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**EFL Students' Attitudes towards Brainstorming as a Pre-writing Stage  
To Improve the Writing Process  
A Case Study of Second Year of LMD Students of English at Abbes Laghrou  
University \_Khenchela**

*Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture*

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## **Abstract**

Writing is one of the productive skills which is difficult to acquire for EFL learners. The aim of this study is to investigate the EFL students' attitudes towards brainstorming as pre-writing stage to improve the writing process. Also, it aims at examining the effect of the writing process, and more precisely the brainstorming stage on the students' writing performance. Moreover, the main goal of this work is to increase many opportunities for EFL students to write using the brainstorming stage. In this research we opted for a descriptive method. A questionnaire is dispatched for second year LMD students of English and an interview is administered to teachers of written expression course at the University of ABBES LAGHROUR. The findings showed that the brainstorming stage plays an important role in developing the EFL students' written production. It helps execute creative ideas which help them to overcome the difficulties they may face when they write. Therefore, it can be marked that both teachers and students believe that the target EFL students improve their writing skill through the brainstorming stage.

**Key words:** Brainstorming stage, writing process, attitudes, EFL students

## **Dedication**

First of all thank to Allah, the almighty and glorious for having given me the strength and guidance to achieve this work.

I wish this work to be dedicated

To my dearest parents for their beliefs in me, specially my sweet mother for her loving and caring.

To my beloved sisters: **Faiza, Nadia, Amira** for their encouragement and help.

To my dear brothers: **Ramzi** and **Toufik** for their support.

To my closest friends: **Amira, Ahlem** and **Hayet** for providing me precious advice.

To all who knew me from near or far I dedicate this work.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ELT:** English language teaching

**ESL:** English as a second language

**LMD:** License Master Doctorate

**L 2:** Second language

**L1:** First language/ Mother tongue

**N:** Number of teachers/ students

**Q:** Question

**%:** Percentage

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## Glossary

**Writing process:** is an approach to writing that entails the recursive phases of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

**Brainstorming:** is a group problem-solving method that involves the spontaneous contribution of creative ideas and solutions.

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## **General introduction:**

Writing is one of the most important skills in teaching and learning a foreign language. It is a tool of communication and the skill, which is used mostly to enhance the learners' performance. Moreover, writing is a specific ability, which helps the learners to put their thought into words in a meaningful way, which means it involves the learning comprehension and thinking ability. Because of the complexity of this skill, many students face a problem to write a proper piece of writing. This is due to the lack of using the four stages of writing process. Many researchers made studies about the writing skill through the process of writing. In this research we discuss the reason behind the non-attainment of a higher level and good performance in writing as a matter of fact, it is speculated that students neglect the step of brainstorming which they must go through before writing. Hence, this research is to investigate the students' attitudes and performance to approach their understanding of writing as a skill.

### **1. Statement of the problem:**

Writing skill is an essential component for EFL students in the process of productive skills. Students need to be proficient in their writing in order to produce a suitable piece of writing. This is probably due to the lack of EFL students' awareness of vocabulary, grammar, spelling and most importantly the lack of using the four steps of the writing process such as planning, drafting, revising and outlining. Thus, students forget about these steps that will notably enable them to write well. These steps are needed for any EFL students to be academically successful. Therefore, students who follow those stages will produce quite an acceptable writing piece. However, the ones who do not follow those steps will have a poor writing. For this reason, students should be more practical in the classroom to improve and develop their writing.

## **2. Objectives of the study:**

This research aims at investigating the EFL student's attitudes towards the brainstorming stage. Moreover, the goal of this study is to increase opportunities for students to write using the writing process. It is aimed also to find out if the EFL students stick to these stages or they only write to finish the task they are obliged to solve. Besides, this study focuses on the students' writing process while they are engaged in some activities. However, most learners feel lost when they want to organize their ideas and their first coming thought. For this reason, teaching writing within the aforementioned processes develops their way of thinking and writing.

## **3. Research questions:**

This present study aimed at investigating the following questions:

- 1) Are the students aware of what they should do in order to write well?
- 2) Does the brainstorming stage improve the EFL students writing skill?
- 3) What are the students' attitudes towards using the brainstorming steps in improving the writing skill?

## **4. Research hypothesis:**

Based on the research questions, it is hypothesized that EFL students who use the brainstorming technique through the writing process will perform much better in written expression.

## **5. Research Methodology and design:**

### **a. Choice of the method:**

This study is non-experimental in that it aims at recognizing the students' perception towards the writing process. It aims also to study the importance of brainstorming stage on the first writing process. In addition to that, this study aims to find out to what extent the writing process steps are effective on EFL students written production. For this reason, the suitable method that goes with these aims is descriptive approach.

#### **b. Population and sample:**

The population from which the sample was selected contains about 147 students; they are enlisted in second year (2017/2018). The sample is about 39 students, they are randomly selected from second year groups at the department of English at ABBES LAGHROUR University. This sample was specifically selected because they are engaged with the four strategies of the writing process in this level. Besides the learners' sample, there is another complementing sample of teachers (05) teachers of written expression.

#### **6. Data gathering tools:**

The questionnaire is prepared for second year students at English Department of Khenchela University. It is opted for to have insights about using the stages of the writing process and an interview for English teachers of written expression.

#### **7. Background and Significance of the study:**

As it is mentioned earlier, According to Richards (2002) writing skill is the most important and difficult element in teaching and learning a foreign language. Mogahed (2013) for many people, especially young writers, starting to write is a problem. The EFL students may face problems and issues and even they may feel stressed and bored when they are asked to write something. For this reason, this study aims to investigate these problems and solve

them through using the writing process and much more important the brainstorming stage. Rao (2007) supports this view since the brainstorming strategy can help the EFL students to use their knowledge in their writing activity. Therefore, they will be able to discover what information they have and what they need to know. Fawzi and Hussein (2013) conducted a study on enhancing students' motivation to write essays through brainstorming. Furthermore, the goal of this research is to show that using such technique will enhance the level of the students, and develop their writing through the writing process.

### **8. Limits of the study:**

This study is focused on the second year English students at ABBES LAGHROUR University of KHENCHELA during the academic year 2017/2018.

## 9. Structure of the study:

Our research is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is divided into two sections:

**Section one:** in this section we will define the word writing; we will present the purpose and the objective of this skill according to barras, followed by the importance of writing across the curriculum. Also, we will look at the connection of writing with other language skills and the several problems that EFL learners encounter when they write. In addition to that, we emphasize on the teacher role and the main difficulties they may face when presenting the course.

**Section two:** The key concern of this section is the writing process, OSBORN will define the writing process as well as the brainstorming technique as it is the most important step. Followed by the different models of the writing process. The definition, Importance and goals of brainstorming stage will be highlighted. Also, we will present the major problems learners may face when they brainstorm and the several ways used to brainstorm ideas.

# *Chapter One : Section One*

## **Chapter one:**

### **Section one: The writing skill**

#### **Introduction:**

The Writing skill is an important component in teaching and learning foreign languages. It is viewed as a tool of communication and a productive skill which enables learners to produce a piece of writing.

In this chapter, we will define the word writing; we will present the purpose, and the objectives of this skill according to Barras, followed by the different types of writing, which will be; mentioned systematically. In addition to that, we will look at the connection of writing to other language skills, more precisely to reading and speaking. Furthermore, it is crucial to shed light on the writing context and the several problems that EFL learners encounter when they write. Finally, it is important also to emphasis on the teacher role and the main difficulties he/she may face when presenting the course.

### **1.1. Definition of writing:**

Writing well in foreign languages must be one of the most difficult jobs. The way of developing language and the meaning you want to transmit is not an easy task. As it is mentioned before; EFL students do not write as well as we think they should (e.g., Hillocks, 1986; Ping, 2000; Rijarsdam et al., 2005). writing is considered as a mean of communication that uses symbols with letters, and this latter produces piece of written language designed to be read. According to Byrne (1991:1) "when we write, we use graphic symbols that is, letters related to the sound that we produce in speeches".

### **1.2. Purpose of writing:**

Barras (2005:1) argued that:

*Writing is important in studying all subjects, and in all professions. Only by writing well can you give a good account of yourself as students or when applying for employment, or in a career when writing email, memoranda, letters instructions and reports. It is by your writing that many people judge you.*

Writing is the vehicle for communication and a skill mandated in all aspects of life. First it enables learners to prove their capacities and performance in order to meet their needs. Second, it is considered as a tool of translating ideas, thought, and emotions into words in any situation. Most importantly, it enables learners and teachers to share emotional commonality that leads to building relationship. With a strong teacher-learners connection, students welcome the opportunities to express their thought, feeling and reasoning writing.

Writing does not have to be fearsome. It is a natural part of life that is not a choice but an expectation. This tool provides the means for teacher to teach writing and provides a path for students to follow, these ideas are emphasized in the book of *Strategies For Teaching Writing* (2004).By this way; learners will sit with their final copy and smile at their accomplishment.

### **1.3. Styles of writing**

Writing is one of the means of communication depending on the purpose of this form of communication; we use different styles of writing. Depending on whom we are writing to, what we intend writing and why we are writing it. The language, vocabulary, syntax and even at times the tone and tenor of the writing changes. Writing can be broadly categorized as formal and informal writing. Each style used according to its purposes.

#### **1.3.1. Formal writing:**

Formal writing is usually used for academic or business writing in which the writer wants to convey some information. Also, it demands conventional sentences which are longer and more complex. In formal writing colloquialism is not required, for example we cannot say kids and folks in formal writing but instead of it we use words like children and people. Moreover, while writing formally, one must use the third person as a mark of respect and formality. Finally, the formal writing style shows a limited range of emotion and avoids emotive punctuation, contraction and abbreviations which must be spelt out in full.

#### **1.3.2. Informal writing:**

Informal writing is more personal in nature and the receiver is usually a friend or a close relative. It accepts short fragment sentences and it uses a simple language and colloquial usage is accepted. Furthermore, abbreviations and contractions are allowed, for example if

you are writing to your mother, you may write contraction like can't, won't or wouldn't.

Informal writing is similar to a spoken conversation; it may include slang, figures of speech, broken syntax, asides and so on and so for. Also, as is common among friends or close relatives, one uses an imperative voice and may address the receiver in first, second or third person while writing to them. Finally, in informal writing the writer can show empathy and emotions while writing.

#### **1.4. Writing and other skills:**

The acquisition of a language, whether our native tongue or a second language presumes a process in which both receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing) intervene to affect and complement each other simultaneously. It is through these four skills, the learners' performance will be achieved and strengthened. It is also involved the mastery of these different skills. Reading and writing go hand in hand and demonstrate that the learner is a part of literate society. However, not all the four skills are seen equally, writing and reading are "culturally specific, learned behaviors" (Brown, 2001:334), which are acquired by teaching. While, listening and speaking are acquired naturally. Many researchers argued that writing as a skill must be taught. But recently, it is investigated by combine it with other language skills, particularly to reading and speaking skills.

##### **1.4.1. Writing and speaking:**

The role of speaking skill with second writing classrooms is an interesting topic among researchers. The way it is presented is through the interaction of teacher-learner conversation. From one side, speaking and writing share the same linguistic resources and they may used also for the same communicative purposes. According to Brooks and Grund (1990, p.17), "both in logic and in practice the spoken and written mode share more common

purposes than we sometimes realize.” And from another side, speaking and writing are two different skills, writers have needed more time to plan, write and revise , whereas, speakers must plan and create utterances in few seconds when they have a course. Moreover, writing is considered more complex and more formal than speaking because when student asked to write about particular topic they use longer clauses and more subordinators. However, in speaking conversation, speeches are considered to be reliable by shorter and concise clauses.

Weissberg (2006) has specifically called for the increased integration of dialogue in the L2 writing classrooms. He argued that writing is “ fundamentally social phenomenon” best acquired by L2 learners when it is practiced in a classroom environment of social interaction, in other word, researchers are still not sure if a high social L2 writing classrooms environment actually has any effect on the quality of student writing (Weissberg, 2005). Despite the growing interest on those disciplines, the field of academic study seeking to understand the relationship between the development of speech and writing proficiencies (Weissberg, 2005).

#### **1.4.2. Writing and reading:**

*Reading strategies must be taught that will enable learners to comprehend the text in a way that will allow them to produce an appropriate essay. ...Because task- based reading is grounded in learners' needs, EAP instruction that focuses on task mastery does maintain a clear connection with genuine language in genuine communicative interactions.*

*(Carrell & Carson, 1997: 55-56)*

Reading Next (2004) and Writing Next (2007) have documented the importance of the reading-writing connection. Both reports affirm that students' reading and writing abilities are complimentary and growth in one skill leads to strengthen students writing skill. Both reports indicate a shared emphasis on reading and writing, in real-world practice, these skills are not

connected. In fact, reading and writing are supposed to be taught separately by different teachers. Gail Tompkins (2006) notes that reading and writing have been taught as opposites “readers decoded or deciphered language and writers encoded or produced written language” (p.46). However, other researchers showed that they share the use of similar cognitive strategies and processes. Also, many studies focused on the influence of reading on writing, Flower (1990) considered reading-to-write a way contains several activities that develop writing instruction. Besides that, it is considered as a tool to motivate students to improve their writing.

Moreover, it is viewed also that the effect of reading on writing is more than the effect of writing on reading; this must be considered for EFL students who are weak in reading skill. In addition, Stostsky (1983) argues that “good writers tend to be good readers and that good readers tend to produce more systematically nature writing than weak readers”, which means, there is a complementary relationship between writing ability and reading achievement. Furthermore, reading provides prior knowledge, the book of Harmer (Practice in Language Teaching) emphasis on the same idea saying that “reading text also provides good models for English writing”. He means that reading text helps the learners to write well, and build different vocabularies, sentences that enable them to create their own writing.

### **1.5. The Importance and impact of writing across the curriculum:**

Effective writing is a skill that is grounded in the cognitive domain. It involves learning comprehension, application and synthesis of the new knowledge. It also includes the creative inspiration, problem –solving and reflection. However, many students are not aware of the importance of this skill and the number of mistakes in their written works. Nowadays, the recent progress lacks the necessary writing skills which the students need to be one successful communication both during their studies and after graduation. The authors teach in

under graduation, said that both undergraduate and graduate programs are purely graduate progress.

The majority of students do not master the skills necessary in written format that enable them to be successful upon graduation. Students are in need to understand that being good in written communicators not enough, but they need also to understand the importance of good writing skill.

The key answer of pure writing is the environment in which students communicate; texting and email messages. The biggest problems with their strategies are that they rely on the use of abbreviation and informal language. However, faculty members must address the writing skills adequately to prepare students for jobs that need responsibility. Half of the students respond lacked basic skills (Baer, Cook, and Baldi, 2006). Holtzman and colleagues (2005), in article about assessing the writing skills of dental students, noted that “the ability to communicate effectively has been recognized as a hallmarks for membership in the learned profession”. (Holtzman, Elliot, Biber, and Sanders, 2005, p.285).

### **1.6. Writing problems:**

Al-Khsawneh (2010) said that the environment and the teaching method are the main reasons of the students' weaknesses in English. Their weak performance is due to the lack of motivation in class, or the teacher's interest. If they are not attached to other cultures, they will automatically use their L1. Until this time students are still using Arabic in English classes, which lead them to writing done in Arabic. The other causes are the teachers' low proficiency in English, and lack of writing practice in educational institutions. Moreover, researches showed that limited vocabulary include the repeating words, Rabab'ah (2003), showed that students are not able to express their ideas because of the lack of choosing the

right words. The present tense is the most and only used tense in their writing as the result of unwilling to share their work with other students.

Writing is the most difficult skill for EFL students to master. Gomaa (2010) indicated that “students’ first language affects learning the target language”. This shows why EFL students make mistakes. The following mistakes are the most experienced ones while teaching writing:

**a. Run on sentences:** Run in sentences is not allowed in writing English while in Arabic is accepted even without punctuation marks.

**b. Arabish:** When student translate Arabic into English they cause misunderstanding and confusion with meaningless sentences.

**c. Punctuation:** The lack of using punctuation in Arabic like commas and periods affect in using them in English language.

**d. Writing Organization:** In English essays (the topic sentence of the same idea is the conclusion) whereas in Arabic assays in the conclusion you should bring something new.

### **1.7. Difficulties in teaching the writing skill:**

Kimble and Garmezy in Brown(2000) state that learning is perpetual process of the change in behavioral tendency; which means that teaching is not only about transferring knowledge but , it is also about changing behavior. Teachers should be aware of these changes in order to help students to perform much better. Many students face difficulties to master the writing skill, they showed little use of strategies when they write an essay. Therefore, teachers are supposed to realize their important roles towards students’ learning and more precisely in writing.

In order to write a proper piece of paper, there were many strategies should be respected such as: establishing language making drafts, reading and revising then editing them (Hedge, 2000). These strategies become difficult for student who has a low proficiency of using the target language (Richard and Remandya, 2002). Because of that teachers are required to have different strategies while they are teaching writing. Furthermore, teachers are responsible for students' performance. It means that the success of the students is guided by the teachers' instruction, explanation and motivation. For teacher the main function is conceptualizing, planning and delivering courses (Hyland, 2003) combined by their experience and knowledge. Although, it is difficult context to cope with, teachers must be aware that the main purpose of language teaching is leading the English learners to be efficient in their writing production.

**Conclusion:**

In this chapter, we have represented the definition of the writing skill and its purposes. Then, we shed light on the importance of writing across the curriculum, besides the major problems that can be found for both teachers and learners in teaching and learning process. In the next section we will examine the writing process and more precisely the brainstorming technique as pre-writing stage that can be helpful to increase the learner's thinking creativity.

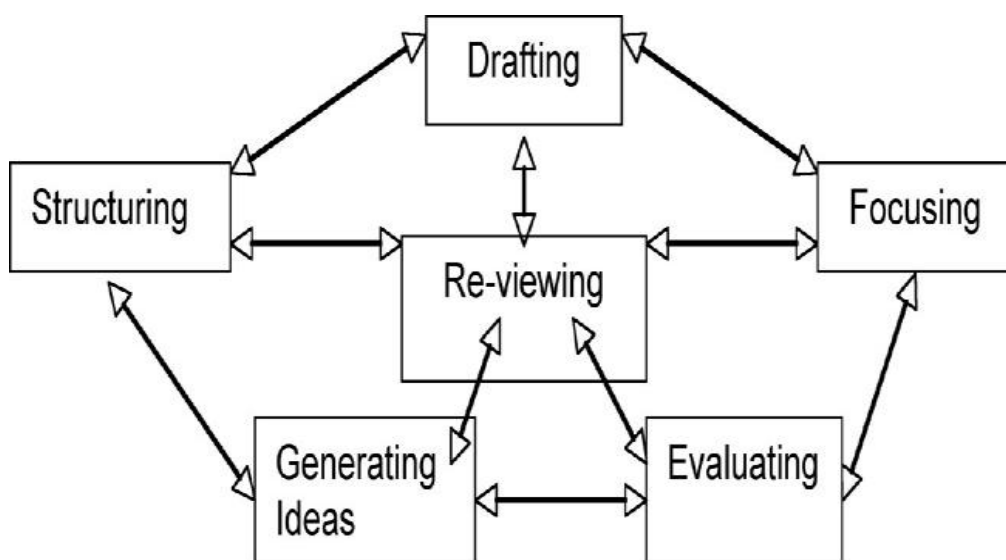
# ***Chapter One : Section Two***

**Chapter one:****Section two: the brainstorming stage****Introduction**

The key concern of this chapter is the writing process; Osborn will define the writing process as well as the brainstorming technique as it is the most important step. Following the models of Hayes and Flower (1980), Bereiter and Scardamalia(1987), the definition, importance, purpose, and goals of pre-writing stages will be highlighted. From the previous insights, a primary focus will be on the brainstorming technique in addition to the major problem that learners may face when they brainstorm as well as the different ways used to brainstorm ideas. Finally, we will discuss the relationship between the learner's effective writing and brainstorming stage.

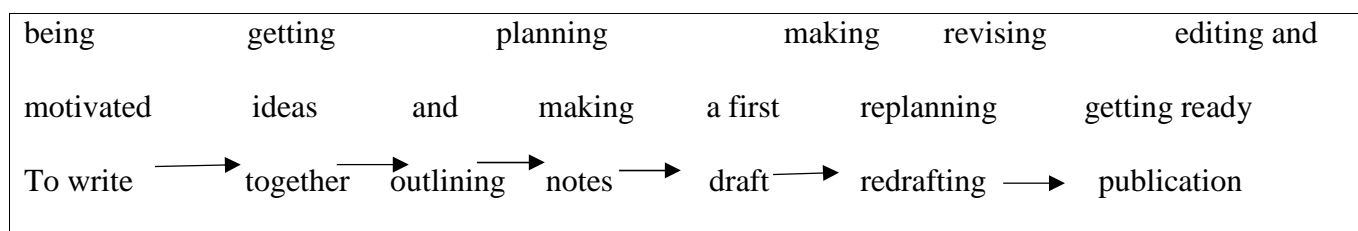
### 1.1. Definition of the writing process:

Writing process is an approach to writing in which the EFL student starts focusing on how they can produce a piece of written language designed to be read. Writing is not that easy because it is a recursive process, for example, brainstorming, one of the important skill for the prewriting step, it can be exercised many times during the process of writing because each time you need to bring new ideas whenever you write something. In simplified manner figure 1 tries to explain the complexity of being the process of writing recursive (White and Arndt, 1991:43).



**Figure 1 – A model of writing (White and Arndt, 1991:43)**

The basic rule of the writing says that you need to think about what you are going to write, before you write. This is due to the complexity of the writing task. In order to write a proper piece of writing, there are some stages which help the learners to become more proficient. There are different stages around four to ten such as planning, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading and presenting as in figure 2:



**Figure 2 – Stages involved in process writing (Hedge, 2005:51)**

Writing well in a second language would require more and higher cognitive skills to be able to write well. Kellogg (2001) explained that the process needs to involve a test of a person's memory, Repertoire language, thinking ability all at once. According to Harmer (December, 2009) "Spoken language for a child is acquired naturally as result of being exposed to it, Whereas the ability to write has to be consciously learned". This means writing needs a strong desire from the learners in order to express their ideas, feeling and their opinion toward any topic they may face.

Also, they emphasize on the importance of developing students' ability to plan, identify issues and analyze and implement possible solutions (Hyland, 2003: 10). In other words, teachers train students to become self-aware and reflect on the activities and strategies they carry out while they write (Hyland, 2003). It is seen as a process of discovery and thinking (Hedges, 2000) Writing is not simple as it seems because it needs a specific process which it goes through practice .only few writers can achieve a higher level in writing due to the lack of relating the correct meaning with correct words. Furthermore, writers are in need to have the ability to convey writing aims that goes regularly with their personnel thinking and take writing as a tool of expression of ideas.

## **1.2. The importance of the writing process**

In traditional writing classrooms, the writing process was largely ignored. Teachers ask students to write regularly but they do not give them much guidance in their writing. Fortunately, this began to change in 1960s when writing teachers and researchers began to

talk about writing process that could be explicit taught. Donald Murray was one of the writing teachers who saw the traditional mode and emphasized the importance of teaching a process of discovery. According to Murray (1983), teaching is viewed differently; he puts it: "once you look at your composition program with the realization you are teaching a process, you may be able to design a curriculum which works" (p.89). For this reason, the writing process is considered as a method of transmitting information effectively which has an important role for both teachers and learners. In The list below some of the important features of the writing process:

- 1/** Gives students the opportunity to write from their own experience and knowledge.
- 2/** Helps develop positive relationships between student /teacher and student/student.
- 3/** Provides assistance with writing and editing because students get input from student/teacher.
- 4/** Provides immediate feedback in many of the stages of the "Writing Process," and students know that they are heading in the right direction for a given writing task.
- 5/** Allows students to think about the message first then work on correcting mistakes in their writing.
- 6/** The editing process help students develop an awareness of corrections
- 7/** Gives students the opportunity to feel, see, and experience success with writing
- 8/** Teaches students the basic skills, structures, and language of writing that can be built upon as they continue through the education process and beyond.
- 9/** Transfers to all content areas improve clarity and focus in writing, and produces writing on the topic assigned.

**10/** Is effective regardless of ability, language, or educational level.

### **1.3. Reasons for teaching the writing process**

The writing process allows teachers to focus their attention on improving students' writing activities to produce a meaningful product. So, the writing process offers a graphic that synthesizes the recursive nature and interconnectedness of each stage of the writing process. It provides a sense of ownership for the writer on the next stage or to continue with other strategies within that stage. Student need to be taught that they are responsible for their production. But first, teacher needs to guide them to choose the appropriate tools to meet their needs. For student to be process writers, they need to take control of their own writing.

Furthermore, the extended use of the writing process allows the students to experience each strategy and understand its nonlinear placement within each stage. Their comprehension and application of the writing process allow them to become experienced writers and make conscious choices regarding their writing.

According to Brown (2007:392), process writing encourages the following principles:

1. Produce a well written outcome.
2. Allows the student to discover the strategies; planning, drafting, revising, outlining.
3. Helps the student to analyze and understand their writing processes.
4. Allows the student to provide enough time to write, rewrite and revise.
5. Enables student to transfer their ideas into a well written production.
6. Gives opportunities for peer and teacher feedback.

### **1.3. Models of the writing process**

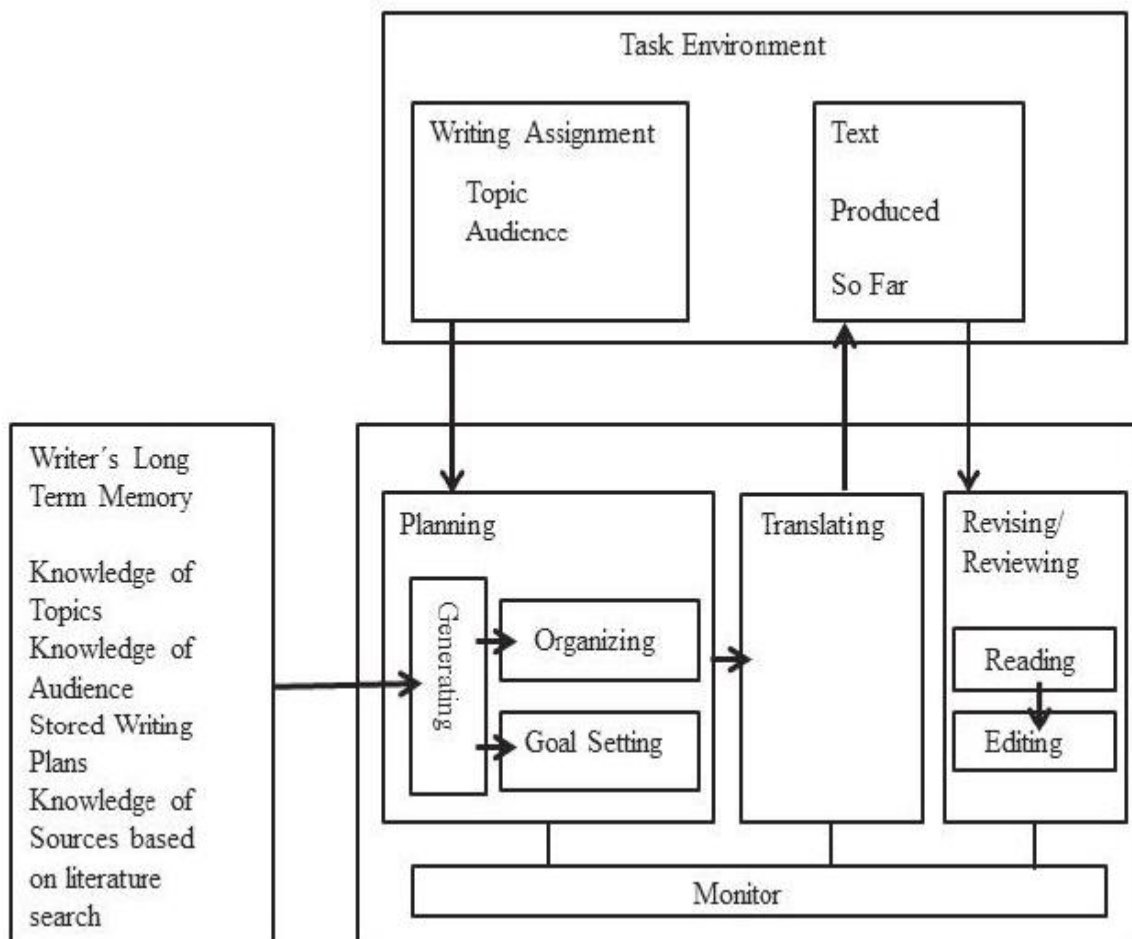
Cognitive models have tended to define writing in terms of problem-solving (cF.McCutchen, Teske, & Brankston, 2008). Over the last year's composition, researchers have tried to analyze the process through different writing models. There were two different models which are mostly used known as Hayes and Flower model (1980) and Bereiter and Scardamalia model (1987). In 1980 Linda Flower and John Hayes attempted to classify the various activities that occur during writing and their relationships to task environment and to internal knowledge state of the writer. However, in 1987 another model was proposed by Bereiter and Scardamalia. They focused more specifically on the diagnostic element of CDO process.

#### **1.3.1 The Hayes and Flower model**

Hayes and Flower model mainly focused on the mental activities involved in writing and sources of knowledge that writers use. They argue that the writer's long term memory has various types of knowledge (knowledge of topic, audience and stored writing plans); in which they include two new sub-stages: 1) processes, which involved reading to evaluate, selecting a strategy and executing the revision; and 2) knowledge, which contained task definition, criteria for planning and text; problem representation, and revision procedures. Also, they present the cognitive path in which the writer's knowledge and intentions are both included in the model. In addition to that, Hayes and Flower identified four major writing processes which are: planning, translating, reviewing, and monitoring. Moreover, Hayes (1991) model is specific about contents of long term and short term memory among task schemas, topic knowledge, audience knowledge, linguistic knowledge and genre knowledge.

John Hayes and N. Ann Chenoweth propose a new version of the 1996 task schema that includes three levels: control, process and resource. Through this model, the study

showed increase language skills facilitated writing fluency, which means that teachers should give students chance to practice writing to increase their lexical and strategic proficiency.



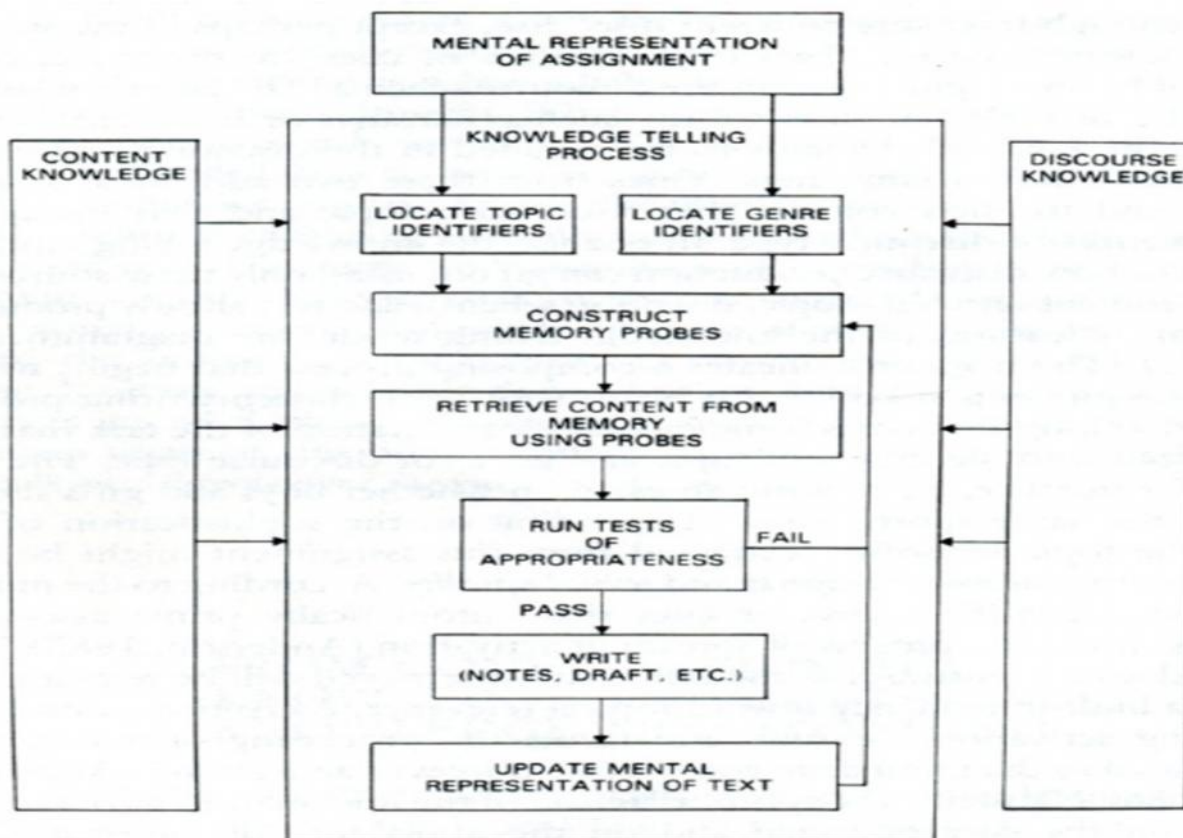
**Figure 3: The cognitive process writing model Hayes-Flower (1981:370)**

### 1.3.2. The Bereiter and Scardamalia model

The second model that came after Hayes and Flower model is the Bereiter and Scardamalia model (1987). Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia expanded the evaluation and revising process suggested by Flower and Hayes model in (1980). In this model they propose that skilled writers often problematize a writing task, adopting a strategy that called

knowledge transforming. However, the knowledge telling consisted of creating what wants to say and the generate text to say it. This means that in knowledge telling writers consider writing as less important act without any interest to follow a certain process. Whereas, in the knowledge transforming, writers should follow the different steps of the process in order to solve problems and choose valid content. So that, expert writers can move freely between knowledge telling and knowledge transforming.

Moreover, Bereiter and Scardamalia theorized that when revising writers first compare their mental text with what they have written, since the majority of the writers work by what they planned to write rather than the actual text. Furthermore, they focused on the difference between expert writers and novice writers in constructing and reviewing their text. Bereiter and Scardamalia model aims to compare diagnose and operate (CDO) planning stage in their 1983 model. The CDO process has been proposed for elementary- aged children, so that they can write and review their sentences. The result shows the lack of diagnostic skills most novice writers possess.



**Figure 4: Structure of the Knowledge Telling Model Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987)**

## 2.5. Writing process as a thinking process

The writing process is a series of overlapping steps that you must follow to produce a piece of writing. When students write, the only thing they care about is to finish their written task. Some students spend a whole time thinking about what they want to say while the other ones do not think at all, they grab their pens or laptop and starting write whatever they come to their mind because they just want to complete the assignment and pass it in.

Most writers would agree with novelist E. M. Forster, who wrote “how can I know what I think until I see what I say” this saying goes with William Zinsser saying “writing is a thinking on paper” which means that writing and thinking are related and linked with each other. Therefore, expert writers will know that writing task is stimulus to thinking.

In addition, writing makes thinking concrete; which means that it helps students to transform their thinking and thought into facts and words. Also this process empowers

students “to take charge of their own minds” in order to lead them to be creative writers, and thinking in writing is more related to brainstorming stage (pre-writing) in which brainstorming is considered as a thinking stage.

## **2.6. The role of teacher during the writing process**

Teaching writing is not a simple job that aims to transfer knowledge but also it aims to teach moral behavior. As we know, students rely on the teacher instruction and guidance more than themselves. Therefore, teachers who are competent enough to teach writing and know about “the pedagogical content knowledge” are the appropriate ones to present and transmit the information in a meaningful way. In fact, many students have the problem of mastering effective writing (Graham & Harris, as cited in De La Paz & Graham, 2002), this means that they are in need of teacher support. Teachers are expected to help students to develop their writing during the process of teaching writing; which means that they are in need to use different methods and strategies such as: brainstorming, planning, drafting and outlining in order to motivate and grasp their intention.

Harmer (2004:41) suggest some tasks for teachers before, during and after the writing process which are: 1) demonstrating, 2) motivating and provoking, 3) supporting, 4) responding and 5) evaluating.

- **Demonstrating:** teachers are required to show the genre constraints of a certain types of writing to their students in order to make them understand what the course is about.
- **Motivating and provoking:** many students find difficulties to write in English and they get lost to choose the exact words they must use. Therefore, teachers should provoke students to get the idea and motivate them to write more.

- **Supporting:** in the process of teaching writing, students are in need of help to write. Teachers take many roles, one of them is to support and help students whenever they face difficulties.
- **Responding:** after teachers read the students writing work, they give feedbacks or suggestions in order to produce a well written form.
- **Evaluating:** evaluating is the last job for teachers. To evaluate is to assess the students' works by giving marks or remarks to develop their writing.

Also, harmer (2007:261\_262) mentioned other roles in the teaching and learning process of writing which are: 1) motivator 2) resource 3) feedback provider.

- **Motivator:** teacher should motivate and encourage students by creating a pleasant learning atmosphere.
- **Resource:** the teacher is the reliable source of information for students. Therefore, teachers must be ready to provide them the amount of information they are in need to use.
- **Feedback provider:** teachers react to students work in a way that helps students to develop their level and it must be based on what they need.

To conclude, we can say that the success of students to be better writers is guided by the teachers' performance by taking different roles in the teaching and learning the writing process.

## 2.7. Stages of the writing process

Darayseh (2003) stated that nowadays, teaching writing is not anymore about doing grammar exercise, punctuation and spelling mistakes. However, the emphasis is on the process; the series of steps which the students must follow to rich their final product. Several

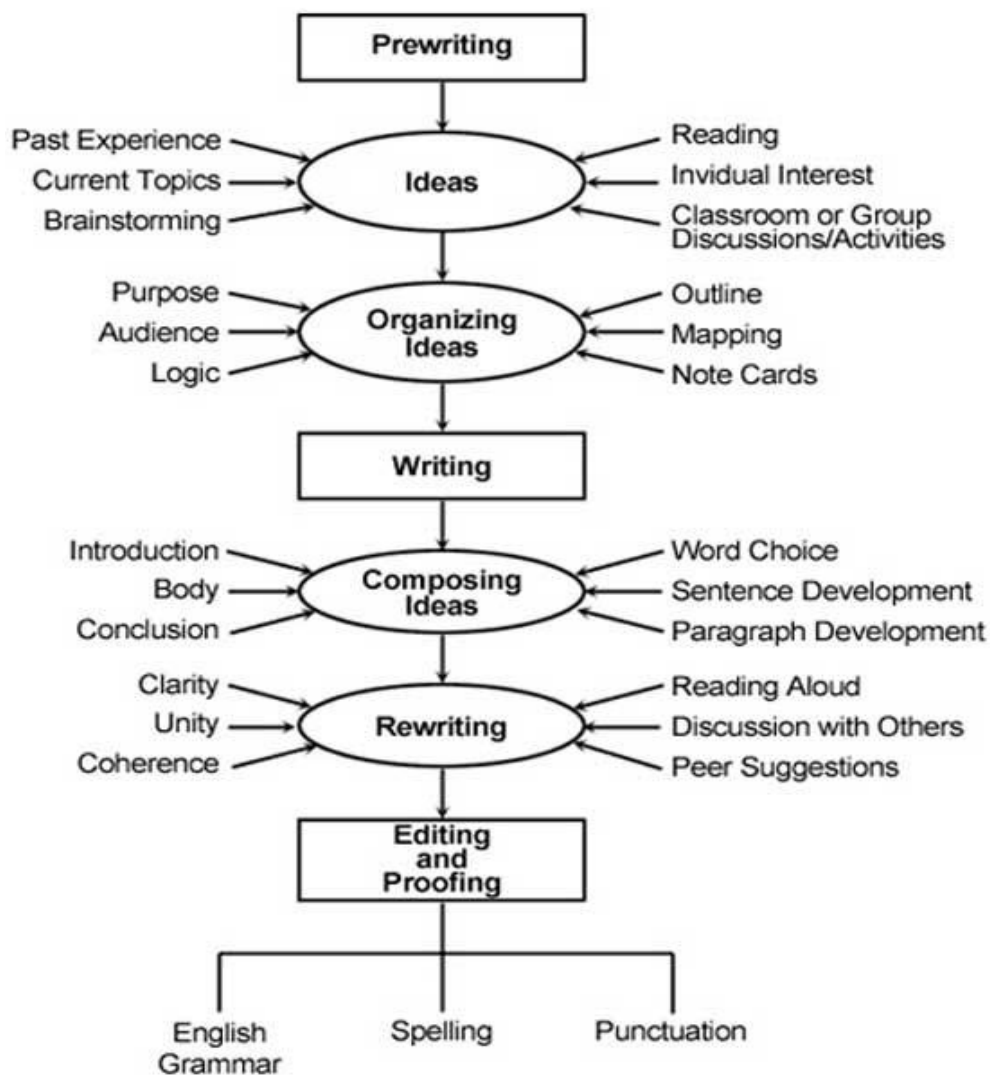
studies have conducted in the writing field indicating that the writing process includes different stages which help the learners to improve their writing skills. Actually, there is no fixed number of stages, but the most used and repeated ones are: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing/proofreading. For each stage there are specific learning activities that direct the learners writing. For example, in the prewriting stage, learners are in need to prepare themselves to write and to generate ideas using several strategies such as, brainstorming, clustering and rapid free writing.

In the classroom, teaching the writing process means that the learners will engage with the following stages:

### **2.7.1. Pre-writing**

The prewriting stage or the planning stage based on activating the student's previous knowledge through brainstorming and other activities. It aims to encourage and support students to write; the main purpose of the pre-writing stage as Brown (2007) names them is to activate any prior knowledge that can help learners to improve their written piece.

Also, it focuses on who is going to read the written outcome and whom they are writing for (sense of audience). Likewise, Richard (1992) indicated that the more time learners spent on prewriting activities, the more successful their writing will be. Tompkin (2001) noted that the most neglected stage is the pre-writing stage; which means that learners did not pre-write at all. Many researches showed that learners who are engaged with the pre-writing activities prove greater writing achievement. In addition to that there is different method to get ideas; the brainstorming technique is the most important strategy in provoking creativity and solving problems in the educational, commercial, industrial and political fields.



**Figure 5 : writing process as a dynamic process**

### 2.7.1.1. Definition of pre-writing (brainstorming technique)

The brainstorming technique is notably the most famous tools of creative problem solving. It is a simple, easy strategy to learn, and has a huge ability to effect and improve group idea generation in addition to the pleasure with the activity itself. In addition, brainstorming is considered as a powerful practice when the learners encounter their first coming ideas and thought; which seem to be unimportant. According to Isksen (1998) brainstorming is one of the most well-known tools for effective thinking. On the other hand,

creative thinking is defined as a compound mental thinking that aims to manage a strong desire to find solutions (Jarwan, 2008).

The term brainstorming was suggested by Dr. Alex Osborn in 1953, in which he defined this technique as: “an organized way to allow mind to produce ideas without getting bogged down trying to judge the value of those ideas at the same time”(Kirk & Spreckelmeyer, 1993, p. 85). Also, Osborn claimed that learners can develop their creative output by the help of brainstorming. As a matter of fact, teaching writing to EFL learners become an important subject for both teacher and learner starting by brainstorming technique and it's relation to learner's motivation. During the brainstorming sessions there should therefore be no criticism of ideas in which learners are trying to open possibilities and break down wrong assumption about the limits of the problem. Hence, ideas should only be evaluated at the end of the brainstorming session.

One of the benefits of brainstorming is the activation of reader's prior knowledge. Feather (2004, p.82) "brainstorming provides plenty of materials for making prediction". Therefore, learners will be aware about a given topic before they read it. And through this strategy learners will consciously enhance their reading comprehension.

- **Stages of brainstorming session**

According to A-blwi (2006) the stages are:

- A. Phrasing the Problem: the teacher offers a problem and students receive and grasp the meaning.
- B. Framing the problem: the teacher asks question and offers solution without the need for further brainstorming.

C. Practicing brainstorming for one or more than one statement in problem: this step needs:

1. Conducting warming up session
2. Receiving ideas even if they were nonsense.
3. Offering the four principles of brainstorming on the board in order to be seen by students.
4. Writing and presenting all ideas (Proposed solutions).
5. Frustration and boring must be avoided.

D. Offering the ideas: this step deals with selecting the suitable ideas according to novelty, originality, usefulness, duration and cost as well as logic (BaniHamad, 2006).

#### **2.7.1.2. The purposes of brainstorming stage**

Brainstorming is one of the most used tools for effective thinking. It is a technique used during the writing process to encourage individuals to come up with solutions to a given problem. Brainstorming is a spontaneous act which helps learners to express their ideas and show their creative thoughts.

Students who had been trained in brainstorming technique and used them regularly over a twelve-month period produced measurably higher results in writing tasks. In addition to this, an attitudinal survey showed that students who participated in this research project felt positive about the effectiveness of the brainstorming techniques.

Rao (2007)

Brainstorming is a technique used to encourage learners to create ideas and to find solutions to a given problem. It is viewed as the first step in the writing process and an

effective tool to motivate learners writing. Sayed (2009) said that brainstorming has a great importance in the teaching process. First, it is considered as a strategy to develop the communicative skills. Second, it helps the learners to raise their thinking skill as well as obtain several opinions. Brainstorming also regarded as a way to help students to solve problems and to get benefit from their ideas by rebuilding them. Moreover, it aids the cohesion of the student built relationships among them and assess the views of other.

From the other hand, (humaidan, 2005) said that brainstorming strategy helps teacher to be more respectful to the different points of view. Also, teaching learners the different brainstorming techniques is purposeful because it assists them to cultivate their writing and generate ideas that are very important in second language acquisition (Harmer, 2001).

Brainstorming technique is an automatic and spontaneous act without the need to prepare anything and it is used under any circumstances (Buzan, 1993). There two types of brainstorming: individual and group brainstorming. Many studies have shown that when the individual brainstorm on their own, they come up with more ideas. Individual brainstorming is a best way to generate ideas; it enables learners to create wider range of ideas than with group brainstorming. But it is probably less effective at developing them. But, group brainstorming can be very effective to bring creativity to all members of the group. Also, it helps every member to feel involved in the problem to find solution, and through discussion they will exchange every creative idea comes to their minds.

### **2.7.1.3. Major problem that learners face when they brainstorm**

Brainstorming has long been described as one of the best ways to find new ideas. However, learners who have a limited imagination, who feel shy and quiet, they will face many problems during the brainstorming section. Therefore, they will not contribute much; the following problems are the major problems learners may face:

- 1) It takes time to organize: this especially happened when you are in need to write an essay in a limited period like exams.
- 2) You generate ideas but do not know how to evaluate these: this is a serious problem, mostly happened with EFL students when they generate many ideas but they have no idea on how they exercise them in their written work.
- 3) Not everyone contributes equally: this happened in group work brainstorming. There are some members' works and produce creative ideas while the others do not participate at all; which create a big conflict between the members group.
- 4) Fixed in a dominant idea: the first coming ideas are easy to get dominant by a particular idea which means that the originality of the output is low.
- 5) It is hard to brainstorm by yourself: individual brainstorming come up with more ideas but it less effective at developing them. Student who brainstorm alone are facing many problems when they want to develop their ideas.
- 6) Lots of ideas yet little action: the purpose of brainstorming stage is not to generate lots of ideas but to solve a problem.
- 7) Getting stuck to choose the right ideas: most students feel stressed and lost to choose the correct ideas in order to put them in a task they are asking to do.

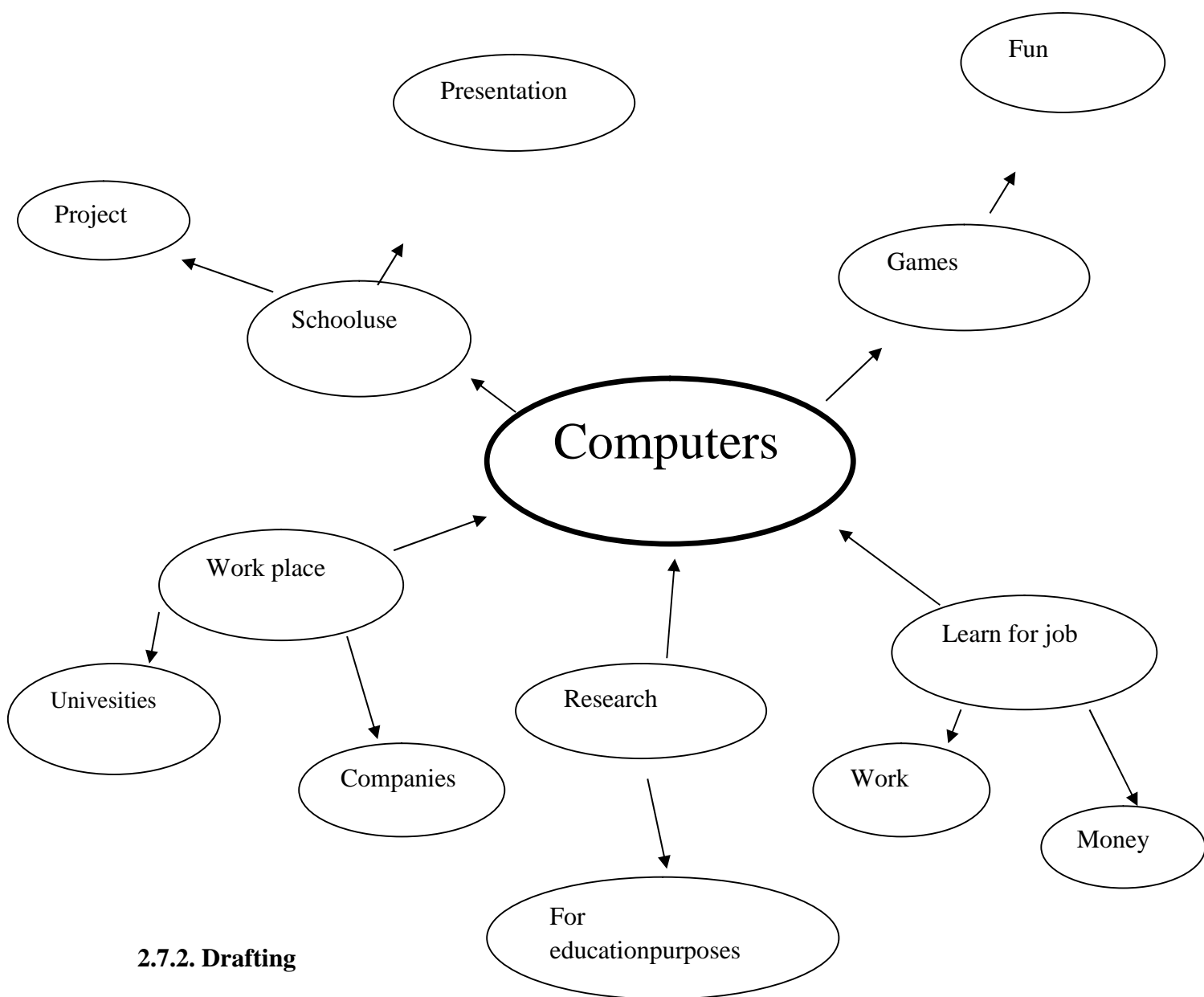
#### **2.7.1.4. The best methods to brainstorm:**

Brainstorming can be a powerful way to discover new ideas and thought, the main objective of this stage is to clarify your issue, and to be concisely stated in a single sentence.

There are several methods for effective brainstorming but the most used ones are:

freewheeling brainstorming, structured brainstorming, mind mapping brainstorming.

- a) Freewheeling brainstorming: the aim of this method is to encourage student free thinking and energy around the objective. Freewheeling brainstorming provide a large quantity of ideas. It is mostly used where the quantity if ideas are important and it uses one or more flip chart than recorded the ideas that have been created.
- b) Structured brainstorming: this method focus on the members of the team in which all of them have the chance to participate. The following steps are systematically used in structured brainstorming:
  - 1) Define the brainstorming purpose
  - 2) Give 5-10 minutes to each student to create individual brainstorming
  - 3) The round robin technique (ask a student bout his/her idea the move to the rest). Sharing ideas then capturing them
  - 4) Respect the rules of brainstorming: no discussion, no criticism.
  - 5) Carry on with all the students until all the ideas have been tacked.
- c) Mind mapping brainstorming: using mind mapping in brainstorming sessions frees the student to capture everything that comes to their mind, without giving importance to order and logic. All what they need is to bring a piece of paper turned horizontally, your brain and your creativity. For example taking the word computers:



In this stage, students start drafting their writing in which they will reconstruct their ideas and words into paragraph form. Drafting is the “physical act of writing” Richards and

Rodgers (2001:p.43). According to Hedge (2005:p.89), drafting is when the writer “puts together the pieces of the text through developing ideas into sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure”. Also, students are not expected to perfect on their written production, because this stage is considered only as a tool of discovering ideas. The main focus of drafting stage is the content rather than the mechanics, the ideas comes easily and the words be written rapidly. Besides, all the writing drafts should be kept while and after the writing them. These drafts are extremely important for new leading thought for the coming stages.

### **2.7.3. Revising**

After finishing with the drafting stage, students are obliged to check their errors and grammar mistakes; they will pay their attention on both content and organization of the ideas. The reviewing stage is the process of checking and discovering new perceptions. Badger and White (2000) argued that revising stage is when the writers check what they want to say in a clear manner. Moreover, revising is considered as the heart of writing, it does not focus on spelling, grammar and punctuation but also it is a tool used to help students to add, substitute, delete and rearrange materials. Muncie (2000:p.49).

### **2.7.4. Editing/ publishing**

At this stage, students are asked to prepare their final draft in order to be evaluated by the teacher. Thus, the brainstormed ideas will take place in a formal paper. Furthermore, students will revise and edit carefully their piece of paper to ensure that there are no errors like word choice and word order (Johnson, 2008). Muncie (2000:p.51) defines editing as “putting the piece of writing into its final form”. Student will ultimately polish their writing as follow: the order of information, the layout, the spelling, the punctuation, handwriting, choice of words and grammar”. The purpose of this stage is to share and celebrate student’s finished products. Therefore, students will have confidence in themselves as writers.

## **2.8. The relationship between the learners' effective writing and brainstorming stage**

Brainstorming and writing motivation are two crucial fields in second language learning and teaching. Many studies have been found that brainstorming stage has an effective role on enhancing the students writing skill. Besides, it has been considered as an important stage in the process of learning a second or foreign language. For EFL students brainstorming is regarded as creative stage that can help them to carry out writing tasks. Due to brainstorming, students are freer to break up the usual way and start generates creative solutions to a given problem. According to Isakson (1998) brainstorming is one of the most well known tools for effective thinking. Then again, Bobb-Wolff (1996) indicates that brainstorming is useful method to show students that they are enriched enough to create more ideas to improve the writing process. Numerous researchers have been found that the high quality creative ideas are likely achieved through brainstorming. Liaw's(2003) indicated that the use of content-based approach is suitable to promote EFL learner's critical thinking skills. Furthermore, teachers should provide their learners with the previous strategies for help them to develop their level in writing and to enhance their performance as writers.

## **Conclusion**

In this section, the definition of the writing process and its importance to language teaching and learning are inclusively highlighted. In particular, more focus was by Osborn (1953) on brainstorming stage as creative stage that helps learners to improve their writing skill. Also, we have showed the major problems that learners may face during generating ideas and ending up with the relationship between the learner's effective writing and brainstorming stage.

## ***Chapter two : Field Work***

## Chapter two

### Data Analysis and Interpretation:

#### Introduction:

After finishing with the theoretical part dealing with its several elements, this chapter is about the practical work of the research in which we investigated and analyzed the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview. Commonly, the students' questionnaire aims to identify the students' attitudes towards the brainstorming stage as pre-writing stage and mainly the problem that they may face when dealing with such topic. Whereas, the teachers' interview aims to gain the need data that can help students to use brainstorming stage in the teaching and learning process.

#### Part one

#### 1. Students' questionnaire :

##### 1.1. Description of students' questionnaire:

The questionnaire is prepared for second year students at English Department of Khenchela University. It aims at obtaining their views and perspectives concerning the process of writing and its importance. Students are asked to tick the appropriate answer or to write full statement answers where necessary. Also, it is divided into three sections. Each section deals with different aspect of the writing process.

##### **Section one:** background information (Q1\_Q4)

It represents general information about the students' sex, age and their specialty in secondary school.

**Section two:** Students' perceptions towards learning writing skill (Q1\_Q4)

This section contains five items. It aims to provide with students opinions and interest about the use and purpose of writing skill.

**Section three:**students' opinion about using brainstorming as pre-writing stage to improve writing skill (Q1\_Q8)

This section contains eight items. It is designed to identify the students' attitudes towards using the writing process and more precisely the brainstorming stage. The first three items deal with the importance and purpose of the writing process. The next four items deal with the students' opinions about the necessity of using the brainstorming as a pre-writing stage to improve their writing skill. The last item is about the students' free views towards using the appropriate ways to produce a well written production.

**1.2. Analysis of the results:****Section one: (1\_4) background information****Item one: Age**

<b>Options</b>	<b>19 years</b>	<b>20 years</b>	<b>21 years and more</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Students' number</b>	14	13	12	39
<b>Percentage %</b>	36%	33%	31%	100%/

**Table 1:** Students' age

The table above shows that their ages are close to each other in which (36%) of students are 19 years old, (33%) students are 20 years old, and 12 students whose age are 21 years old and more.

**Item two: Students' gender**

Options	Male	Female	Total
Students' number	5	34	39
Percentage%	13%	87%	100%

**Table 2:** Students' gender

The results show that the majority of students are females; they represent 87% from the whole population while the rest 13% represent males.

**Item three: what is your baccalaureate major?**

Options	Foreignlanguages	Sciences	Letters	Maths	Other	Total
Students' number	18	16	05	00	00	39
Percentage%	46%	41%	13%	00%	00%	100%

**Table 3:** The classification of students' specialty

As indicated in the table above, students' responses show that (46%) of them studied foreign languages. Science major with (41%) while (13%) of the participants were doing letters and philosophy. This means that the majority of the participants who were studying foreign languages choose to learn English at university.

**Item four: are you good at?**

Options	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Total
Students' number	11	16	09	03	39
Percentage %	28%	41%	23%	8%	100%

**Table 4:** The students' attitudes towards the language skill they master

The previous table demonstrates that 16 of students consider speaking as an easy skill to master with (41%), then comes listening with a rate of (28%). Reading comes third that (23%) of the participants are quite good at it. And last comes writing with the lowest percentage (08%). From these insights, we can deduce that writing skill is the most difficult skill for EFL learners.

#### **Section two: (1\_4) students' perceptions toward learning writing**

##### **Item one: are you interesting in writing?**

Options	Yes	No	Total
Students' number	28	11	39
Percentage %	72%	28%	100%

**Table 5:** The students' interest toward writing skill

From the table above, it is noted that 28 students are interesting in writing with (72%), whereas (28%) assume the opposite.

##### **Item two: you learn writing skill to:**

- a) Develop your language proficiency
- b) Pass exams
- c) Write essays, articles and letters

Options	Develop your language proficiency	Pass exams	Write essays, articles and letters	Total
Students' number	25	08	06	39
Percentage %	64%	21%	15%	100%

**Table 6:** Students' purposes for learning writing

The table n°6, indicates that (64%) of students said that learning writing as a skill develop their language proficiency, while (21%) of students stated that they learn writing only to pass exams, and only (15%) students hold that the purpose from writing essays, articles and letters is to attain the writing skill.

**Item three: how do you find your writing?**

Options	Weak	Average	Good	Excellent	Total
Students' number	02	20	15	02	39
Percentage %	5%	52%	38%	5%	

**Table 7:** The evaluation of students' level

(52%) students admit that their writing level in English is average, while (38%) said that their writing is good. However, (5%) students claimed that they are weak in writing and only (5%) of the students' state that their writing skill is perfect.

**Item four: In your view good writing is?**

- a) Good ideas
- b) Precise vocabulary
- c) Correct grammar

d) Others

Options	Good ideas	Precise vocabulary	Correct grammar	others	Total
Students' number	25	03	09	02	39
Percentage %	64%	8%	23%	5%	100%

**Table 8:** The students' perceptionstowards the function of good writing.

It is clear from the table above that (64%) students found that writing good is when they create good ideas unlike (23%) of the students who state that correct grammar is the way to write well. Whereas very small group of (8%) students claim that good writing is when we have a particular background, ending with (5%) students who said that there are other reasons to reach good writing.

### Section three: students' opinion about using brainstorming as pre-writing stage:

**Item one:** Do you use the writing process when you are developing your essays?

Options	Yes	No	Total
Students' number	30	9	39
Percentage %	77%	23%	100%

**Table 9:** The students' response toward using the writing process

The majority of students representing (77%) stated that they use the writing process before getting engaged in the activity while only (23%) disagreed because they said they feel stressed and this push them to write whatever comes to their mind. From these results we conclude that the writing process is an important process that can help students to enhance their level in writing.

**Item two: Do you think that your level will be enhanced through using the writing process?**

Options	Yes	No	Did not answer	Total
Students' number	32	04	03	39
Percentage %	82%	10%	8%	100%

**Table 10:** The importance of using the writing process to develop the students' level.

32 out of 39 students stated that their level will be improved through using the writing process. Unlike (10%) said the opposite. The rest percentage of (8%) students did not answer. So, we can deduce that the majority of students believe that the writing process is necessary for EFL learners to develop their writing skill.

**Item three: in the writing process indicate the moment of attention you give to the following stages:**

- a) Brainstorming
- b) Drafting
- c) Revising
- d) Outlining

Options	Brainstorming	Drafting	Revising	Outlining	Total
Students' number	26	05	07	01	39
Percentage	67%	13%	18%	3%	100%

**Table 11:** The most interesting stage for students in the writing process.

The aim of this question is to know which stage is the most important for learners. The results show that the majority of students give their attention to the brainstorming as pre-writing stage in which they represent (67%). However a small group chooses revising stage with (18%). After revising come drafting with (13%) and the minority asserted that they give importance to outlining stage with (3%). From the previous answers we conclude that most EFL learners are aware of the importance of this stage in which they pay their attention on brainstorming stage rather than the other ones.

**Item four: Do you brainstorm you ideas before you write?**

Options	Yes	No	Total
Students' number	30	09	39
Percentage %	77%	23%	100%

**Table 12:** The students' perceptions toward using the brainstorming stage.

As indicated in the table n°12, (77%) students prefer to brainstorm their minds before start writing anything. While only (23%) students do not brainstorm at all.

**Item five: before you write, do you find difficulties on how you start writing?**

Options	Yes	No	Total
Students' number	24	15	39
Percentage %	61%	38%	100%

**Table 13:** The difficulty to write at first for student in the writing process.

As it is shown in the table above more than a half students (61%) stated that they face some difficulties before they start to write, they claim that they feel confused and stressed because the information are mixed and not well organized in their minds. Whereas (38%) students said that they do not have problems on how to start writing. So, we can deduce that

the majority of students should be provided with the different ways of brainstorming stage in order to facilitate the organization of their ideas.

**Item six: in your opinion, what are the major problems you face before writing?**

- a) Manage your ideas
- b) Write an outline
- c) Choosing the right words

Options	Manage your ideas	Write an outline	Choosing the right words	Total
Students' number	13	03	23	39
Percentage %	33%	8%	59%	100%

**Table 14:** The major problems students may face in the brainstorming stage.

The question aimed to know the major problems learners may face before writing. As the results mentioned (59%) of students consider choosing the right words is the main possible problem will be founded. Then come (33%) students claim that what is difficult is the organization of their ideas. While only (8%) students said that writing an outline is their problem to start writing.

**Item seven: in your opinion, how effective is brainstorming at generating ideas**

- a) Always effective, one of the best ways to get new ideas.
- b) Can be effective, sometimes not, depends on the situation
- c) Rarely effective, there are other better ways to get new ideas

<b>Options</b>	<b>Always effective</b>	<b>Can be effective</b>	<b>Rarely effective</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Students' number</b>	22	12	05	39
<b>Percentage %</b>	56%	31%	13%	100%

**Table 15:** The effectiveness of brainstorming stage.

The table above reveals that (56%) of the students asserted that brainstorming ideas are always effective and it is one of the best ways to get new ideas. However, (31%) of the students claimed that brainstorming sessions can be effective, it depends on the situation. And the minority (13%) stated that brainstorming stage is rarely effective in which there must be other ways to get new ideas.

**Item eight:** what do you think is the most important influencing factor in brainstorming session?

- a) The students who attend
- b) The teacher who leads the brainstorm session
- c) How the brainstorming session is designed and conducted
- d) The topic of brainstorming

<b>Options</b>	<b>The students who attend</b>	<b>The teacher who leads the brainstorm session</b>	<b>How the brainstorming session is designed and conducted</b>	<b>The topic of brainstorming</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>The students' number</b>	09	07	06	17	39
<b>Percentage</b>	23%	18%	15%	44%	100%

**Table 16:** Students' response toward the most important influencing factor in brainstorming session

According to the table n°16, (44%) students claimed that the topic of brainstorming session is the most important factor of brainstorming, while (23%) have the opinion that the students who attend are responsible for making the brainstorming session successful. Whereas, (18%) think that the teacher is the one who leads the brainstorming session and only (15%) of the students asserted that the way the brainstorming session designed and conducted influence more the brainstorming session.

**Item nine: if you would do one thing to improve brainstorming in your organization, what would it be?**

The majority of students stated that they will try to enrich their vocabulary and background through reading books; also they will give themselves more time to think before writing anything. While some of them did not answer at all.

**Part two****2. Teachers' interview****2.1. Description of teacher interview:**

This interview is prepared for teachers of written expression to take their views and perspectives through their experience. As well as, it aims to find out the student's problem that they may face before writing and the aspects they should master. Also, the teachers who participate in this study were interviewed to obtain and collect data about which strategies they use while teaching writing. The interview is made up of (Q13), the questions are divided into three main sections.

**Section one:** background information (Q1-Q2)

It represents general information about the students' sex, and their experience in written expression module.

**Section two:** Teachers' perceptions of writing(Q1-Q2)

This section contains two items. It aims to provide with teacher opinions towards writing skill and their views about the use and importance of this skill.

**Section three:** The Writing Process and the brainstorming stage (Q1-Q8)

This section attempts to know the teachers strategies they follow. It aims to analyze the teacher's opinion about using brainstorming as pre-writing stage to improve the students writing skill. As well as the teachers role before, during and after the writing process and knowing the suitable techniques used to help learners to enhance their writing skill.

**2.2. Analysis of the teacher's interview:**

**Section one: (1-2) background information****Item one: Gender**

Possibilities	Males	Females
Teachers' number	03	02

**Table 17:** Teachers' age

The table above shows that three teachers are males whereas two teachers are females.

**Item two: how long have you been teaching written expression module?**

Possibilities	(2 years - 5 years)	(5 years- 15 years)	Did not answer
Teachers' number	04	01	00

**Table 18:** Duration in teaching written expression module

From the obtained results, we notice that four teachers have been teaching for three to four years while one teacher has been teaching for five years. Therefore we conclude that all teachers are well experienced.

**Section two: (1\_2) teacher's view on writing****Item one: as a teacher of written expression, why did you choose to teach writing?**

In this question most teachers' answers were similar but each teacher expresses these answers by he/she own style, except one teacher who stated that teaching this module was imposed by the head of the department. Whereas, the majority of teachers said that writing is a basic skill that must be mastered and it is very important for EFL learners to be proficient writers in the future.

**Item two: do you think that writing is a spontaneous task or there is a specific process must be followed?**

Teachers were asked whether writing is a spontaneous task or a process. Their answers were almost different in which each teacher has a different point of view. The two first teachers stated that writing is a process. The third teacher said that writing is both (spontaneous and a process), while the last two teachers stated that writing skill is a complicated process that requires a several sub skills. From this answers we deduce that writing is not a simple task. It is needs a specific process to be learned.

### **Section three: teachers' perceptions toward the brainstorming stage**

**Item one: in your view, teaching the writing process and more precisely brainstorming stage is necessary for learners to improve their writing skill?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Teachers' number</b>	05	00

**Table 19:** Teachers' opinions towards the brainstorming stage to improve the students writing skill.

From the table above, we notice that all the teachers answered yes. From their answers we deduce that brainstorming stage is a preparatory stage that students' need to gather information and ideas about certain topic.

**Item two: while teaching, which stage do you think is the most important stage in the process of writing and which stage is difficult for learners?**

This question aimed to know which strategy is difficult for learners during the writing process. The majority of teachers claim that all the stages are equally important and they are

related to each other. But they stated also, that start writing is probably considered as a hard work for beginners' learners, and the pre-writing stage is the most difficult stage in the writing process. From these results we consider that the writing process is necessary to be taught in EFL classrooms and more precisely the brainstorming stage.

**Item three: what are the major problems learners may face before start writing?**

This question was designed to identify the major problems learners may face before start writing. Three teachers claimed that most learners think that they do not have much to say (lack of ideas). While, the last two teachers stated that learners may feel uninterested because they do not know how to generate the first coming ideas. All in all learners are not aware on how to organize their ideas and they may feel stressed and bored because they do not find the words to express these ideas.

**Item four: while teaching, do you find difficulties to explain how the brainstorming stage works?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Teachers' number</b>	00	05

**Table 20:** Teachers' opinions about the difficulty the brainstorming stage.

From the table above, we notice that five teachers responded with no. so, we can conclude that all teachers said that they do not find any difficulties to explain how the brainstorming stage works.

**Item five: there are different ways to brainstorm ideas, in your opinion what is the most effective way?**

- a) Freewheeling brainstorming
- b) Structured brainstorming

## c) Mind mapping brainstorming

Options	Freewheeling brainstorming	Structured brainstorming	Mindmapping brainstorming	All of them
Teachers' number	00	01	01	03

**Table 21:** Teachers' opinions about the most effective way to brainstorm ideas.

The results in the table above show that each teacher uses a different strategy depending on the learners' level. The first teacher chooses to use the structured brainstorming in form of outline. And the second teacher chooses to use the mind mapping brainstorming. While the other teachers indicated that each one has a different style to present the brainstorming session. From these answer we deduce that the most effective way to brainstorm ides is based on the students' level, the topic and the atmosphere.

**Item six: what is your role during the brainstorming stage?**

The majority of teachers agreed on one role as guiders. Four teachers whose answers were nearly the same stated that they tried to guide and help student to gather their ideas and pick up the relevant ones, by asking them direct questions or by giving them enough time to brainstorm. While the last teacher stated that he tried to be a facilitator; by giving them examples and letting them to brainstorm on their own ways. From their answers we can deduce that in brainstorming stage, there is no judgment; teachers will just receive and guide the learners to find the suitable ideas that suit the topic.

**Item seven: do you think that the writing process is a thinking process?**

In this question, all the teachers believe that the writing process is a thinking process. They confirmed that thinking to formulate the abstract ideas starts merely when re-activating the thinking process and the process of thinking is a part of the writing process.

**Item eight: in your opinion, do you think that good readers are good writers?**

The aim of this question is to know how can be good writers. Three teachers assumed that good readers are good writers while the two last teachers have different point of view. The fourth teacher said that it is not necessary the good writers are good readers. While, the fifth teacher said writing is a talent. From their answers we can deduce that writing is regarded in different ways. It can be a talent, in the same time it can be acquired by intensive reading.

**Item nine: if you would do one thing to improve brainstorming as pre-writing stage, what would it be?**

This question was meant to give us a piece of advice to the learners that can help them to improve brainstorming as pre-writing stage. We have some suggestions which are mentioned as follows:

Firstly, they suggest that collective brainstorming will help students do the activity better than the individual brainstorming. Secondly, they pointed out on the necessity to apply some mind exercises which allow learners to practice over and over again, therefore it will be a habit of mind. Thirdly, they advised to read more about several topics because as we mentioned in the theoretical part that reading and writing are much related. Also, some teachers stated that they will try to raise the students' attention through the possible available techniques.

**2.3.Findings**

According to the students' answers, the majority of them use the writing process but they face difficulties before start writing anything. Also, they claimed that the brainstorming stage is the most difficult stage in the writing process because they feel stressed and lost ideas whenever they are asked to write something. And lastly, we gave the students chance to express their opinions and thoughts in which they insisted on the importance of reading books because it helps them to have extensive knowledge.

From the previous answers, we conclude that all the teachers are experienced in teaching the written expression module. They advice students to respect all the stages of the writing process, therefore the majority of teachers believe that following these stages are important to improve the students writing skill. In addition, they focus on the brainstorming as pre-writing stage since it is considered as a difficult stage for learners. We have notice from the teachers' answers that learners neglect this stage in the writing process. So, they suggested many solutions and strategies to raise the students' attention to generate more ideas. The responses show that it is difficult for learners to start writing, therefore, they agreed on using mind activities by acting different roles as guiders and facilitators. The results reported that using the writing process and more precisely the brainstorming stage will enhance the students' level in their written compositions.

**Conclusion**

This study explored the EFL students' attitudes towards the brainstorming stage as prewriting stage to improve the writing process in Khenchela University. After the analysis of the students' questionnaire and the teacher interview, the results show that brainstorming as prewriting stage has a potential role on developing the students' level in writing skill. Also, it is shown that most EFL students get benefit from the brainstorming stage because they

considered it as a preparatory stage used to generate their first coming ideas and thoughts. In addition to that, we figure out that using the writing process is necessary for both teachers and students. Therefore, we conclude that brainstorming stage affects the students writing and improve their capabilities during the writing process.

### **Recommendations**

According to the results that have been obtained, writing were seen as an essential element that must be achieved during teaching and learning foreign languages. So, the following points are suggested to be taken into consideration:

- ✓ The writing process should be much more explained and illustrated in EFL classrooms.
- ✓ Despite the fact that EFL learners seem to be interested to learn English language, they may feel shy or embarrassed to participate in brainstorming session. So, teachers should encourage them to participate and welcomed their ideas so that they feel comfortable to express their thoughts.
- ✓ Learners should be aware of the usefulness of brainstorming stage because it helps them to generate creative ideas.
- ✓ Teachers should remind their learners that the stages are much related to each other.
- ✓ Learners should know that without the writing process, their level will not be achieved.
- ✓ Teachers must give their learners enough time to think before start writing anything.
- ✓ Teachers should provide their learners with the different way of brainstorming ideas.

**General conclusion**

Teaching the writing process is one of the effective approaches to develop the learners writing abilities. This work promoted to identify the EFL students attitudes towards the brainstorming as pre-writing stage to improve the writing process. We focused on a descriptive research and we hypothesized that the use of brainstorming stage will help the EFL students to perform much better in written expression module.

This study includes two chapters: the theoretical part composed of two sections, the first section dealt with the writing skill, its nature, purpose, problems, its connection with other skill and its important and impact across the curriculum. The second section dealt with the writing process, its importance, reasons for teaching it, its models and also we mentioned the role of teacher during the writing process. Furthermore, we presented the stages of the writing process and we focus on the brainstorming as pre-writing stage. We talk about brainstorming definition, purpose, and the major problems learners my face when they brainstorm, followed by the different way to brainstorm ideas, finished by the relationship between the learners effective writing and brainstorming stage. The second chapter which is the practical part, we presented the analysis of students' questionnaire and teachers' interview.

From the obtained results, we conclude that brainstorming stage has a positive impact on EFL students writing capabilities. In order to write well, there a certain stages must be followed. The brainstorming stage is one of the stages that can helps students to generate and develop their way of thinking and to produce a well written production.

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# ***APPENDICES***

## Appendix one

### Students ' Questionnaire

Dear students,

The following questionnaire investigates the EFL student's attitudes towards brainstorming as pre-writing stage to improve the writing process. It aims at finding out your attitudes towards using the four stages of the writing process, and more precisely, the brainstorming stage. In this context, the survey aim is to provide EFL teachers insights about how to improve writing skills. Your answers will be of great help for us. Please, tick ( ) the appropriate answer or give full statements when necessary.

#### Section one: background information

1. Age:

2. Gender: Male  Female

3. What is your baccalaureate major?

- a) Foreign languages
- b) Sciences
- c) Letters
- d) Maths
- e) Other

4. Are you good at?

- a) Listening skill
- b) Speaking skill.
- c) Reading skill
- d) Writing skill.

**Section two: Students' perceptions towards learning writing skill.**

1. Are you interesting in writing?

Yes  No

2. You learn writing skill to:

- a) Develop your language proficiency.
- b) Pass exams.
- c) Write essays, articles and letters.

3. How do you find your writing?

Weak  average  good  excellent

4. In your view, good writing is?

- a) Good ideas.
- b) Precise vocabulary.
- c) Correct grammar.
- d) Others

**Section three: students' opinion about using brainstorming as pre-writing stage to improve writing skill.**

1. Do you use the writing process when you are developing your essays?

Yes  No

\* If no, please justify .....

.....

.....  
2. Do you think that your level will be enhanced through using the writing process?

Yes

No

3. In the writing process, indicate the moment of attention you give to the following stages:

a) Brainstorming (pre-writing)

b) Drafting

c) Revising

d) Outlining

4. Do you brainstorm your ideas before you write?

Yes

No

5. Before you write, do you find difficulties on how you start writing?

Yes

No

If yes, please justify

.....  
.....  
.....

6. In your opinion, what are the major problems you face before writing?

a) Manage your ideas.

b) Write an outline.

c) Choosing the right words.

7. In your opinion, how effective is brainstorming at generating ideas?

- a) Always effective, one of the best ways to get new ideas.
- b) Can be effective, sometimes not, depends on the situation.
- c) Rarely effective, there are other better ways to get new ideas.

8. What do you think is the most important influencing factor in brainstorming session?

- a) The students who attend.
- b) The teacher who leads the brainstorm session.
- c) How the brainstorming session is designed and conducted.
- d) The topic of the brainstorming.

9. If you would do one thing to improve brainstorming in your organization, what would it be?

.....

.....

.....

**Thank You for your collaboration**

## Appendix two

### Teachers' Interview:

This interview is a part of our research which scrutinizes the role of brainstorming as a pre-writing stage to improve the EFL students writing skill; we would be much appreciated for your cooperation. We thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Please, fill in information when necessary.

#### Section one: background information

1. Gender: Male  female

2. How long have you been teaching written expression's module? ..... years

#### Section two: writing skill

1. As a teacher of written expression, why do you choose to teach writing?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. Do you think that writing is a spontaneous task or there is a specific process must be followed? .....

.....  
.....

#### Section three: The Writing Process and the brainstorming stage.

1. In your view, teaching the writing process and more precisely brainstorming stage is necessary for learners to improve their writing skill?

Yes

No

If yes how? .....

.....  
.....

2. While teaching, which stage do you think is the most important stage in the process of writing and which stage is difficult for learners?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. What are the major problems learners may face before start writing?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. While teaching, do you find difficulties to explain how the brainstorming stage works?

Yes

No

If yes, please justify? .....

.....

.....

5. There are different ways to brainstorm ideas, in your opinion what is the most effective way?

.....

.....

6. What is your role during the brainstorming stage?

.....

.....

7. Do you think that the writing process is a thinking process?

.....

.....

8. In your opinion, do you think that good readers are good writers?

.....

.....

.....

9. If you would do one thing to improve brainstorming as pre-writing stage, what would it be?

.....

.....

**Thank you for your collaboration**

تعتبر الكتابة واحدة من أهم المهارات الإنتاجية التي يصعب الحصول عليها بالنسبة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية إن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو التحقق من مواقف طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية تجاه العصف الذهني كمرحلة ما قبل الكتابة لتحسين عملية الكتابة. ويهدف أيضًا إلى دراسة تأثير عملية الكتابة وتحديدًا مرحلة العصف الذهني على أداء كتابة الطلاب. علاوة على ذلك، فإن الهدف الرئيسي من هذا العمل هو إتاحة العديد من الفرص لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للكتابة باستخدام مرحلة العصف الذهني. بحيث أننا قمنا بتوزيع مجموعة من الاستبيانات الأولى لطلاب السنة الثانية للغة الإنجليزية و الثاني موجه لأساتذة التعبير الكتابي لغة انجليزية بجامعة عباس لغرور. أظهرت النتائج أن مرحلة العصف الذهني تلعب دوراً مهماً في تطوير إنتاج كتابات اللغة الإنجليزية. فهي تساعد على تنفيذ الأفكار الإبداعية التي تساعدهم على التغلب على الصعوبات التي قد يواجهونها عند الكتابة. لذلك ، يمكن أن يلاحظ بشكل عميق أن كل من المعلمين والطلاب يرون أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية سوف يحسنون مهاراتهم في الكتابة من خلال مرحلة العصف الذهني.