

The Challenges and Opportunities for Writing: A Concise Study Based on Innovative Methods of Teaching and Learning Techniques in Relation to Writing

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“A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning.” – Brad Henry.

Abstract: There are so many challenges involved in developing and successively writing centres in tertiary contexts vary in different part of the world. These challenges include identifying the role Writing Centres need to play in the compensation of basic academic literacies. Higher cognitive skills such as synthesis and analysis are developed through spoken (teaching) and written (writing) language. This also mainly emphasizes writing as a mode of learning and teaching. Academic discourse is a clear and obvious distinct written form, comprising often implicit conventions which dictate appropriate use of lexicogrammatically structures. Each discipline of study also has its own particular 'dialect' which is unique in its own form. Acquiring these 'foreign' methods of communication and writing poses a challenge to many students, not only English Language students. Thus, providing access to academic and disciplinary discourses discussing how a text works in a controversial manner while involving students to this discourse would be a challenge that is to be faced. This article examines some key pressures in Writing Centre practices in the Middle East context, and the challenges and opportunities for writing. It also explores how establishing the Writing Centres at the University level would address some of these challenges, and looks at the potentials for Writing Centres in tertiary institutions.

The purpose of the study is to investigate how students could be motivated by teachers with self-interest and new innovative methods of teaching and writing which could be utilized and integrated with technology and real-life scientific materials to stimulate the creativity in students. Several real-life experiences with activity-based sessions integrated with online teaching and writing would be initiated for the better understanding of the students. In this study the relationship between teacher learning and collaboration in innovative terms would be explored. This study uses an interpretive methodology, which is qualitative analysis rather than quantitative analysis. The main data can include students' online data, interactions, and the teacher's journals. If implemented the results also will show that this study provides information to enhance students' expression of sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration of creativities and their skills. Students' creativity would be motivated by the online interactivities and the teacher's inquiry.

Key words: writing centres, collaboration, discourse, innovative methods, integrated

Introduction:

Teaching is an art like learning and writing and all have its phenomenal application and methods elucidating its own. In this current trend and scenario writing is losing its prominence and importance. Thus, reinventing the idea of writing with different tools and technologies with the help of writing centres in the university levels would predominantly improve the writing skills of the students. Establishing writing centres with talented and motivating teachers would defiantly and undoubtedly transform the level of students. The most well-developed branch of applied linguistics is the teaching (teacher oriented) and learning (student - centered) of the first language (mother tongue) as well as second language (foreign language – English) and finally writing which would be the outcome of teaching and learning. In a long search for the best way of teaching a foreign language there are hundreds of different approaches, methods have been devised and designed. Each and every method of teaching and writing recommends the use of a set of teaching ideas and materials and activities which could be implemented in a fixed sequence.

Writing centers are not teacher focused, they are student-centered. This means they seek to enhance students' self-worth and confidence through various methods of training and learning. The difficulties and limitations of the teaching and learning environment include strong attraction toward the internet, poor ability of students in word processing and discussion online. In view to promote their interest in writing, writing centres should be established as part of the teaching unit at the university level which is the need of the hour especially in the Middle East where student's performance of understanding and writing varies with different category of students.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Language Teaching was emerging as an active area of the educational debate and innovation. Although Language teaching has a very long history, the foundation of contemporary approaches of language teaching was developed during the early part of the twentieth century, as applied linguistics and others sought to develop principles, procedures, design for teaching methods. There are certain methods which are recognized because of their influential role in the history of ideas surrounding the subjects. Teaching methods can be broadly classified under into three broad categories. These are teacher-centered methods, learner-centered methods, content-focused methods and interactive or participative methods. Every method desires its creditability. There are also different methods of the project method, e-learning method, direct method and audio-lingual method and teaching method.

Research Questions:

This study intends to answer the following questions:

1. How can writing centres enhance the English language writing skills among Middle East students?

2. What are the innovative methods that teachers incorporate to improve the writing skills of the students of ESL/EFL?

The Significance of the Study:

The students of English as a foreign language can acquire more language skills through social interaction and communication. Characterization, video clips, story forms and narratives can really inspire students to write in a free will. Learners can watch and listen to lectures and lessons given by experienced teachers and thereby jot it down as bullet points which could be elaborated later into sentences. The findings of this study will clarify the advantages of the effective use of different types of methodologies and social media sites by the writing centres to help the students write with confidence and also will help the universities to have a full-fledged writing centres for students to empower themselves in writing skills. This will obviously encourage the learners to write well in classroom and take it to the real-life situation.

Literature Review:

According to the “The Baylor Writing Center Tutor Guidebook 2 defines a writing center as a beyond-the classroom space where students can explore confusing or challenging educational issues through dialogic relationships. In other words, a writing center is a place for conversation and dialogue. This means that a writing center is not a place for monologues or one-sided instruction. Tutors do not take on the role of professor or expert, meaning that tutors do not edit, correct, or tell students how to “fix” their papers. Rather, writing centers are founded on the idea that tutors and students work collaboratively through open communication to discover effective writing strategies and approaches to reading and writing that are particularly useful to the individual student. Writing centers are not tutor focused, they are student-centered. They seek to enhance students’ self-worth and confidence by working within non-evaluative relationships of trust. We believe that absence of evaluation by the tutors allows the students to express concerns and doubts, take risks, draw on personal resources and knowledge, and make choices about their work.”

According to Merrill Harmon and Melanie Toth, in their book “Inspire active learning”. The lack of interest is the lack of engagement dead time. Dead time interferes with students' learning, and it is contagious. It lures those who are on task into wondering, "Why should I pay attention if others aren't?" Students should be active listeners while learning and not passive. This passive time is referred to as dead time. Thus, when students are engaged in conversation obviously the dead time will be eliminated and widen the envision of learning and writing.

The Methodology of the Study:

The research methodology for this study is descriptive. This study uses an interpretive methodology. The main data can include students' online data, interactions with the students and the teacher's journals. If implemented the results also will show that this study provides information to enhance students' expression of sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration of creativities and their thinking and writing skills. Students' creativity would be motivated by the online interactivities and the teacher's inquiry. An elucidating study tries to discover certain actualities concerning a current marvel. This method is applied because this study aims at improving student's ability to write.

Suggested methods to improve the performs of students in writing**A good teacher:**

1. Should not be too long in whatever they wanted to say or convey as to exceed the student's attention span (up to 25 minutes).
2. Should address a single theme at a time to grab the attention of the students.
3. Explains technical terms more carefully.
4. Gives familiar examples and analogies which would attract the students.
5. Should inherit the fluency in technical content.
6. Also uses illustrations and examples to get the attention of the students.
7. Builds on existing knowledge which is the career concern.
8. Employs a variety of approaches.

Challenges:

Improving reading and writing skills also goes hand in hand with developing the communication skills. The more the students read and write, the more they broaden their vocabulary and are able to articulate concepts accurately and more effectively to others. Increasing the ability to communicate also helps make a better worker or student. Writing is a channel for emotions and expressions, despite the fact that the writing skills occupy the last position in the ladder of acquisition of skills. Still it forms an important component of Foreign Language Learning. Though writing is a complex process it also includes different factors which would be essential and necessary for ESL/EFL students. It is a step by step process which involves thinking and reproducing to the text form of writing. Writing involves learning skills like grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation. It is indeed a great ordeal but according to the saying, Practice makes perfect, it is through practice and interest learners or students would target to improve their writing skill.

Active learning and active listening in which students are thoroughly and thoughtfully engaged with each other would pave way for new ideologies. The teacher represents the opposite of dead

time where motivation can be instilled and learner could achieve the task assigned. There are four types of hierarchy that describes the level of students' motivation. There are four different level in learners for example students at the lowest level basically said to be the work avoiders, and on the next level are the halfhearted workers next would be the learners who are responsible students, and, finally, come the fully active learners. As a teacher we always have to pay close attention to these levels of student engagement. It may be that it's difficult to keep students focused when the lesson comes from the teacher. But it can be adequately difficult when they are engaged as project-oriented teams. But there are new ways and techniques with which a range of strategies is initiated to eliminate dead time and move students up the active-learning ladder.

Innovative Techniques and Social sites:

Eradicating dead time starts with generating a cache of practices and activities. They can be general purpose activities that apply to various subject areas or styles of teaching, or specific content-oriented activities that allow the students to learn by tapping into multiple intelligences beyond the usual listening and recalling. Some are physical activities that help students unleash pent-up energy, while others create private thinking time that encourages reflection. On the other hand, they can be well-managed through student-to-student communication which would guarantee that they are all thinking about the work. Developing these activities initially takes a long time, but the payoff in terms of classroom management and overall learning and understanding is more than worth the effort. There are so many tools online that can help master the writing process. For instance, "Grammar Girl" has a huge selection of grammar rules which is easily understandable and a resource of helpful question and answer section featuring common questions from readers. The Elements of Style of writing used is a free online version of the massively popular style guide used by writers across all genres. "Verbix" is a helpful tool that will conjugate verb and instructs in which tense to use it. "EssayMama.com" is an online writing service that can assist and help the learner with writing, editing, and formatting the paper or essay. The Ultimate Writing Productivity Resource is basically what it sounds like, an all-inclusive website filled with tools to make writing time more productive and effective. "Common Errors in English" offers a tremendous list of common errors so to improve grammar and everyday speech. It is very essential that writing skills are so important to the career success. Using certain strategies and tips to improve writing skills achieve the future career trajectory. Yet, a majority of student's dislike writing unless they unleash the box of ideas and strategies involved. In this view, there is always a great difficulty to achieve high command of English writing ability and skills to be performed at the level of college and academic success. Accordingly, Graham & Perin, 2007, states that "However, despite the importance of writing, too many youngsters do not learn to write well enough to meet the demands of school or the workplace."

Conclusion:

The research suggests that considering the following interconnected elements, the writing centres should implement learning activities which may help increase student involvement, engagement behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively and thereby positively affecting student learning and achievement of his or her goal. This research would show that if students do not consider a learning activity worthy of their time and effort, they might not engage in a satisfactory way. To ensure that activities are personally meaningful the above methodology should be followed. The more the students write, the more creative they will become. This will finally be helpful when they need to solve work problems or come up with new ideas for work. It is very important and essential to write every day as it improves the way or the style of writing. Reading is also associated with writing thus, reading in addition to writing makes the learner achieve their goal. Apparently, reading increases vocabulary, improves grammar and creativity. Reading finally leads to analyzing whether the sentence is simple or complex enabling the learner to incorporate certain ideas in their writing. The advantages of the effective use of different types of methodologies and social media sites by the writing centres would largely help the students write with confidence and also universities with such writing centres bring out the talents of the students which would motivate them and also empower them in writing skills. This will obviously encourage the learners to write well in classroom and take it to the real-life situation. Creativity also furnishes the idea of writing messages in own way of imagination, giving a map to follow as the learner climbs up the ladder of writing. Creating an outline gives structure to writing where the learner need not worry of about perfection as great work really takes time. Learners can endure writing as it can enhance their vocabulary which is considered to be a literacy skill which is active and productive.

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