Year Literary StreamPupils at Mohamed Belkheir Secondary School-ElBayadh

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I

Dedications

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Abstract

Writing is considered to be the foundation of instruction in all phases of language acquisition and learning. However, it is the most difficult task that most EFL learners face. This research study aims to show how the writing skills can be improved with the help of the brainstorming strategy among secondary school learners while writing in English. In order to collect data and test the hypotheses, the researcher designed two data collection instruments: a questionnaire and an interview.

The questionnaire was addressed to third year pupils at Belkheir secondary school (FL class) – El Bayadh. It was designed in English and translated into Arabic, due to the pupils' low proficiency in the English language. The interview was done with two English teachers from the same secondary school.

The results showed that brainstorming aids pupils to be aware of their mistakes. Answering questions and solving activities start to become easier when they think right either individually or in groups. Therefore, teachers are invited to apply brainstorming in their classes so as to help their learners to improve their writing abilities.

Key words:
Writing - language acquisition - writing skills - brainstorming - questionnaire - interview

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C.B.A: Competency Based Approach

E.F.L: English as a Foreign Language

E.L.T: English Language Teaching

FL: Foreign Languages

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General Introduction

The teaching and learning of EFL has become a vital part in the Algerian educational context because of the necessity of this language which is increasingly recognised. In fact, learning English requires the mastery of the four skills; namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Writing is one of the four skills that students should learn and focus on. It is considered as a basic and a necessary skill for language acquisition because of its positive effect on grammar knowledge, spelling as well as reading. It is a means of language acquisition and learning. However, writing in a foreign language is regarded as one of the most challenging and difficult tasks that most EFL learners face due to the complexity of this skill. Most students suffer from their failure in the achievement of writing;which is a skill that is critical in the educational success. For, without adequate writing students may fail in many subjects' areas. That is to say, it is more important for learners to have not only the ability to read and understand, but also the ability to know how to write any word. EFL learners often face some difficulties which require the use of brainstorming to improve their skills. Brainstorming can be used either in groups, pairs, or individual works.

In this respect, the research questions to be raised are:

What are the difficulties and problems that EFL learners often face while writing in English language?

What are the main causes behind these difficulties?

What are the effective strategies that must be used to improve the writing skills ?

Is Brainstorming an effective strategy that students should use?

The hypotheses that are formulated for these research questions are:

EFL learners often fail in the achievement of writing in the English language because of unfamiliar vocabulary and ambiguous words and sentences.

Different factors may lead to these writing problems such as students' poor vocabulary and the lack of reading habit in the English language.

The selection of texts that are appropriate to students' levels may be an important factor in the performance of writing tasks.

Brainstorming may have a great influence on learners' writing achievement.

This research study deals with EFL learners writing skills and how to improve them through the aid of brainstorming strategies. In order to collect data and test the hypotheses, a questionnaire was designed for third year secondary school learners literary stream, FL Class. An interview was also done with two secondary school English teachers. Both learners and teachers are from Mohamed Belkheir Secondary School.

This research paper is divided into three main sections: the introductory section, which is Research Methodology. It introduces the ELT situation in Algeria, mainly in the secondary school by stating some teaching objectives. Then, it presents the methodology that is used to conduct this research.

The second section is based on a theoretical overview of the writing skill. It is devoted to literature review: which sheds some light on reading definitions, the writing skill, and brainstorming. Finally, the last section: it involves the data analysis, interpretation and recommendations.

Chapter One: Description of the ELT Context and Methodology

Chapter One: **Description of The ELT Context and Methodology**

1.1 Introduction

English has a special status as an international language in the educational system. In Algeria, it is the second FL after French. Recently, there is a plan to make it the first foreign language after Arabic. This section will give a brief overview of the teaching of English in Algeria.

First, it introduces the status of English language teaching and learning in the Algerian context, particularly in secondary schools, by stating some objectives. Then, it identifies the methodology used by the researcher to represent the research tools and the population of this research study.

1.2 The Status of English in the Algerian Educational System

Nowadays, it is very important to learn Foreign Languages. English is a universal language which transforms the world into a small place. It's the language of Media (TV, Radio, Internet, Social Media..). Billions of persons over the world speak English; besides, it is used for Universal Business Communications, Diplomacy, Technologies, News (Tiersky and Tiersky, 2001)

English Language Teaching (ELT) becomes an important part of the Global Education. In Algeria; the Ministry of Education praises its increasing importance at both levels, nationally and internationally.

Additionally; the Educational Reform runned in 2001 dealt with the situation of teaching it as a second foreign language (ESL) after French. It is taught obligatory and following the Competency Based Approach, in a period of seven years (four years in the Middle School and three in the Secondary School). Algerian pupils study English as an academic subject at schools.

In the introduction of the second year's English Syllabus presented by the Ministry Education (2006), it is stated that:

"The aim of teaching English is to help our society to get harmoniously integrated in modernity through a fully complete participation within a community of people who use English in all types of interactions.

This participation should be based on sharing and exchanging ideas as well as experiences being scientific, cultural, or civilizational – this participation will help for better understanding for oneself and the other" (Malki, 2017, p.28)

This emphasises the importance of teaching and learning English for a better educational and intellectual future since it is spoken in all over the world. Besides, it is a big benefit to have an English tongue in communicating and sharing ideas in any field and to open the mind on a global culture to have more opportunities in the near or the far future.

1.2.1 Teaching English in the Algerian Secondary Schools

Within the introduction to the English Secondary School syllabus approved by the Ministry of Education (2006), it is clear that the conception of language learning that consists merely of acquisition items is extended to include methodological and cultural objectives.

The teaching is also intended to help learning promote self-learning and critical thoughts and promote learners' intellectual capacities on analysing, evaluating, and synthesising.

It enables learners to exploit English documents, in view situation at work and encourages them to accept other cultures to initiate the spirit of tolerance.

To sum up, the teaching of English at the Algerian secondary schools is not only concerned with general aims of teaching, but also with universal, human and national values.

Students are expected to learn how to represent their country and its cultural values in elements of modernity and globalisation.

1.2.2 General Importance of EFL Teaching

Nowadays, English is taught for different purposes. It is not only concerned with schools, people can learn it for their studies, to read books, journals, watch movies and series; or for daily contact with others.

This shows the importance of acquiring and educating English. Yet, the aim of teaching and learning English is the ability of sharing points of view and exchanging ideas with others.

Chapter One: Description of The ELT Context and Methodology

English learners are taking steps to the future. Teaching English aims to increase students' development of their skills. Though, Yadav (2006) claimed that: " ..it is the main bridge between economic growth and opportunities for the human development"   p.188

Accordingly, the English language plays a big role since it is important in the majority of societies. When people are looking for a job in some international organizations, they have to possess an English Luggage.

When it comes to travelling and friendships, Michael Cronin (2000) stated that: " The traveller may decide that ethically the only appropriate form of travel is to travel in countries where they know the language" p.76

So, the most important thing to do when people decide to travel; is to know the language. If the language is English, they have to know English well enough.

In addition, Anne F et al., (1994) declared that: "Many welcome the opportunity to live with people from all over the world and like the more western ambiance enclaves" p.86.

English as a foreign language helps learners to travel and to make new relationships with people from the target language.
It provides some facilities and opens the minds to the world in order to discover other cultures.

1.2.3 Objectives of Teaching EFL in Secondary Schools

The objectives of teaching English as a foreign language at secondary schools are considered to be part of general goals which have been in accordance with the principles set forward in the Educational Reform (2001), and which subscribes to a Competency Based Approach (CBA) to teaching English as a foreign language.

Therefore, the secondary school syllabus is intended to develop learners' acquired competences and it sets communication as an ultimate goal of teaching English.

Actually, teaching English to secondary school students turns around three main objectives:

<u>Chapter One:</u>   Description of The ELT Context and Methodology

1.2.3.1   Linguistic Objectives

To provide the learner with basic linguistic material (Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation and the four language skills) that are necessary to pursue further education or employment.

1.2.3.2   Methodology Objectives

Teaching English helps to consolidate and develop learning strategies aiming at autonomy, critical and self-assessment. It also enables students to use and exploit various documents and feel interests in subjects treated in class.

1.2.3.3   Socio-cultural Objectives

The English language is used as bridge between people from different cultures.

1.2.3.4   Historical Objective

English is used to ensure interdisciplinary coherence as an attempt to integrate the overall information acquired by the learner. That is why Algerian learners consider English as an additional and different language from their mother tongue which is Arabic (L1).

1.2.4 Teaching Writing Skills

Hedge (2005) said: "In school we write… not to anyone…we just give information. Not to someone… we just write information down on paper" p.20.

What he wanted to say is that writing is considered as a way of transforming ideas into written symbols. In (2001), Brown said that Writing is to represent what is sad in a form of symbols. Then he said it is as the difference of walking from swimming. (p.335).

Above this, Writing can be a kind of test and a challenge to the power of thinking, language capacities, and especially the memory to remember some subjects and any information registered (Kellogg, 2001). So, it is based on thinking in any topic. (Nickerson, Perkins, and Smith, 1985).

Chapter One: Description of The ELT Context and Methodology

Until now and because of the several efforts done to form thoughts and ideas, Writing has always been the hardest activity to be done because it is a productive skill that leads learners to produce and create new thoughts.

1.2.5 The importance of Writing

According to Meek (1988:21): "..the most important single lesson the children learn from texts is the nature and variety of written discourses, the different ways that language lets a writer tell, and the many different ways a reader read". It means that to know the exact meaning of a language is very necessary for learners and also writing is that important, and not only at Schools.

While Walsh (2010:01) stated that:

"Writing is important because it is used extensively in higher education and in the workplace. If students do not know how to express themselves in writing, they will not be able to communicate well with professors, employers, peers, or just about anyone else. Much of professional communication is done in writing:

 proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, e-mails, and more are part of the daily life of a college student or successful graduate."

This puts a light on the importance of writing for learners since it helps them to exchange and express what goes in their minds in a form of words.

But, it is not only necessary in the process of learning, it is valuable in the long term while working, doing research or higher studies, and even in daily lives.

Suleiman (2000:155); when talking about writing, asserts that: "Writing is a central element of language, any reading and language arts program must consider the multidimensional nature of writing in instructional practices, assessment procedures, and language development".

He wanted to say that writing importance has passed the stage of a communication arriving to an essential key that opens the doors of learning, expressing ideas and views. It covers many fields.

Chapter One: Description of The ELT Context and Methodology

1.3 Research Methodology

This section deals with the different aspects of the methodology, taking into account the statement of the problem, the study population and the instrumentation that is used to collect data and obtain results.

1.3.1 Statement of The Problem

Writing is a fundamental skill that students need to acquire and develop their language proficiency. However, many EFL learners suffer from their weaknesses in the writing achievement.

This research paper is mainly concerned with problems and the difficulties that confront EFL learners at secondary school, while writing in the English language and how to improve their writing.

1.3.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

1.3.2.1 Questions:

- What are the difficulties and problems that EFL learners often face while writing in English language?
- What are the main causes behind these difficulties?
- What are the effective strategies that must be used to perform the writing skills ?
- Is Brainstorming an effective strategy students should use?

1.3.2.2 Hypotheses:

- EFL learners often fail in the achievement of writing in the English language and this may be because of unfamiliar vocabulary and ambiguous words and sentences.
- Different factors may lead to these writing problems such as students' poor vocabulary and the lack of reading habit in the English language.
- The selection of texts that are appropriate to students' levels is an important factor in the performance of writing tasks.
- Brainstorming may have a great influence on learners' writing achievement.

1.3.3 Purpose of The Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the efficiency of brainstorming and its significance and how it helps pupils to improve their writing skills. To accomplish this aim, the researcher conducts the study with third year pupils, literary stream at Mohammed Belkhir Secondary School in El Bayadh.

1.4 Research Tools

1.4.1 Questionnaire

In order to achieve this study effectively, the most convenient research tool seems to be the questionnaire.

"… collect data on phenomena which are not easily observed, such as attitudes, motivation, and self-concepts. They are also used to collect data on the processes involved in using language and to obtain background information about the research subjects, such as age, previous background in language learning,and years of studying the language…"

(Seliger&Shohamy, 2000:172)

A questionnaire was addressed to third year pupils, literary stream who study at Mohammed Belkheir secondary school during- the academic year 2018-2019. It consists of three sections: The students' personal background, students' language preferences and students' writing difficulties, with three questions in each section.

A questionnaire helps to know the participants more, "perhaps the most important value of questionnaires is that they help the investigator to know the target audience better"

(Dubin&Olshtain,1988:17)!

In order to obtain valid information, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic, and this is because of students' low English proficiency.

Moreover, this research study also focused on teachers' interview for an experimental research. The interview included eight questions addressed to two teachers from the same secondary school.

1.4.2 Interview

Interviews are strong research tools that permit researchers to know others points of view.

It was introduced by Kvale (1996) as "a conversation whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the (life-world) of the interviewee" p.174

Additionally, Schostak, (2006) said that: "an Interview is a kind of questions asked by the interviewers in order to discover specific and exact answers about a precised topic and gather Data they need in their works" p.54.

In an Interview, the researcher is in contact directly with the interviewee.

This increases the opportunity to ask many questions which may or may not be prepared before, but they are of course related to the subject of study and they help to answer and prove the hypotheses.

1.5 Participants

1.5.1 Teachers' Profile

The interview was done with two secondary school English teachers:
one male and one female. The two informants have Licence degree in English. One of them has twenty two years of teaching experience, while the other one has an experience of five years.

1.5.2 Students' Profile

Allwright and Bailey (1996) stated that: "Learners collaboration is one way of ensuring a variety of perspectives on the situation being investigated" p.73.

Thus, to achieve such target, a group of second year pupils has been chosen .The participants belong to Mohammed Belkheir Secondary School. Their ages vary from sixteen to twenty years.

The pupils have an experience of learning French for about ten years, the first foreign language in the third year of primary school, and English for nearly seven years, being the

second foreign language introduced in the first year of middle School.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Writing

Nunan, (2003) said that Writing is a set of physical and mental activities. Discovering things, thinking about a way of communication, developing them into statements and paragraphs that makes it easy for them who read to understand.

Impressing and expressing are the twin purpose of writing and the ones who write must choose what is advantageous the most.

1.6.2 Brainstorming

Brainstorming strategy is one of the most important strategies in provoking creativity and solving problems in the educational, commercial, industrial and political fields.

Brainstorming strategy was introduced by Alex Osborn, an American advertisement company manager in 1938 who was unsatisfied of traditional business. Literally, it means the use of brain to the active problem solving and the brainstorming session aims to develop creative solutions to problems (Jarwan, 2005).

1.6.3 Competency Based Approach (CBA)

In the CBA (Competency Based Approach), the role of the teacher is to guide the pupils who are considered as the centre of the learning process.
They do most of the work and they seek for the information themselves.

Learners rely no more on what teachers give them, they have to dig for knowledge, under guidance and control.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter deals with teaching English in the Algerian Schools, where the researcher identified the status of EFL in Algeria by stating some teaching objectives and how it is taught.

Moreover, the researcher tried to introduce the research methodology and identified the research tools that are used to gather Data. Then, the researcher stated the research problem, research questions as well as the hypotheses, and presented the study population. Finally, the researcher defined some key terms that are related to the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The discovery and development of writing have pushed mankind through great linguistic steps. Antoine Meillet (1912) said that: "The men who invented and perfected writing were great linguists and it was they who created linguistics" p.13.

Writing has been with us for several thousand years, and nowadays it is more important than ever since it is considered as the embodiment of thoughts and ideas and the realisation of them to be shown. Besides, it plays a crucial role in the learning and acquisition process of language.

Though students face difficulties while writing, some helpful strategies can make it easier such as brainstorming.

This chapter puts some light on how can brainstorming improve the writing skill. It introduces the term writing, definition of writing and writing strategies. It also deals with definition of brainstorming, its origin, and its strategies in addition to some rules used to improve students writing skill.

2.2 Definition of Writing

In his famous essay 'Carving of the Literary Dragon' writer and philosopher Liu Hsieh (1983) states: "When the mind is at work, speech is uttered. When speech is uttered, writing is produced. The Tao inspires writing and writing illuminates the Tao. What in mind is idea when expressed in speech is poetry. Isn't this what we are doing when dashing off writing to record reality? Writing originated when drawing of bird trace replaced string knitting." P. 465.

The Tao corresponds to Nature, that is to say, things about which ideas are formed in the mind.

After alphabetic literacy had shaped Western ideas of writing for more than two and a half millennia, in the nineteenth century, Nicolas de Massias (1828) published a book in Paris entitled The Influence of Writing on Thought and on Language.
Massias thought that writing, especially phonetic writing, was closely linked with language.

He thought of it not just as a means of representing language or of cultivating it, but as something much more essential, which permits language to fully develop:

"Here then is man, able by means of language, thought, spoken and written, to communicate with himself and with his present and absent similars. But these languages resolve themselves into a single one, which is limited, written speech. It is this necessity of writing which gives its name to grammar, osteology and framework of discourse." Massias (1828: 5)

Scholars as Ferdinand de Saussure believe that the invention or discovery of writing makes a difference, both with respect to what language is and how we think about it.

Saussure (1959) declared that "Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the purpose of representing the first. The linguistic object is not both the written and the spoken forms of words; the spoken forms alone constitute the object" p.23

Writing is the use of symbols such as letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces for the aim of communicating thoughts and ideas in a form of written words. Only when a language is well written, people can understand it.

In English this includes the mastery of grammar, punctuation and sentence structure. Vocabulary as well is important.

Writing is not an acquired skill but it is usually learned or transmitted as a set of practices that should be practised through experiences.
It is also a form of communication. It allows individuals to communicate their messages, thoughts and ideas and why not their feelings.

2.3 Types of Writing
There are more than one type of writing. They are used depending on the topic. Following are the types of writing

2.3.1 Expository
The word expository contains the word expose. This type of writing exposes, or sets forth acts. It is probably the most common writing genre.

In an expository piece, a topic will be introduced and laid out in a logical order without reference to the author's personal opinions. It aims to explain and give information.

This type can be found in Textbooks, Journals (except for opinion and editorial articles), Business writings, Technical writing Essays, and Instructions…

Examples:

- " The Children are taught to read and write in their early ages.."
- "A good classroom atmosphere helps teachers to work and pupils to learn.."

2.3.2 Descriptive

The aim of this type is to help the reader imagine and see, in detail, a character, an event, a place, or all in the same time.

Descriptive writing gives the writer more artistic freedom than expository writing. It can be found in fiction, poetry, advertising journals, and diary writing…
Examples:

- It is a quite place where only Nature sounds can be heard. Birds singing and water fall symphonies. It is a Paradise on Earth.
- "He was tall and big with blue sad eyes. He was a very angry man where negotiation is denied. When he walks people stop breathing.."

2.3.3 Persuasive Writing

The aim of persuasive writing, or argumentation, is to influence the reader to assume the author's point of view. The author will express personal opinions providing some evidences so that the reader will agree with him or her.

It can be found in Advertising Opinion and editorial pieces, Reviews Job applications.
Examples:

- Sport is the best activity that can help the body. It is the solution and medicine to many diseases. It helps the human body to be stronger.

- "Drugs are enemies. They destroy the body and brain because of the problems they cause.."

2.3.4 Narrative Writing

The purpose of narrative writing is to tell a story, whether the story is real or imaginary. Pieces in a narrative style will have characters, and through the narrative, the reader learns what happens to them. Narrative writing can also include dialogue.

Narrative writing can be found in all types of fiction (e.g., novels, short stories, novellas), poetry, biographies...

Examples:

-   "Once upon a time, there was a beautiful lady who loves everybody and all the neighbours love her. She helps who ever asked her.."

-   "One year ago, the little boy was on holiday with his parents. When passing by a forest, he saw a beautiful cat. He didn't stop crying until they turned back and took her home.."
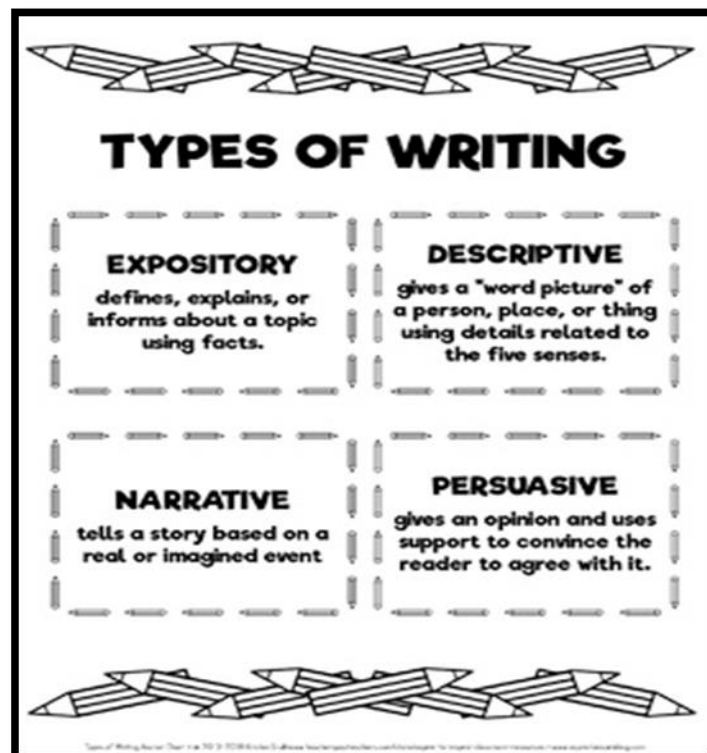

Figure 1: Brief Definitions to Types of Writing

2.4 Stages of Writing

The process of writing is split into many stages which help to facilitate writing in a good form to have a better content. Merriwether (1997) stated that: "Writing is a process which involves several identifiable steps" and Nuan (1991) said: "The Process Approach focuses on the steps involved in creating a piece of work"

The following are the eight steps to a good writing process according to Steele (Brainstorming, Planning/Structuring, Mind mapping, Writing the first draft, Peer feedback, Editing, Final draft and Evaluation, than teachers' feedback)

First, students should start by generating the ideas by brain storming then they discuss them. After that, they write down the ideas and test their quality to see if they are useful.

Then, they have to match the relationship of ideas understandable and organise them either in a form of maps or notes.

Working in pairs or groups to prepare the first draft will be the the fourth stage. Then, they should exchange drafts with each other and understand their works.

In the sisxth stage, they would improve the drafts with changes if needed taking into consideration the feedback of others , and, preparing the final draft with necessary changes.

Finally, the teachers will evaluate the final draft providing a feedback on it.

Following these steps, students can show their latent abilities in writing process, build up their power of thinking and creativity, and they understand the importance and value of developing their writing skills.

They can also concentrate on strategies and processes of writing with their own abilities and potentials; and they are enabled to reach their objective and purpose.

2.5 Vocabulary and Writing

To write, pupils need to enrich their vocabulary. Laflamme (1997) said: "Reading and writing are two analogous and complementary processes in that both involve generating ideas, organizing ideas into a logical order, drafting them a number of times to achieve cohesion, and revising the ideas as is appropriate" p.373

Chapter Two: Literature Review

" ..Writing is dependent upon the ability to draw upon words to describe an event"
(Corona, Spangenberger, &Venet, 1989, 8)

Students, while writing, they may not remember the meaning of a particular word or
sometimes they encounter new words that they didn't see before.
Here, they have to be creative and use them in the right context (according to their meanings
for instance).

Ediger (1999) said "Students should be able to contextualize the vocabulary terms they have
learned and use them in society" p.7

To be able to do this, they should firstly practise to use those new words which were
unfamiliar or ambiguous in the classroom. They also should be asked and encouraged to
incorporate new vocabulary terms in their classroom and even homework tasks.

Practicing and repeating words already taught is a way to improve the writing skill and help
register more vocabulary.

It's up to teachers to choose the right texts or passages where their pupils can find the target
words and encourage them through some kind of challenges or competitions in order to
remember them.
" The best source for teaching good writing: good books"   (Sloan, 1996, 268)

By choosing books, poems, and stories that contain interesting vocabulary; teachers can both
introduce new words and provide a forum for discussing them through reading sessions.

They may also read aloud for their pupils and ask for words which attracted them then ask
them to put the words in new sentences as a way to fix those words in the pupils' memories. It
is without any doubt that the right choice of texts is an important way to enrich vocabulary.

Pupils can write down new and unfamiliar words with their meanings as a method to learn
and not to forget new vocabulary. It is an effective method to enrich their vocabulary.

Written expression sessions and exchanging ideas between pupils would be one of the best
ways to improve the pupils' writing skills since they will catch the idea by themselves.

In addition to the stated problems that EFL learners face, some others find writing a complicated task.

In this context, Brown (2001: 334) said: "Just as there are non-swimmers, poor swimmers and excellent swimmers, so it is for writers. Why isn't everyone an excellent writer?"

He compared writing to swimming, and the ability to swim as the ability to write. Like there are good, bad, excellent swimmers; there are writers different in capacities.

2.6 The Competency-Based Approach (CBA)

After the changes in the educational system, the pupils became more active and the teachers direct them. This is a challenge for both of them. For pupils, they are required to search and find out. While for teachers, it is harder to be both the teacher and the guide and also to know what and how to teach.

"Teachers who are the products of the old educational system may find it difficult to manage the role reversal required in the new classroom where learners are the main players"

Richard et al (2006: 2).

This was a very important reason that made educationalists re-think about how English should be taught. As a result, they introduced the Competency Based Approach, which is based on the learners as researchers while the teacher is just a guide.

This approach focuses on developing learners' competencies and how to employ them in solving problems they may face in their daily lives. Here, the centre of the learning process is the pupils; they research and reach the target idea with guidance of the teacher.

Consequently, pupils build their own knowledge from the tasks they do which make them responsible of their learning and the teacher is a mediator between the pupil and knowledge... His task is to guide, help, stimulate, accompany and encourage the pupil throughout this training.

2.7 Brainstorming

To answer any question or solve a problem, everyone start by thinking and gathering some ideas that help to form an answer or make a solution. This process is called brainstorming.

"Brainstorming is a technique by which a group attempts to find a solution(s) to a specific problem by amassing ideas spontaneously" Osborn (1953)

"It is a highly effective technique for maximising group creative potential, not only to generate ideas but also to determine which ideas are most likely to succeed in a specific area of interest" Baumgartner (2007)

2.7.1 The Origin of Brainstorming

Brainstorming, since the early ages, is an important activity to be done and which takes place in bringing and creating new thoughts.

The brainstorming session is the use of brain which aims to develop creative solutions to problems. Folse et al (2010:31) said that brainstorming is quickly writing down all the thought that come to the head about any subject or question.
In 1938, this strategy was brought by Alex Osborn who was an American advertisement Company Manager when he was unsatisfied about the work and results of the employees.

After several years, in 1953 he published a book entitled "Applied Imagination" which talks about the efficiency of Group Brainstorming and he developed a theory of how to brainstorm effectively.

The theory is based on two main principles " Do not criticise bad ideas and focus on the quantity of the ideas not the quality". According to him, following these principles will lead to a successful brainstorming.

2.7.2 Purpose of Brainstorming

Al-Maghrawy, (2012: 361-366) defines brainstorming as: "a group creativity forum for general ideas".

Brainstorming technique involves oral and pre-writing exercises for helping the learner and for expressing ideas by the teacher. This technique has a great importance in the writing process. It helps students to solve problems as an innovative solution and it helps them to benefit from the ideas of others. It also aids and builds relationships among them, encourages communication, and assesses the views of others.

Besides, it helps the teacher to conclude ideas that are broader than students' thinking solutions, and it makes the teacher more democratic and respectful of views regardless of the different points of view.

2.7.3 How to Use Brainstorming

Brainstorming helps pupils to gather ideas for the questions they were asked and do their activities whether individually or in groups. To do a successful brainstorming, they should follow some steps.

Kelly and Gargagliano (2000:4) stated that when people brainstorm, they have to write as many words or phrases as they can think of about the topic.

They do not necessarily have to write complete sentences when brainstorming.

First, they should prepare themselves in order to think and be creative taking into consideration how much time they have.

 To organise their brainstorming session, they can design one of them to record the ideas they gather. This allows them to work faster and in an organised form.

Next, they present the topic they want to work on and make sure they collect as many ideas as possible. Then, when they all share the ideas they have, they start discussing and correcting them, and even using some to create new ones.

Finally, putting the ideas in the right order so that they answer the question being asked.

2.7.4 Strategies of Brainstorming

Brainstorming is helpful whether there are many ideas or few ones. The following are brainstorming strategies by Mark Nichol:

2.7.4.1 Cubing

It was developed as a critical-thinking exercise to help students express their thoughts in opinion essays, but it can be adapted for general nonfiction writing, though it is of limited value for fiction.

In this strategy, a topic or idea should be studied in six viewpoints:

- Describe the topic (what is it?)

- Compare it (what is it like or unlike?)

- Associate it (what does it make you think of?)

- Analyse it (what constituent parts is it made of?)

- Apply it (how can it be used?)

- Argue for and/or against it (how can you support or oppose it?)

2.7.4.2 Free writing:

Freewriting, a writing strategy developed by Elbow in 1973. It is a very helpful technique which helps to increase the flow of ideas in order to make a draft. Learners may apply the following instructions:

Even if you do not know what to write, just write. You should have a goal: for example say that you have to write at least 500 words, about three pages, in a period of five minutes. You shouldn't stop in order to spell correctly or write flawlessly, and do not go back to correct mistakes. Go ahead and just write.

Also, do not strive for coherence. Just write and consider closing your eyes while you are writing or typing, or turn the computer's monitor off. Just write.

2.7.4.3 Listing

Making a list that may contain some opinions, arguments, facts, questions, or components, or any combination of the above.

2.7.4.4 Researching

Reference sections of a library, or reference web sites could help learners with their researches if they know the target topic but they do not know how to write the idea.

They may also draw the ideas in the form of a list or a map when reading about a current or past event to facilitate the work.

2.7.5 Stages of Problem solving in Brainstorming Session

A-blwi (2006) mentioned some stages that must be followed in problem solving within the brainstorming session, those are:

- **Phrasing the Problem:** the teacher offers a problem and discusses its various dimensions with students to ensure understanding.
- **Framing the Problem:** in this stage, the teachers determine the problem accurately by reframing it in certain questions. This may offer acceptable solutions without the need for further brainstorming.
- **Offering the Ideas:** Brainstorming sessions lead to generate a big number of ideas and therefore, those ideas must be evaluated and we have to select the most suitable and important ones according to novelty, originality, usefulness, duration and cost as well as logic (Bani Hamad, 2006).

2.7.6 Brainstorming Rules

What follows is a list of some acts to do and others not to do, and some ways to make brainstorming much better by Osborn.

- **Rule 1:** It is important to give time to the group to think individually first. Let the members collect some ideas by themselves without pressure or timidity in order to focus. Then, they think together to build a bridge between the group.
- **Rule 2:** For more creativity, there should be no limits while brainstorming or any judgments to say (It's not a good idea).
  Instead, individuals or members should think and work without any bonds. This leads to more and better ideas. What is important as well, is to work in comfort. Members should work freely and say whatever comes to their minds.

- **Rule 3:** When working in a group, everyone has to give at least one idea but they should not refuse any ideas or thoughts immediately even if they are unsuitable.

Sometimes, the best ideas are those that seem bad, and listening to everyone is a key to a good session. In addition, to avoid judgment it will be better to share the ideas first then discussing them. It helps the participants who are dominated by other members to talk and share what they are thinking of.

-        **Rule 4:** Group members should focus on how much ideas not on their quality which means collecting a lot of ideas regardless if they are good or not.
The aim is collecting as much thoughts as fast as possible. This helps to neglect any sort of judgement. It also lets the opportunity to think in a wide range for more ides and fruitful results without limiting the confines of thinking.

-        **Rule 5:** Not only good ideas should be commented, they all should. In a Brainstorming session, all the thoughts should be marked up either good or bad ones to reach the best of them.
It's not expected to find the excellent ideas rapidly. They will come after looking at every single piece of information. It would be better if one of the members takes the role of writing down the ideas to facilitate the work and easily add anything if found.

-        **Rule 6:** When the Brainstorming time is over, it is fine to add anything. Creativity may carry on; it should not be limited to a period of time. Bringing new ideas can drag others.

2.8   Conclusion

This chapter talked about the students writing skill and how some scholars defined it, types of writing. Then it dealt with how could brainstorming be a beneficial strategy to improve it among EFL learners. It also puts in hands the origin and definition, brainstorming strategies that are helpful to students in order to work in a good way in less time with more results and 6 rules for a successful Brainstorming.

Brainstorming is an effective strategy. It helps pupils think and write what they think and collect information about any topic they work on.

It makes them note down every idea they have in their minds than exchange them with others and correct each other's mistakes. Then, they organise the ideas collected forming coherent sentences to answer and solve their activities.

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the practical part of the research study that aims to determine the students' writing skills and how to improve it by applying brainstorming strategies at Mohamed Belkheir secondary school, El Bayadh, Algeria. To test the hypotheses, the researcher used two research tools to collect data and to obtain results; a questionnaire was given to third year literary stream learners, FL class of 35 pupils, and an interview was done with two teachers from the same secondary school.

3.2 Learners' Questionnaire Analysis

3.2.1 Pupils' Preferences

Question 1: Which skill do you prefer?

When students were asked about what skill do they prefer, most of the answers were writing (37%, 14 pupils) and listening (34%, 11 pupil) and less answered reading (17%, 06 pupils) and speaking (12%, 04 pupils). The results are shown in the following Pie chart
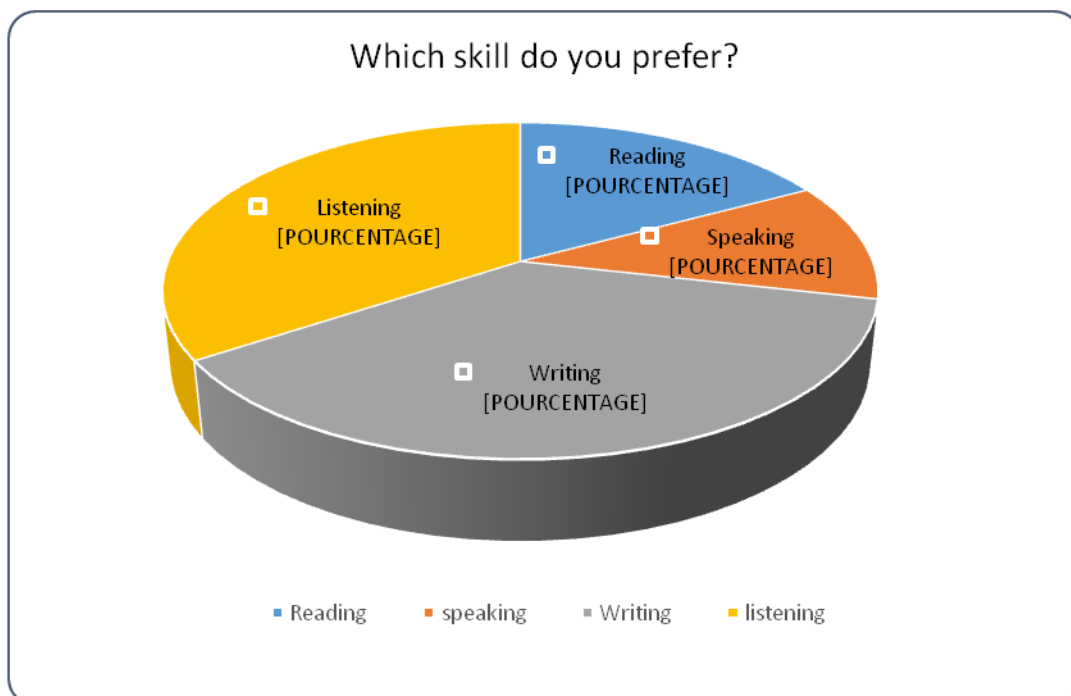
Pie chart 3.2.1.1: Which Skill Do You Prefer?

As shown in the pie chart above, students prefer writing and listening than speaking and reading. This is probably because they feel free to write freely and because listening does not require mental efforts as speaking and reading.

Question 2: What do you prefer to write?

When students were asked about the themes they prefer to write, so many answers were given.

The responses of the participants (35) show that (11% , 04 students) prefer to write texts, (31%, 11 students) prefer to write poems/Quotes, (40%, 14 pupil) prefer to write essays and about (17%, 06 pupils) prefer just to write anything.

The results are shown in the following table.

What do you prefer to write	Number of students	Percentage
Texts	04	11%
Poems	11	31%
Essays	14	40%
Anything	06	17%

Table 3.2.1.2: Writing Preferences

As shown in the table above students' first writing preference is "Essays", this is probably due to tasks have been asked to do during lessons. Essays can improve writing skills in many ways. For instance, they may encounter new words especially used in the classroom, mainly when they work together.

3.2.2 English Learning Objectives
Question 1: What is your attitude towards learning English?

The responses of the 35 students show that 29 (83%) of them have a positive attitude towards

learning English, 02 (06%) negative, 03 (09%) indifferent and only 01 (02%) student is not interested about it. The next diagram will show the results
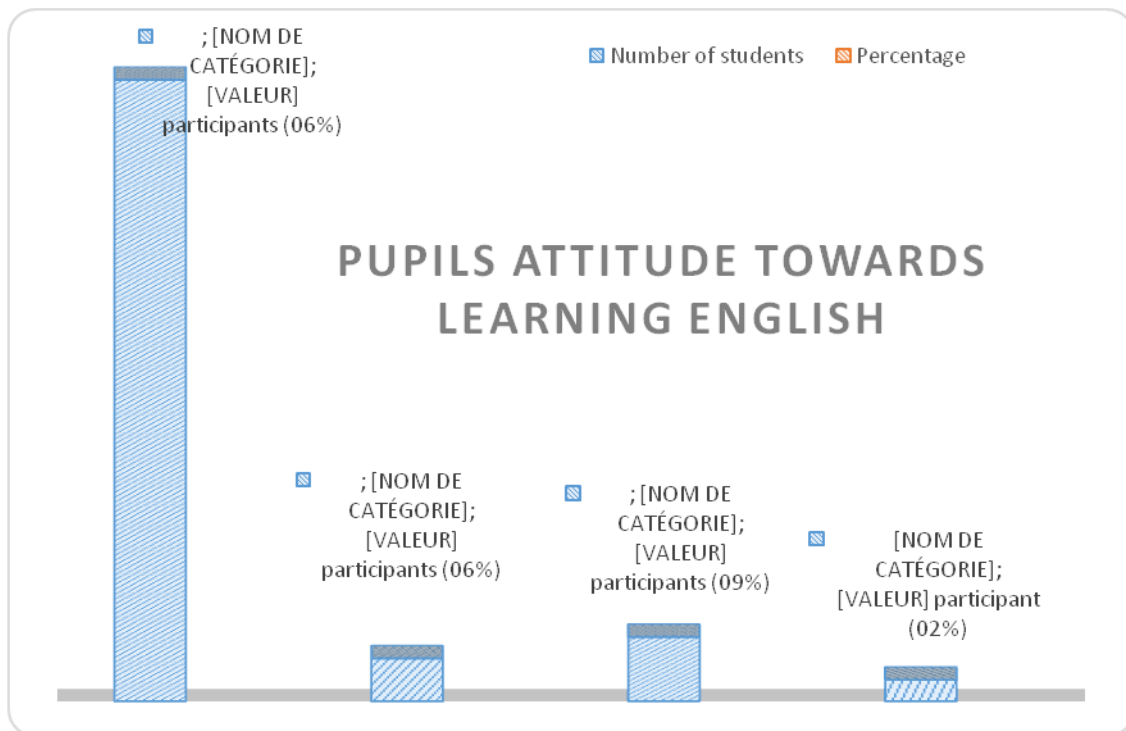
Bar graph 3.2.2.1: Pupils' Attitude Towards Learning English?

The majority of the students (29, 83%) have a positive attitude towards learning English, which means that they are learning with passion. Three of them have a neutral reaction, 02 (06%) are unfortunately negative and just one student not interested about learning English.

Question 2: What is your reason for learning English?
Concerning the reason for studying English; 15 (43%) students answered "To speak and write English well", 10 (29%) of them claimed that they are learning English to improve their level in English, five said they are learning it to prepare themselves for the Bac exam but five others mentioned that they learn it just because it is in the Curriculum.

The following Pie-chart will show the results.
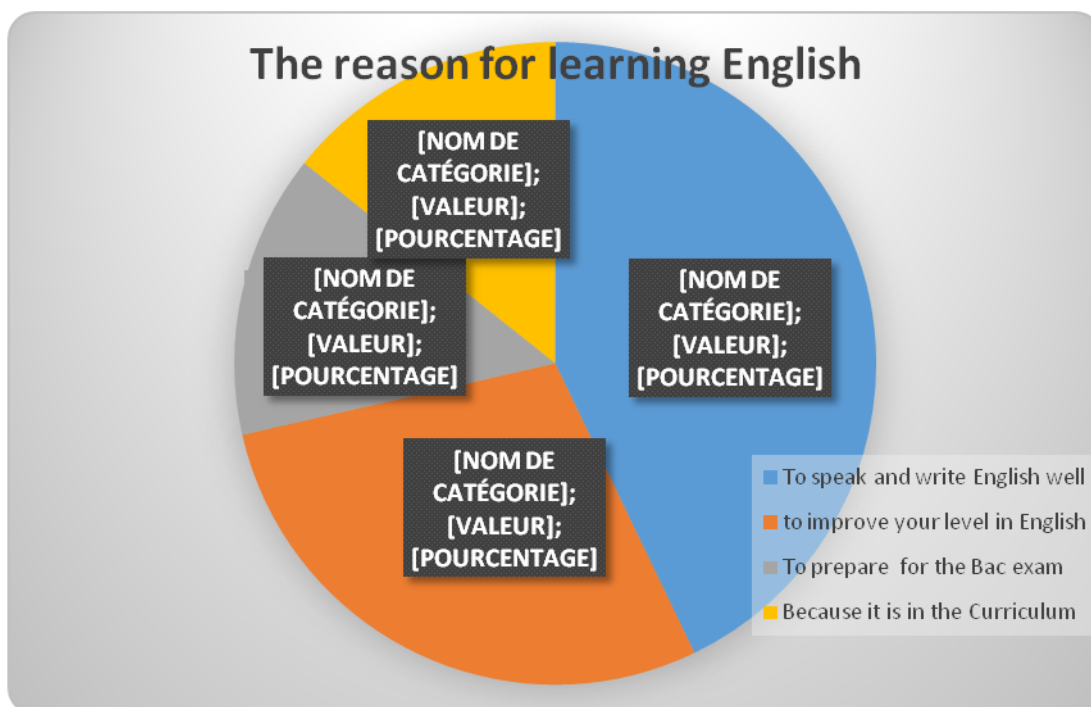
Pie Chart 3.2.2.2: The Reason for Learning English

Question 3: The importance of learning English

The importance of English	Number of students	Percentage
Very important	15	43%
Important	11	31%
Not important	5	14%
Does not affect	4	11%

Table 3. 2.2.3: The Importance of Learning English

The answers of pupils indicate that most of them see that it is important and very important to study the English language but some others see that if they study English not, it does not affect; e.g, useless.

3.2.3 Writing Learning Objectives/ Difficulties

Question 1: What is your purpose from writing?

When students were asked about their purpose from writing, they provided different answers as shown in the table:

Purpose from writing	Number of students	Percentage
To write for pleasure	09	26%
To enrich your grammar	15	43%
To write only because you are asked to	11	31%
Total number	35	100%

Table 3.2.3.1: Purpose from Writing

Most of the learners (43%) prefer to write in order to enrich their Grammar because it helps them to know more words and how they are written. While 31% only write because they were asked to. Here, they mostly said because of the difficulties they face while writing.

Whereas, 26% of them said they write for pleasure and they add that it is entertaining especially discovering new words and looking for new meanings.

Question 2: When you do not know a word, you ..?

When asked about what to do when they do not know how to write a word, 15.44% of the participants said that they go back to the dictionary or they ask their teacher or classmates, 12.35% carry on writing even with mistakes, and only 7.21% stop writing. The result are shown in the following pie chart

When you do not know a word, you..?

[NOM DE CATÉGORIE]; [VALEUR]; [POURCENTAGE]

[NOM DE CATÉGORIE]; [VALEUR]; [POURCENTAGE]

[NOM DE CATÉGORIE]; [VALEUR]; [POURCENTAGE]

- Use a dictionary or ask your teacher/classmate
- Carry on even with mistakes
- Stop reading
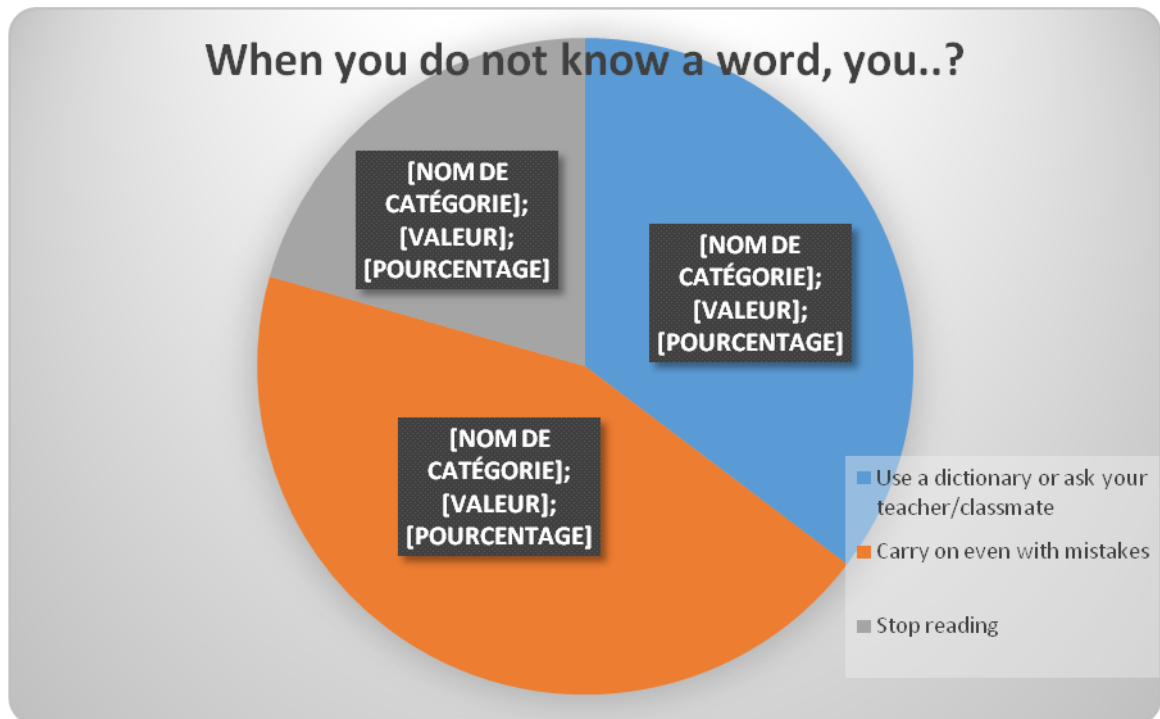
Pie Chart 3.2.3.2: When you do not know a word, you..?

Difficulties	Number of students	Percentage

Grammar	23	66%
New/Unfamiliar words	17	34%

Question 3: What kind of difficulties do you often encounter?

Table 3.2.3.3: Difficulties while writing

When the students were asked about the difficulties they face while they are writing, 66%of them answered with grammar which shows that it is the most common difficulty learners ever encounter. 34% said they have problems with new/unfamiliar words.

3.2.4 About Brainstorming

Question 1: How do you prefer to work?

43% of the students prefer to work in pairs/groups because they take ideas from each other besides it is much better in order to cooperate, 34% like to work individually and 23% choose whatever the topic demands. Results are shown in the next graph.
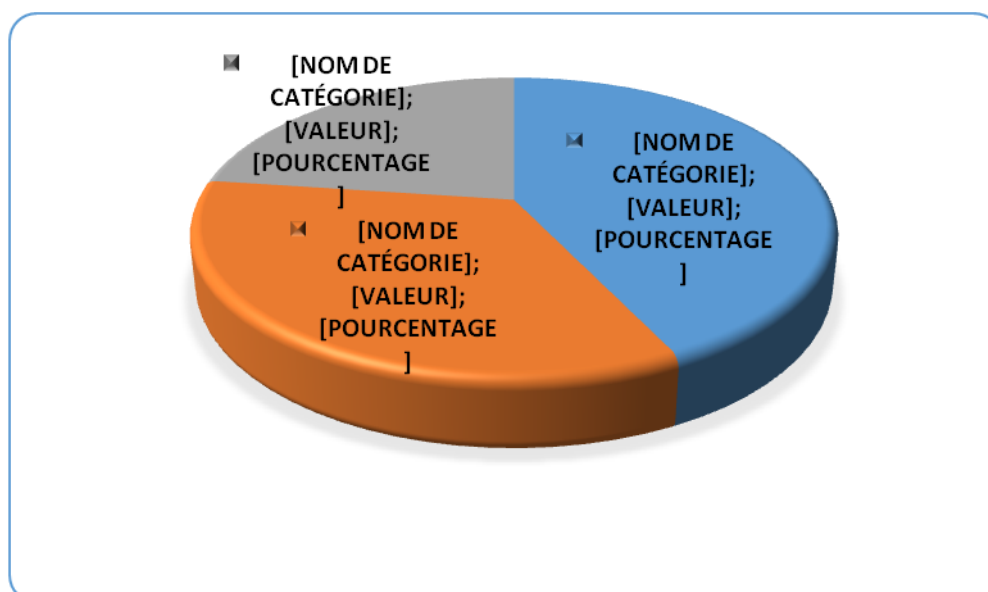
Graph 3.2.3.1:Preferable way to work

Question 2: How is it to work in group and exchange ideas?

When they were asked, 20 pupils said that it is beneficial to work in groups and exchange ideas, 10 of them claimed that it is the same as working individually and the rest (05) said it is a waste of time. The following table will show the results.

Group work is	Number of students	Percentage
Beneficial	25	71%
Nearly the same as individual work	07	20%
Waste of time	03	09%

Table 3.2.3.2: Group work

71% of the students see that working in groups is beneficial, as they have already said because it leads to cooperation and the exchange of thoughts and ideas and 20% said it is nearly the same as working individually which means they did not see a big change. However, 09% consider it as a waste of time maybe because they prefer to work individually.

Question 3: The Impact of Brainstorming

30 students claimed that their works are better after taking some time to think than when they answer directly. 05 of them said that their answers are just the same either when they answer instantly or after thinking, and no one answered by 'no changes noticed'.
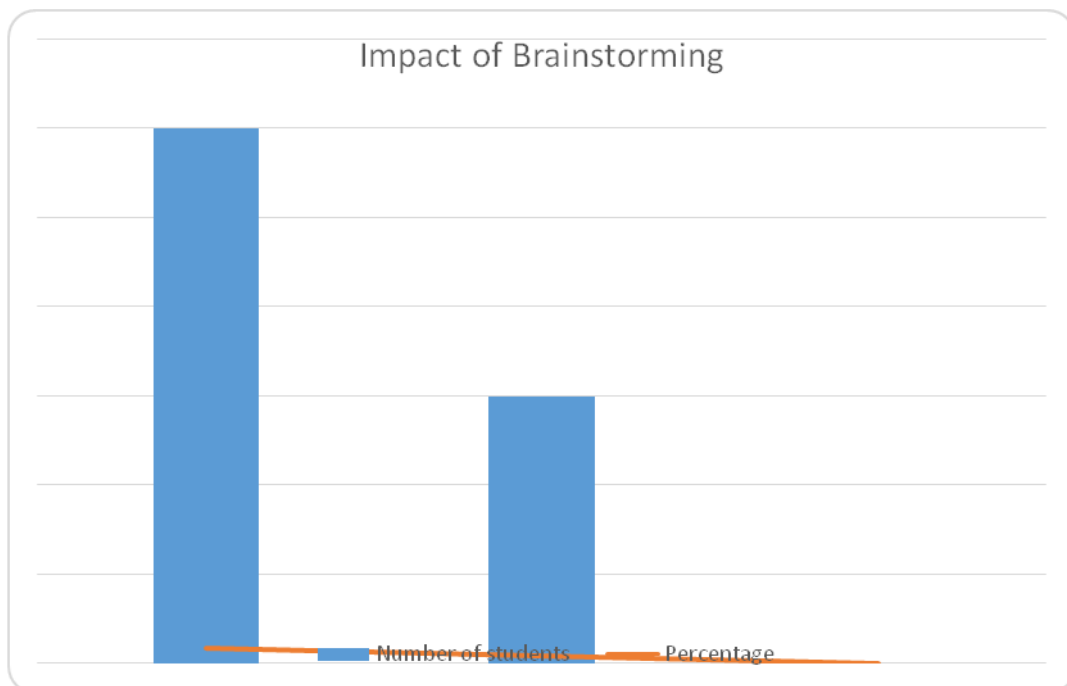
Bar graph 3.2.3.3: The Impact of Brainstorming

The result show that the 30 pupils (68%) who work in groups and do brainstorming, their tasks are better done and have better answers than after working alone and answering directly. 43% claim that they didn't notice big changes.

Question 4: How much time do you need to do brainstorming?

When students were asked about how much time they need to do brainstorming15 pupils said '05-07 min', 15 others said '07-10' minutes, and the 05 others said 'more than 10 min'.

The results are shown in the following Pie chart.
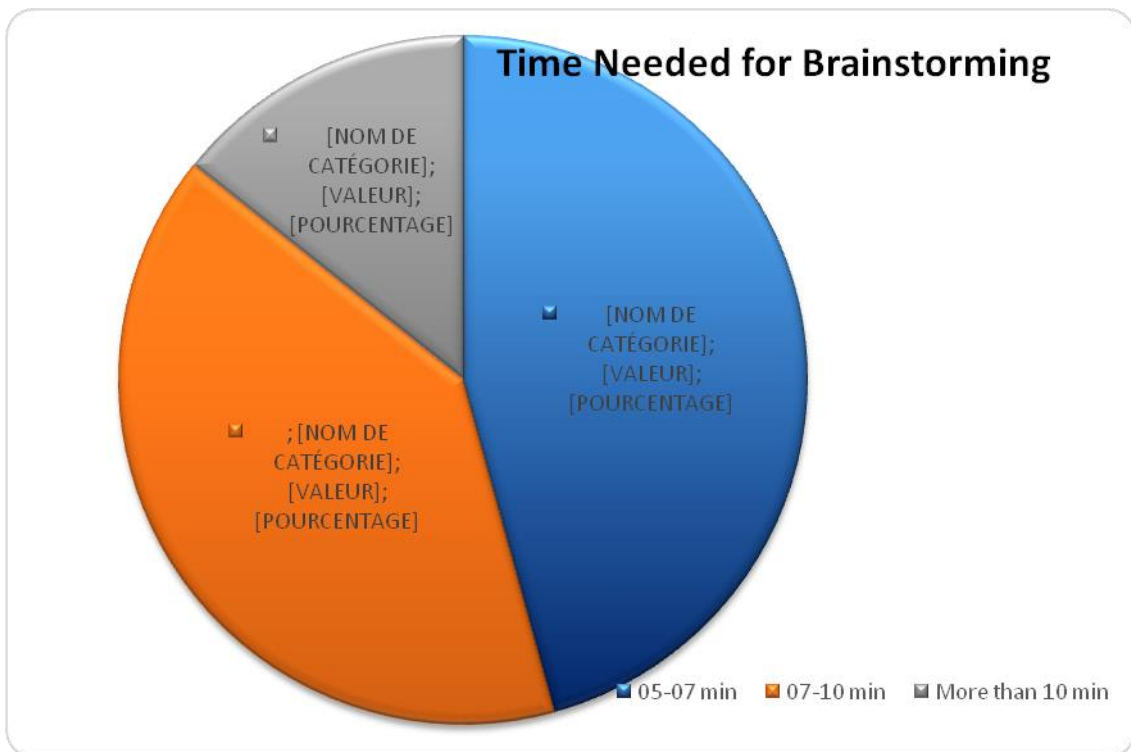
Pie chart .3.2.34: Time needed for brainstorming

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Interruption

As shown in the pie chart above, most of (30) students claim that they need from 05 to 07 and 07 to 10 minutes to do brainstorming and only 05 students answered by 'more than 10 minutes which may be because they are not very good in English. Therefore; according to the answers of the majority of pupils, time that is needed for a successful and fruitful brainstorming should be at least 10 minutes

a.   Discussion of Findings

This study sets out the students' writing preferences, aims, the benefits of group work and brainstorming.

Data was collected to examine the writing skill and difficulties encountered by EFL students, besides to their purpose of writing. The analysis of students' questionnaire showed that they have some difficulties mainly in Grammar butgroup work using brainstorming helps them.

The response of the participants (35) reveal that most of them (40%) prefer to write essays, (31%) prefer to write poems, (12%) prefer to write texts, while (17%) write anything.

Additionally, the findings show that 32% of the students write to enrich their Grammar, 24% write for pleasure and the rest 31% write only because they are asked. According to them, writing is the best way to have more grammar background. It helps to reduce making mistakes, and to keep the words in mind.

Furthermore; pupils' answers reveal that only 02 out of 35 pupil have a negative attitude towards learning English while 29 of them have a positive attitude, which is a big number in one classroom.

The findings also show that 43% of the pupils are learning English to speak and write English well and 29% of them to improve their level. When 14% learn it to prepare for the baccalaureate exam and some others (14%) only learn it because it is in the Curriculum. In addition to this, 43% of them think that learning English is very important and 31% said it is important. Probably because they see that it is a universal language which is used all over the world and in almost all the domains.

Moreover; 15.44% of the participants use a dictionary, ask the teacher or their classmates when they come across words that they do not know in order to write correctly and to know the meaning of the new word. 12.35% keep writing with mistakes possibly not to waste time, but 7.21% stop writing when they do not know the right spelling of a word.

When it comes to the difficulties, 48% of the students face difficulties in grammar, 29% find it difficult with new/ambiguous words, and 23% find it difficult to write new words mainly because they have not seen or heard them before.

Then, 43% like to work in groups when they have an activity since they could exchange ideas and new thoughts and also learn new words from each other.

34% see that working individually is better for them in order to concentrate and be able to think right. The rest of them (23%) claimed that it depends on the task.

Also, 71% of the pupils see that working in groups and exchanging ideas is beneficial and it helps them toimprove the quality of their answers and do better activities. While, 20% stated that they find working in groups or individually is the same and they could not notice a big change. But 09% of them said it's a waste of time mainly because they prefer to work on their own or because some spend the time in joking and laughing so time passes without any result.

Whereas; 86% of the pupils work better when they take a while to do brainstorming, exchange ideas between one to another and work either individually or in groups which explain the benefit of brainstorming, 43% of them declared that the answers are the same either immediately or after some time. Also, 46% need from 05 to 07 minutes to do brainstorming, 40% need from 07 to 10 minutes and the others (14%) need more than 10 minutes maybe because they do not think quickly. So, according to the majority of students, the time estimated for a classroom brainstorming is from 05 to 10 minutes.

b. Teachers' Interview

Question one: How long have you been teaching English?
- **Teacher 1:** 15 years
- **Teacher 2:** 06 years

Question two: Are there any difficulties you face while teaching?

- **Teacher 1:** Yes, there are always difficulties. Personally, I find some difficulties while teaching reading. Pupils often stop reading or stop me when they do not understand a word. This takes time to explain the word and giving examples to make it clear

- **Teacher 2:** Yes there are. Pupils always ask about meanings to new words for them, either while reading or in writing sessions.

Question three: Which skill do most of your pupils find the most difficult? And what do you do about it?

- **Teacher 1:** Reading, since it is a foreign language and there are so many words that need explanation and mainly pronunciation for pupils. That is why I usually give them time to read in groups; and it frequently works out, they correct each other's mistakes.

- **Teacher 2:** Most of my pupils have many issues while writing. They do not stop asking me about how to write words. Thus, I give them few minutes to solve activities in pairs or in groups. This often helps them because they exchange their ideas.

Question four: Do you follow ancient or modern ways of teaching? (You explain all the lesson to your pupils or you let them do brainstorming and then using their capacities to go to the aim of the lesson)

- **Teacher 1:** Well, the modern teaching of course. I ask them a question or some questions related to the lesson at the beginning when I enter; and, I guide them relying on their capacities to explain the lesson.
-
- **Teacher 2:** I let them arrive to the aim of the lesson by themselves. Consequently, they will use their competencies thus they will be able to understand the lesson better.
-

Question five: Is it you the centre of learning/teaching process in the classroom, or the pupils?

- **Teacher 1:** The pupils. Nowadays, it is better when the pupil searches for the information so that s/he will remember it well

- **Teacher 2:** The pupils. When they make efforts, they will understand better than when the teacher explains everything.

Question six: How many times do you teach writing per week?

- **Teacher 1:** At least twice a week and I try to give them home works to see their mistakes to correct for them.

- **Teacher 2:** Twice a week and I try as much as possible to correct their mistakes. Also, I give them activities in groups to help each other.

Question seven: What kind of texts do you often use when teaching writing, and what do you think about it?

- **Teacher 1:** Texts and illustrations because they are so useful and facilitate the comprehension.

- **Teacher 2:** Texts and handouts. They may be sometimes difficult but they help my pupils to understand and discover new words and also keep them focused.

Question eight: Does the text selection have an effect on writing achievement? How?

- **Teacher 1:** Of course, the text selection is very crucial since it is not only to teach the learners new language or information but also to guide the whole lesson to reach your objectives smoothly especially new words to be discovered by students.

- **Teacher 2:** Yes, the text selection affects the writing sessions. The technical scientific or literary texts that involve topics beyond students' conceptual level or language should

be avoided. They would simply leave a negative impact on students and kill their curiosity or interest in learning new words and know the correction of mistakes.

Question nine: What difficulties do your pupils face while writing?

- **Teacher 1:** Grammar most of times and sometimes new words.

- **Teacher 2:**Most of their problems are with words they see for the first time. They either write them wrong or stop me to ask about how they should be written.

Question ten: How can you help your students when they do not know how to write words?

- **Teacher 1:** Usually, I give my students materials with words they need to learn. In this way, I can make sure they will reach the purpose of teaching. Of course, I make them work in pairs or groups.

- **Teacher 2:** First, I ask them to make groups; I give them a text or a passage, and ask them about some definitions or the explanation of some words. Then, I explain those terms. This will help them to remember the words.

Question eleven: Do pupils engage in brainstorming sessions effectively?

- **Teacher 1:** Yes, the majority of them do. Brainstorming sessions help them to think and exchange ideas.

- **Teacher 2:** Yes, they work and help each other.

Question twelve: How much time do you give your students for brainstorming?

- **Teacher 1:** Not less than five minutes. I try to give them enough time to do brainstorming and think well.

Teacher 2: Five to ten minutes. I think it is enough time to think in the questions asked.

Question thirteen: Do they cooperate with each other?

- **Teacher 1:** Yes, they help each other.

- **Teacher 2:**Yes, they do cooperate.

<u>**Question fourteen:**</u> According to you, does brainstorming have an effect on improving students' writing skill?

- <u>**Teacher 1:**</u> Brainstorming is like a double strategy "(Attack/Defence)". Learners face their fears from making mistakes and feel themselves freeto write and discuss their thoughts individually or when they are working in pairs and groups.

- <u>**Teacher 2:**</u> It makes them more creative. They can write flawlessly and help each other and also exchange ideas.

<u>**Question fifteen:**</u> What Brainstorming strategy(s) do you prefer to use and advise your students to use?

- <u>**Teacher 1:**</u> I personally prefer "Freewriting" strategy. It allows students to have the opportunity to write whatever comes to their minds.

- <u>**Teacher 2:**</u> Listing is a good brainstorming strategy to be followed while writing. It leads to collect opinions, thoughts and arguments about the topic to be written.

<u>**Question sixteen:**</u> Was there any progress among pupils after using brainstorming either in groups or individually?

- <u>**Teacher 1:**</u> When pupils do brainstorming, their answers and their activities are better done. They take time to think and answer correctly.

- <u>**Teacher 2:**</u> Their creativity increases and they start to think more before answering any question.

<u>**Question seventeen:**</u> What could you suggest as materials or techniques to improve students writing skills?

- <u>**Teacher 1:**</u> I think that lyrical educational songs can be a very helpful material in classrooms. It would help EFL learners both to know how to write words and how to pronounce them.

- **Teacher 2:** Short animated stories with subtitles on the screen. It will add some entertainment to the EFL class, which helps students to learn in a good atmosphere.

c. Teachers' Interview analysis

According to teachers' interview, it is noticed that the two teachers experience ranges from five to fifteen years in the domain of teaching English.

The responses show that the two teachers agree that their pupils' preferable skill is writing. Then, concerning the teaching materials; (Teacher1) regards texts and illustrations as the best materials used in EFL classrooms since they are very useful and because they facilitate the comprehension.

While (Teacher2) prefers to use texts and handouts because they keep their students focused. In addition to that, the results obtained from question eight show that both teachers have the same opinion that the text selection has a great impact on students' writing achievement, stating that it is very crucial since it teaches the learners new information and it avoids the negative impact of bad text choices.

Furthermore; for question ten, the teachers different ways to teach them new words, such as bringing materials containing target words and also asking for definitions to be able to remember words they need to learn.

Additionally, the teachers said that brainstorming has an influence on improving students writing skill. It raises their level of creativity, ; it stimulates them to write with more courage to face mistakes. Makes them free to discuss and cooperate, as shown in question ten. And then, (Teacher 1), prefers using "Freewriting" because it allows to write what they are thinking of, while (Teacher2) recommends students to use "Listing" since it leads to gather ideas   and   thoughts   for   writing. Lastly, the responses of the last question reveal that the teachers show more interest and care about their students by suggesting some techniques and materials that may help them to develop their writing skills

d. Suggestions and Recommendations

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Interruption

As seen in the research done, brainstorming can help pupils to think better and write their thoughts. Most of them said that they answer and do their activities correctly and better after thinking, thus they could share what they know with each other, note down some mistakes they commit and correct them, learn from others mistakes and even they can build some information from each other.

From here, we can say that every teacher can apply a brainstorming session at least for five minutes so that his/her pupils have the opportunity to think in the question asked or the topic discussed and exchange the thoughts they have in mind without fearing of being mistaken. Brainstorming as well gives the pupils the opportunity to order their random ideas to have a clear answer.

In addition, pupils should be taught how to do brainstorming and take advantages from it; and, to be effective in brainstorming sessions to learn more grammar and take their writing skills to higher levels.

Moreover, teachers can choose effective materials such as illustrations and give the learners different types of texts to be able to know as much new words as possible. They may also assign a few minutes in the beginning or the end of the class to discover new words and how to be pronounced and written; why not making it as a challenge between pupils as a type of competition for the aim of knowledge.

3.3   Conclusion

The practical chapter represents an analysis of a case study that was done quantitatively by using both research tools; a questionnaire and an interview. In fact, the obtained results show that writing is preferable, challenging and complex skill for third year EFL students since it helps them to enrich their grammar and lead to know more new and ambiguous words and how to write them. Also, because it is the base of learning any language and knowing its rules.

But, to reach those aims, the use of brainstorming and its strategies will be the best solution to improve writing. It helps students to write flawlessly, freely and even with mistakes so that they will be able to correct them and fill their package of words.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Writing is the most important skill among the four language skills which learners need to master in learning in any language. It is a cognitive constructive technique which involves specific skills and strategies. It can improve the overall language proficiency. However, many students believe that writing is one of the most frustrating activities, they ever face. Even though one may have writing difficulties in his or her mother tongue, the problems get worse when writing is applied to a foreign language. That is why; this research paper is mainly concerned with how to improve writing skills using Brainstorming Strategies in EFL classroom at secondary school.

This research study was divided into three chapters; the first chapter attempts to identify the methodology and the background of the research study. At first, it introduced the status of English language in Algeria. Then, it presented the research problem, the research instruments used to collect Data, and it also identified the sample population of the study. Finally, it introduced some definitions relying on scholars' views. Chapter two covered the theoretical framework of writing. It also dealt with types of reading. In addition to that, it stated Brainstorming and its strategies and how it can be beneficial to improve the writing skill. While the last chapter presented the practical part of the research work. It was concerned with Data analysis and the discussion of results. The concluding part of the chapter offered a number of suggestions related to brainstorming and writing.

The obtained results show that third year secondary school EFL Learners confront some difficulties while writing at the level of grammar, new and unfamiliar or ambiguous words. Moreover, it shows how students can use Brainstorming while writing either in groups, pairs, or simply while working individually.

The mastery and acquisition of language requires the mastery of the four languages skills. Thus, writing is a fundamental element that students need to perform for effective language. For more effective language proficiency and a good acquisition, Brainstorming is a very helpful strategy used among students.

General Conclusion

While undertaking this research work, the researcher met some related limitations mainly lack of references and working under very stressing and constraining conditions due to Covid 19 lockdown measures.

Finally, hopefully that future studies go more than that, to make deeper investigations about how Brainstorming can improve writing skills in secondary schools where they can write easily without any difficulties, and help them to become good and better writers.

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Pupils' Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to collect data about the writing skill and how it can be improved by using Brainstorming among EFL learners. So, please fill it in by putting a cross in the right box, and answer the questions given by stating your own opinions.

Pupils' personal information

   1- Age

   2- Gender (Male /Female)

Pupils' preferences

   3- Which skill do you prefer?

   - Reading

   - Writing

   - Listening

   - Speaking

Why ……………………………………………………………………………………….
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………….. .

   4- What do you prefer to write?

   - Texts / Essays

   - Poems/ Quotes

   - Stories

   - Anythingthat comes to mind

Why?

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

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Appendix A

English Learning Objectives

5- What is your attitude towards learning English

- Positive
- Indifferent
- Negative
- Not interested

6- What is your reason for learning English?
- To speak and write English well
- To improve your level in English
- To prepare yourself for the Bac exam
- Because it is in the Curriculum

7- Do you think learning Writing in English is
- Very important
- Important
- Not important at all
- Doesn't affect

Writing Learning Objectives/difficulties

8- What is your purpose from writing?
- To write for pleasure
- To enrich your grammar
- To write only because you are asked to

9-   When you are writing and do not know a word, you
- Use a dictionary
- Ask your teacher/classmate
- Carry on even with mistakes
- Collapse and stop writing

Other:…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………… .

10- What kind of difficulties do you often encounter when you write?

-   *Grammar*

-   New/ Unfamiliar words

About brainstorming

11- When you have an activity, you

  - Prefer to work on your own

  - Prefer to work in pairs/ groups

  - It depends on the task

  Explain please

  …...…………………………………………………………….……………..

  ………………………………………………….……………………… .

 12-   Working in group and exchanging ideas with your classmates

   - Is beneficial

   - Is nearly the same as individual work

   - Is a waste of time

 13- When you take some time to work (individually or in group)

-    Your work seems better

-    Your answers are the same as instant answers

-    No differences noticed

 14- How much time you need to do brainstorming?

   - 05 to 07 minutes

   - 07 to 10 minutes

   - More than 10 minutes

Thank you for your Cooperation

Appendix A

<div dir="rtl">

يهدف هذا الاستبيان إلى جمع بيانات حول مهارة الكتابة وكيف يمكن تحسينها باستخدام العصف الذهني بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. لذا، ينرجو منكم تعبئته بوضع علامة في المربع المرافق، والإجابة على الأسئلة التي طرحت من خلال ذكر آرائكم الخاصة.

و شكرا

استبيان التلاميذ

المعلومات الشخصية للتلاميذ

1. **العمر**
2. **الجنس (ذكر – أنثى)**

تفضيلات التلاميذ

3. **ما هي المهارة التي تفضلها**
   - **القراءة**
   - **الكتابة**
   - **الاستماع**
   - **التحدث**
   لماذا

....
. ...

4. **ماذا تفضل أن تكتب؟**
   ـ نصوص / مقالات
   ـ قصائد / اقتباسات
   ـ قصص
   ـ أي شيء يتبادر إلى الذهن

5. **ما هو موقفك من تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية**
   ـ إيجابي
   ـغير مبال
   ـسلبي
   ـ غير مهتم

</div>

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6. ما هو سبب تعلمك للغة الإنجليزية؟

- التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية وكتابتها بشكل جيد

- لتحسين مستواك في اللغة الإنجليزية

- لتحضير نفسك لامتحان البكالوريا

- لأنها في المنهاج

7. هل تعتقد أن تعلم الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية أمر مفيد

- مهم جدا
- مهم
- ليس مهما على الإطلاق
- لا يؤثر

8. ما هو هدفك من الكتابة؟
- أن أكتب من أجل المتعة
- لإثراء قواعدك
- أن تكتب فقط لأنك مطالب بذلك

9. عندما تكتب ولا تعرف كلمة، أنت
- تستخدم المعجم
- تسأل أستاذك / زميلك
- تستمر حتى مع الأخطاء
- تتوقف عن الكتابة
آخر ....
....

10. ما نوع الصعوبات التي غالبا ما تواجهها عند الكتابة؟
- قواعد
- كلمات جديدة / غير مألوفة

11. عندما يكون لديك نشاط ، فأنت
- تفضل العمل بمفردك
- يفضل العمل في أزواج / مجموعات
- يعتمد ذلك على المهمة
وضح من فضلك ....
.. ..

.12 العمل الجماعي وتبادل الأفكار مع زملائك في الفصل
- **مفيد**
- **هو تقريبا نفس العمل الفردي**
- **مضيعة للوقت**

.13 عند قضاء بعض الوقت في العمل (فردي أو جماعي)
- **يبدو عملك أفضل**
- **إجاباتك هي نفس الإجابات الفورية**
- **لم يلاحظ أي اختلافات**

.14 كم من الوقت تحتاج للقيام بالعصف الذهني؟
- **من 05 إلى 07 دقيقة**
- **من 07 إلى 10 دقائق**
- **أكثر من 10 دقائق**

شكرا لتعاونكم

Teachers' Interview

Dear Teachers,

The present interview is about "Brainstorming and its efficacy to improve students' writing skills among third year pupils in the Secondary School".

Hence, we kindly request you to give us answers according to your own perspective and make comments if necessary.

Thank you for your collaboration

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1. How long have you been teaching English?

2. Is there any difficulties you face while teaching?

3. Which skill do you find the most difficult? And what do you do about it?

4. Do you follow ancient or modern ways of teaching? (You explain all the lesson to your pupils or you let them do brainstorming to discover their competencies and go the aim of the lesson by their own)

5. Is it you the centre of learning/teaching process in the classroom, or the pupils?

6. How many times do you teach writing per week?

7. What kinds of texts do you often use when teaching writing, and what do you think about them?

Appendix B

8.   Does the text selection affect the writing achievement? How?

9.   What difficulties doyour pupils face while writing?

10. How can you help your students when they do not know how to write words?

11. Do pupils engage in brainstorming sessions effectively?

12. How much time do you give your students for brainstorming?

13. Do they cooperate with each other?

14. According to you, does brainstorming sessions help pupils to improve their writing skills? How?

15. What brainstorming strategy(s) do you prefer to use and advise your pupils to use?

16. Was there any progress among pupils after using Brainstorming either in groups or individually?

17. What could you suggest as materials or techniques to improve students writing skills?

Thank you for your cooperation

مقابلة الأساتذة

أعزائي الأساتذة

تدور المقابلة الحالية حول ماهية العصف الذهني و فعاليته لتحسينمهارات الكتابة لدى الطلاب للسنة الثالثة ثانوي

ومن ثم، فإننا نطلب منكم أن تقدموا لنا إجابات وفقًا لهذا المنظور وإبداء التعليقات إذا لزم الأمر.

شكرا جزيلا لتعاونكم

1. منذ متى وأنت تدرس اللغة الإنجليزية؟

2. هل هناك صعوبات تواجهك أثناء التدريس؟

3. ما هي المهارة التي تجدها أصعب؟ وماذا تفعل حيال ذلك؟

4. هل تتبع طرق التدريس القديمة أو الحديثة؟ (أن تشرح كل الدرس لتلاميذك أم تسمح لهم بالقيام بالعصف الذهني لاكتشاف كفاءاتهم و أن يذهبوا إلى هدف الدرس بأنفسهم)

5. هل أنت مركز عملية التعلم / التدريس في الفصل أم التلاميذ؟

6. كم مرة تقوم بتدريس الكتابة في الأسبوع؟

7. ما أنواع النصوص التي تستخدمها كثيرًا عند تدريس الكتابة ، وما رأيك فيها؟

8. هل يؤثر اختيار النص على التحصيل الكتابي؟ كيف؟

9. ما الصعوبات التي يواجهها تلاميذك أثناء الكتابة؟

10. كيف يمكنك مساعدة طلابك عندما لا يعرفون كيفية كتابة الكلمات؟

11. هل ينخرط التلاميذ في جلسات العصف الذهني بشكل فعال؟

12. ما مقدار الوقت الذي تمنحه لطلابك من أجل العصف الذهني؟

13. هل يتعاونون مع بعضهم البعض؟

14. حسب رأيك ، هل تساعد جلسات العصف الذهني التلاميذ على تحسين مهارات الكتابة لديهم؟ كيف؟

15. ما هي إستراتيجية (استراتيجيات) العصف الذهني التي تفضل استخدامها وتنصح تلاميذك باستخدامها؟

16. هل حدث تقدم بين التلاميذ بعد استخدام العصف الذهني سواء في مجموعات أو بشكل فردي؟

17. ما الذي يمكن أن تقترحه كمواد أو تقنيات لتحسين مهارات الكتابة لدى الطلاب؟

شكرا لتعاونكم