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# **Teachers' Cognition and Classroom Teaching Practice: An Investigation of Teaching English Writing at the University Level in Libya**

By

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**A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
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**School of Education  
College of Social Sciences  
The University of Glasgow**

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents, for just being my parents, the way I wanted for them to be, the way anyone would have imagined, or is going to imagine how parents should be.

Thinking of how far their trust, encouragement, incomparable love always keeps me wanting to be the 'good daughter' that they always wanted me to be, that they are always praying for me to be.

I also dedicate this work to: Ahmad, Mohammed, Hamdi, Rema and Zeinab.

*I have been lucky to share  
My childhood memories and grown up dreams with you*

*You are my Brothers and Sisters  
And my best friends too*

I further dedicate this work to Mohammed Shaltut

*People who are as nice as you  
Are precious and few*

*And it means a lot  
Having an uncle like you*

## ***Abstract***

This thesis has grown out of interest in teaching practice at the university level in Libya. It aims to investigate writing teachers' cognition about teaching writing in English language. These issues are investigated in this thesis and are preceded by explanation of the learning and teaching context in Libya, and a theoretical framework drawing on definitions of cognition, teachers' knowledge and approaches to teaching writing that might help to understand the connection between the participants' theoretical knowledge and their teaching practice. Educational, cultural, and personal views of teaching emerge as essential areas of investigation for understanding the teaching practice as well as the vision of teaching that teachers have developed over years of teaching experience.

The findings are generated from a mixture of interviews, classroom observation, and workshops. The findings show that although the participants share many background features of the teaching contexts, they have different views about the actual practice of teaching writing. These views can be categorised into three broad groups. The first group focuses on form and micro skills of writing. The second group balances form with content. The third group focuses more on fluency and writing extended pieces of writing.

In addition, the findings show that the writing teachers in the three selected Libyan universities largely depend on their own self development and informal learning to deal with challenges such as inconsistent syllabus, students' mixed level and large class sizes.

Furthermore, the findings of the study make a contribution in relation to exploring the ways in which professional development can be introduced by a trial of two workshops. Most importantly, the workshops show that teachers' willingness to broaden their knowledge of teaching motivates them to seek opportunities for shared professional development.

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### ***Author's Declaration***

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this

Dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

**Signature**

***Hameda Suwaed***

## **Abbreviations**

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

L1: First Language

L2: Second language

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Challenges Facing EFL Teachers in Libya at University Level

The need to learn English language is becoming very important in our global world. This is due to the fact that English language is the language of science, technology and communication. Whenever the learning of a specific language is considered essential, it becomes important to teach that language and English is not an exception.

This demand of teaching English language in foreign language contexts requires qualified teachers, because English is the subject of the study and the medium of instruction (Tsui 1995). When students listen to the teacher's instructions and explanations, express their ideas, answer questions, carry out tasks and activities, and write about different topics, they are not only learning about the language, but also using the language that they are learning. In situations where the exposure to the target language is limited to a few hours in the classroom as is the case in most EFL classes including Libya the context of this study, the task of language teachers in general, and writing teachers in particular, is a challenging one (Griffiths 2008:244). This is mainly because of contextual factors such as students' large number and low level (Daoud 1998:391). Furthermore, the courses of teacher education in Libya depend on theory rather than practice and the Libyan national universities do not provide pre-service or in-service training for university teachers. Hashweh (2005:279) states 'subject matter knowledge alone is not enough'. Until recently, even in English speaking countries teacher training program often did not include specific training to teach English writing (Matsuda 2003:22). With the assumption that holding an MA/PhD degree is enough to be a qualified teacher, university teachers in Libya are left to their own knowledge and experience to design their courses. In order to design their own courses, these university teachers are required to select the appropriate approach to teaching, and consequently the material, tasks, and activities for their students.

Based on the challenges faced by Libyan Teachers, this chapter presents the pertinent issues to be investigated, the significance of the research and the structure of the thesis.

## **1.2 Issues to Explore**

In order to investigate English language teaching, Golombek (1998:448) suggests starting with what a teacher knows and what type of knowledge he/she needs. Desforjes (1995:386) argues that it is not enough to know what teachers know. Rather, it is essential to understand how teachers use their knowledge when teaching. Relative to this argument, the specific process of teaching writing that is of particular interest to investigate is: the complex interaction between teachers' knowledge and experience and the teaching context in which they work in. According to Carlgren and Lindblad (1991:510), the analysis of studying the link between teachers' practice and context requires a transition from studying the relation between teachers' knowledge and teaching to studying teachers' teaching practice as expressions of teachers' knowledge.

To explore these points further, this thesis will use the term 'cognition' to consider expressions of teachers' knowledge as the frame that shapes teaching practice. The term cognition, as defined by Borg (2003:86) refers to 'what teachers know, believe and think'. It includes teachers' knowledge about language teaching as well as beliefs about what works best for their students. According to Freeman (2002:6), teachers' cognition plays an important role in their teaching practice, because it bears on the teachers' decisions, such as the appropriate teaching materials for their students.

It is therefore important for this research to consider how teachers learn and how this learning influences the way they teach, because EFL teachers are usually affected by their previous experience as students (Xu and Connelly 2002:221). The models that the teachers know are derived from their previous experience as students and their theoretical knowledge as gained through their education. Through interaction with students, the language teachers can modify their views accordingly and then reflect on the practice of teaching (Allwright 1984:164; Hall and Verplatchese, 2000: 101). With regard to the types of teachers' knowledge, Shulman's list of types of knowledge is adopted, as a basis, to which

two other types of knowledge are added: knowledge of self and personal practical knowledge as suggested by Turner-Bisset (2001) and Golombek (1998).

Furthermore, the writing approaches that the teachers use, as well as contextual factors, such as students' level and the teachers' views on how writing is taught, are considered as they shape the teachers' selection of materials and tasks. Because teachers' knowledge and cognition are reflected in their classroom teaching (Borg 2003), this research will provide an overview of teaching writing at the Libyan universities by investigating writing teachers' teaching practice mainly on three aspects of classroom interaction: the materials used, the assigned tasks and procedures, and the teacher's role of presenting the information in the classroom.

In Libyan Universities, teachers are usually responsible for selecting their own materials and designing their own courses. As a consequence, teachers are expected to use different tasks to teach the selected material. The third area is the teacher's role, defined as the manner in which the teacher interprets his/her role in presenting the information in the classroom (Bailey and Nunan, 1996: 58). In the writing classroom the dominant structure of talk differs (lecturing, group work, pair work) according to the teacher's understanding of his/her role, the approach adopted and the tasks assigned. The teacher may play the role of controller or examiner, who has the main part in talking and correcting students' mistakes, he/she might be a facilitator who encourages students to interact with each other and focuses on the process of writing and not on form or grammatical accuracy.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

Despite the increased amount of scholarly work on how students write in relation to both first and second language contexts, there is a 'paucity of research on how EFL teachers teach and learn to teach writing' (Lee 2010:1). This research is an attempt to heed Borg's (2003: 98) call for more research on writing teacher education. Therefore, the data collected through out this thesis's three stages of data collection not only provides background information about teaching writing in the Libyan context, but provides a contribution to models for the support of professional development for EFL university teachers. Using semi

structured interview data, classroom observation sheets, and field notes gained by exploration of using workshops as professional development; this research aims to achieve the following purposes: (a) on a general level, to make sense of the complexity involved in teaching EFL writing in Libya, as up to now university teachers do not receive any training for teaching writing and they design their courses and select the appropriate materials for their students; (b) to provide descriptions of the teaching process that will lead to understanding the sources of writing teachers personal practical knowledge and how the teachers respond to such constraints as the lack of materials and the students low level to improve their teaching.

## **1.4 Rationale for Research**

It is often a researcher's personal involvement in certain educational contexts or academic interest in a particular field of study that guide decisions about research questions. My personal experience as language teacher at secondary school and then at the university level has inspired my interest in teaching writing. When I started teaching at the university level the only comment that I received from the head of the department when I asked him about the policy and guidelines of the course was 'the teacher is the master of the situation'. Personally, to be 'master' with theoretical knowledge about course design and testing was a challenging task. At the beginning I relied on my teaching experience in secondary school but that was different since there were consistent materials and national exams (this will be explained in chapter two). Then I tried to find other resources to deal with difficulties that I faced such as students' low level. In a context characterised by: a focus on theoretical knowledge, traditional methods of teaching, a lack of English language teachers, and a few opportunities for professional development for university teachers, it was of particular interest to me to investigate the difficulties that the teachers face, as well as their approaches to teaching and their views on how writing should be taught.

Taking into consideration the contexts of this study, the rationale of the research is structured by the following questions:

- How the writing university teachers are teaching without receiving pre-service or in-service training?
- What are the methods that the university teachers of writing use to promote their teaching of writing?

### ***1.4.1 Developing the Research Themes***

As writing teachers' views of teaching was emphasized, teachers' cognition and personal experience was identified as a viable route. Consequently, the problem statement underpinning the research was:

Because much of the available approaches for teaching writing were not generated for EFL contexts, it is important to investigate how the teachers use these approaches while still bearing in mind the cultural views about teachers' roles and the different contextual factors such as students' level and number. *What are the sources of their knowledge? And how can I as teacher and researcher support those teachers?*

## **1.5 Structure of the Investigation**

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. In this first chapter, the topic, its importance, areas to be explored are presented.

Chapter 2 sets out the context of the study and constitutes a critical overview of the educational system in Libya.

Chapter 3 and 4 presents the theoretical frame work of the research. Chapter 3 considers the types of teachers' knowledge and what teachers need to know before and while teaching. Chapter 4 explains the approaches to teaching writing.

Chapter 5 is concerned with the research design and methodology. It outlines the research questions and case study design. Issues related to the data collection, data analysis and research problems are also discussed.



Chapter 6 presents and discusses the general findings of the research gathered from the interviews and observations

Chapter 7 presents the findings and relates them to teachers' specific views of teaching writing

Chapter 8 sets out an exploration for teachers' professional development through the use of workshops

Chapter 9 summarises the findings, draws a conclusion and points out recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER 2.**

### **LIBYAN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In the 1950s, Libya was one of the poorest countries in the world with a small illiterate population and almost no schools. Since 1963, oil revenues have allowed the rapid growth of education. By 1969, education was compulsory and free to all Libyans. As a consequence, the number of literate people increased from 20% in 1951 to 82% (92% of males and 72% of females) in 2003. Such dramatic changes in Libyan society, at such accelerated rates of growth, are bound to bring difficulties and challenges. According to the General People's Committee report (2008), the Libyan educational system faces many challenges related to the demands of the growth regarding the quality of education and access to qualified teachers.

This chapter provides a general picture of the Libyan educational context relevant to this research in order to understand the factors that influence teaching English language and more specifically English writing skill at the university level in Libya.

#### **2.2 Libya's Geographical Location and Population**

Libya is an Arab Islamic country situated in North Africa, with long borders on the Mediterranean Sea where the majority of the Libyans live. It borders Egypt on the east, Chad and Niger on the south, and Algeria and Tunisia on the west. The population of Libya is about 6.5 million. The number of students aged 6-22 is approximately 1.7 million. According to the General Peoples' Committee of Education reporting on 2007/2008, approximately 939,799 students attended basic education and were taught by 119,313 teachers; approximately 226,000 students were enrolled in secondary education and taught by 39,847 teachers;

and about 279,150 students were enrolled in Libyan universities and taught by 2,770 Libyan teachers.

## **2.3 Historical Overview**

Historically, Libya experienced Turkish Muslim Rule from 1551 to 1912 and Italian colonization from 1912 to 1942. From 1942 to 1951 it was under temporary British military rule (Clark 2004:1). The Turkish Muslim Rule encouraged Quranic schools or Kuttab from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Those schools provided traditional religious education which focused on the religious studies, Islamic morals and Arabic language (Arabsheibani and Manfor 2000:140).

During the Italian colonial period, Italian was the language of education in all schools, with Arabic language was taught only as one of the school subjects. Most Libyan parents refused to enrol their children in Italian schools because the focus was on the Italian culture and language. Instead, they depended on the religious education provided by Kuttab or Quranic schools. As a result, the Italian language did not take root in Libya to the extent that French language did in Algeria for example. Presently, Italian language is spoken and understood only by more elderly people.

Since independence in 1951, the Libyan government has guaranteed the right of education to all Libyans and the number of students has increased rapidly. From its establishment in 1969, the revolutionary regime emphasized the importance of education, and continued and developed programs begun under the monarchy (1951-1969).

## **2.4 The Importance of Learning in the Libyan Society**

The importance of teaching and learning in Libya is highly influenced by culture and religion. As an Arabic Islamic country, Islam influences the way Libyans think about education and learning. This is because Islam is not only a religion, but a comprehensive way of life. Islam is a monotheistic religion whose followers believe in the one god, who is known as *Allah* in Arabic (Merriam 2007:21). The prophet of Islam is Mohammed who has great influence upon all Muslims and serves as a role model for those of Islamic faith (Esposito 2002:10). For

Mohammed, educating people is essential, as is obvious in his saying, 'seeking of knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim'. This is supported by many verses in the Quran (the holy book for Muslims), such as 'God will raise up (to suitable ranks and degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge'.

It is a well accepted notion among Muslims that knowledge and learning are important in Islam (Merriam 2007:22), and this emphasis on learning can be seen in the Quran and the teachings of Mohammed. First, the concern for education, knowledge and learning is mentioned in almost all the Quran's 114 chapters, and the Quran asks 'are those who know equal to those who do not know'. Second, learning in Islam is a lifelong process, as is reflected in Mohammed's famous saying 'seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave'. Third, Mohammed encouraged Muslims to seek learning wherever it may be, as indicated in his statement 'go in search of it (knowledge) as far as China'. This need for expanding the horizon of knowledge is further asserted in the Quran's words 'travel through the earth and see how Allah originates creation' (Merriam 2007:29). Fourth, Muslims believe that the journey that one takes in order to learn is a way to paradise. For Muslims 'god is the source of knowledge', and by knowing more they feel they are 'drawing near to God' (Hilgendorf 2003:64). Furthermore, even the act undertaken in Muslim's process of learning is considered worship. This belief is supported by Mohammed's sayings that 'even the sleep of a person in pursuit of learning is regarded as worship', and 'He who goes forth in search of knowledge is in the way of Allah till he returns'. Finally, Mohammed encouraged Muslims to learn languages other than Arabic, as learning other languages would help them to read and acquire more knowledge.

This Islamic emphasis on learning motivates Libyan parents to send their children at early age to Mosques in order to study the Quran and learn how to read and write before they go to school. Even when enrolled in school, most children continue to have evening classes in Quranic schools. Furthermore, from a religious view, parents are aware of the importance of education so most parents insist on sending their children to schools to be educated.

In Islam, both learning and teaching are equally important as they aim to realize the greatness of Allah. Just as the prophet is respected in the Islamic culture,

the teacher is revered in the Islamic society as well. This position is supported by Mohammed's saying 'verily the men of knowledge are the inheritors of the prophets'. Therefore, the student-teacher relationship is sacred. Students are supposed to show respect and politeness when they interact with their teachers. For example, in most Arabic and Islamic countries it is not accepted to call teachers by using their first names as that is regarded as a sign of disrespect. Furthermore, building on the religious notion of the importance of teachers in society, the beliefs and traditions shape the role of the teacher as sources of knowledge. For example, the idea that teachers know more is widely held in the Libyan culture. This shapes students' assumptions, as the teacher's role in the class is to provide knowledge and explain all the needed information. As a consequence, students usually feel uncomfortable if they are asked to work in groups or to try to do a task for themselves.

Acknowledging these kinds of expectations among teachers and students in this research is important in considering how it might shape teachers/ students cognition about the teaching practice and their identity as teachers. According to Burns and Richards (2009:5) 'identity reflects how individuals see themselves and how they enact their roles within different settings'. Identity might be shaped by many factors including age, personality and culture. The culture plays an important role in forming assumptions about teaching, teachers and students. These assumptions reflect what the teacher's responsibility is believed to be, how learning is understood, and how students are expected to interact in the classroom (Richards and Lockhart 1995:107). In the Libyan context, classroom control is a sign of a 'good teacher'. Therefore, student discipline and teachers' control are of high priority to most teachers. As a consequence, teaching is viewed as a teacher controlled and directed process.

## **2.5 The Libyan Educational Policy**

The following is an overview of the objectives of education, the stages of education, the language of instruction and the role of English language in education.

## **2.5.1 Principles and General Objectives of Education**

The general objectives of education in Libya can be summarized as follows:

- Helping students to master the proper use of the Arabic language in all areas with interest in foreign language to communicate with the world.
- Develop the students' sense of national identity, and deepen their pride in the Arabic Nation and the Islamic world civilization.
- Provide educational opportunities for all and assist students to choose the specialization that is in conformity with their orientations and abilities, and meet the needs of the society to achieve sustainable human development.
- Enable students to acquire the skills of thinking and scientific analysis to keep pace with science and technical development in the contemporary world.
- Achieve a balance between theoretical information and its practical application and establish linkage and integration between different fields of knowledge which help to employ them in their lives.

(General Peoples' Committees of Education 2008:4-5)

These general objectives of education are characterised by the focus on teaching Arabic language as Libyan students start learning standard Arabic at age six and continue to study it till graduation (students age 22). Additionally, English language is introduced in third grade (students age 9) as one of the objectives of education is to enable students to communicate in other languages. Although one of the objectives of Libyan education is to teach students to analyse and think critically, according to General Committee of Education (2008:24-43), the traditional methods of teaching, which depend on memorisation and recitation, are still widely used in Libya and the educational system still faces the following challenges:

- 1.The weakness of the education and teaching methods, due to the weakness of the teacher, and his educational qualifications. This has led to depend on non qualified teachers, and rely on non Libyan teachers coming particularly from Arab countries in public education, and from some Asian countries in the university level.

2 The educational and pedagogical techniques and methods of teaching and learning have improved, but the Libyan teacher is still lagged behind. The teacher is still using traditional methods which depend on memorization and recitation. As a consequence, students do not acquire the skills that would enable them to continue their studies because there is a large gap between the school's methods of teaching which prepare them only for exams and the reality and the ambitions of the Libyan society.

The development programmes are introduced without conducting assessment field studies or using evaluation standard. In other words, the plans are applying without assessing their strengths and weaknesses to be taken into consideration in organizing other educational programmes.

The challenges that have been identified by the Libyan Committee of Education are not restricted to teaching English in Libya. Many other countries where English is taught as a foreign language have been reported to suffer from similar problems. In their research, Barkhuizen and Wette (2008: 372-87) investigated the Chinese university teachers' experience. They point out problems related to the teaching contexts such as large classes, low proficiency and instrumental motivation. Also some teachers mention the effect of fixed syllabus and heavy workloads. Teachers work under pressure to complete the textbook and prepare students for examination. Correcting students' papers and lesson preparation are time consuming for teachers' out of class time.

In addition, the results of Mattheouakis's investigation of pre-service Greek undergraduates understanding of learning and teaching indicate that many English language teachers usually use fixed syllabi and focus on teaching grammatical rules(2007:1272-88). Most students have been taught by this approach, and consequently their beliefs and understanding of language teaching are influenced by this learning experience.

## **2.5.2 Language of Instruction**

Libya is a bilingual country where Arabic is the official language and Berber is spoken by a minority of about 2% of the population (Imssalem 2001:9). Since independence, the Libyan official language policy promotes Arabization i.e. the exclusive use of Arabic in all contexts in order to promote indigenous Arabic and

Islamic cultural values throughout society. There are basically three varieties of Arabic used in Libya: classical Arabic (the language of Quran), modern standard (the form used in press), and the spoken Libyan dialect. The classical Arabic is the prestigious form that is used in both written and spoken forms. The modern standard is simpler than the classical and is used for newspapers, public speeches and in formal settings (Cowan 2000:29). Moreover, classical Arabic is learned in formal educational contexts. In contrast, the Libyan Arabic dialect is the language of home and everyday conversations. It is acquired as the first language and only transmitted orally. This dialect differs from the classical variety in its wider flexibility in word order and on the level of phonology. So while the Libyan dialect is spoken by everyone, classical Arabic is not.

Despite the protective language policy in Libya, the Arabization of the language of instruction in the faculties of economics, medicine, and science has not been successful. Using English language in these faculties is taking place. This is because of many factors. First, students who need training after graduation, like medical students, prefer to be trained in United States or Britain. Second, when these graduates return as staff members, they prefer to use English in teaching. Finally, most university level teaching materials (textbooks and references) are written in English, so students learn English through reading specialized books in medicine or science (Imssalem 2001:10-11).

Presently, English and Arabic are taught in schools and at the universities. English is the medium of instruction for university level science, technology and medical schools.

#### **2.5.2.1 The Role of English in the Educational System**

Since 1954, English was taught from primary school at age 10 until the completion of secondary school. In 1973, English language learning was pulled back to preparatory school (age 13). This continued until 1986 when English language was banned from schools and universities in Libya. The banning of English language instruction was implemented when the Arabization campaign sought to eliminate western influences, including English language, in reaction to the American air raid and the US sanction on Libya. This withdrawal of English language instruction lasted for six years from 1986 to 1992. As a consequence,



the English language proficiencies of university graduates have been negatively affected. Furthermore, the decision to ban English language instruction had a great influence on English language teachers and inspectors as well who from 1986 to 1992 had no jobs and were forced to teach other subjects such as history or geography.

However, with the increase in the use of English as a second language and the improvement in Libya's relationship with the US and UK, the Libyan government began to recognize its importance by reintroducing the teaching of English into the school curriculum. Furthermore, due to developments in other sectors such as tourism, the demand for English language graduate speakers has increased. In response to this, the Libyan Committee for Higher education reviewed its policy regarding teaching English language and introduced a new curriculum for English language for basic and intermediate education.

Presently, the educational system in Libya provides exposure to English by offering English language courses in schools from the third grade (primary school students age 9 years) up to university level. At present, all students who finish the secondary school education will have had at least ten years of studying English as a school subject (Imssalem 2001:9). Moreover, as part of the educational and developmental programmes in Libya, the government has encouraged studying abroad in all academic fields. In 1994/1995, the number of Libyan students who were studying abroad was 1,733. This number increased to 71,000 in 2009.

## **2.6 How English is Taught at the Different Stages of Education in Libya**

The educational system in Libya consists of three stages: basic education (primary and preparatory), intermediate education (secondary) and higher education (university and vocational training), including post graduate studies.

### **2.6.1 Basic Education**

The first nine years of education, the six years of primary school and three years of preparatory school, are compulsory to all students from age 6-15. The educational emphasis at the primary stage is for students to learn the standard

Arabic and improve their linguistic ability. In addition, the English language has been introduced to level three (students age 9) to expose students to English at an early age. This stage of education is divided into four year and two year period with assessments at the end of fourth grade and sixth grade. Students study Arabic language, Koranic studies, Jamahiriya society, mathematics, sciences, history, geography, art, music and physical education.

The preparatory stage begins at the age of 12 and continues for three years. During this period, students study Arabic language, Koranic studies, English language, history, geography, sociology, mathematics, and sciences. At this stage, English language teachers use the 'English for Libya' series of textbooks and mainly use grammar translation method with a focus on the basic rules of English grammar such as forming questions and using present tense. The reading passages are mainly about the Libyan culture and history. Teachers are usually directed by school principals and inspectors who usually evaluate their way of teaching to ensure adherence to the curriculum.

After completing the nine years of basic education, students get the Basic Education Certificate. Students who do not complete the full nine years of the basic level have the opportunity to enrol in vocational programmes of one to three years in length.

### ***2.6.2 English in Intermediate Education***

All students who have successfully completed the basic education by passing the national exam with a grade of not less than 50 % are admitted to secondary school. Secondary education is divided into different fields of study: basic sciences; engineering sciences; life sciences and social sciences. Secondary education lasts for three years in vocational training schools or three years in specialized secondary schools. Each section in each of these specialized secondary schools has its own specialized subjects and a class plan. For example, the division of languages includes disciplines of Arabic, French, and English. Students who are enrolled in the English discipline study English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), language lab, grammar, conversation, and phonetics for three years.

In secondary education, English language is considered as one of the important subjects. A series of course books called 'English for Libya' are taught. The books are organised around activities based on the communicative principles by focusing on presenting meaningful tasks rather than focus on the grammatical structure (Richards and Rodgers 2001:154). Writing tasks involve 'pre writing', 'while writing' and 'after writing' tasks; English is used in class as much as possible; the inductive teaching of grammar is required; but mistakes are not considered signs of weakness. In addition, the key principle of the curriculum is interaction, with students required to work in groups and pairs (Richards and Rodgers 2001). However, the method by which secondary school teachers apply the curriculum is different. This is exemplified in Orafi and Borg's research in which they investigated the implementation of Libyan secondary school teachers to the new curriculum (2009:251). They point out that English is taught mainly through focus on form and presenting grammatical structure. Arabic language is used most of the time and the way of teaching is mainly characterized by the teacher centred approach. A few opportunities are given to students to practise the target language and their performance is based on repetition and drills.

Thus it can be said teachers still apply the principles of grammar translation method by focusing on teaching grammatical rules and explaining them in Arabic and the audio-lingual method by focusing on drills and repetition rather than the communicative approach. This is similar to the findings of Anderson (1993) research on using the communicative approach in English language teaching in China. He points out that one of the limitations in using communicative approach in EFL contexts is the demands that it places on the teacher. Using the communicative approach requires teachers to select and design their materials and tasks and using interactive activities such as group work. Therefore, teachers might lose the control over the class and the security of the textbooks and keep using the traditional methods of teaching.

This teaching practice is influenced by teachers own experience as students as they have the tendency to repeat their previous teachers' traditional roles and techniques, as mentioned above. This teaching practice characterises teaching English language in most of the Arabic countries (Fareh 2010:3602) and forms teachers cognition about how to teach and enact their roles as teachers. This traditional teaching persists because teachers find it useful. This use of inherited

teaching methods has been identified in other contexts. In Thailand, Hayes (2009:6) points out that the 'inherited traditions' of teaching are still widely used because they are regarded as useful for improving students' level of English and their achievements in exams.

According to William and Burden (2005: 10-11), the audio-lingual approach is still widely used in many secondary EFL classes because of the following reasons. First, in many countries teachers are not provided with a professional training so they depend on their previous experience as students and teach with methods similar to those with which they have been taught. Second, teachers also follow the procedures provided in their course book in a mechanical way. Third, teachers who lack confidence tend to be less worried about using the audio lingual procedures such as repetition and drills. On the other hand, audio-lingual methodology is also be used by teachers whose own knowledge of the target language is limited. The implementation of interactive activities such as group work is considerably more challenging for teachers with low levels of linguistic ability. For such teachers, it can be easier for them to use the steps involved in an audio lingual approach: presentation, practice, repetition and drills.

Another factor that might affect teaching English in Libyan secondary schools is the national exam that students have at the end of the academic year. For example, the writing test usually is an objective test with multiple choice and completion questions. These exams usually have fixed forms on which students can memorise the information and pass the test. According to Orafi and Borg, while the curriculum in Libyan secondary schools changed, the assessment procedure did not (2009:252). As a consequence, the classroom instruction continued to focus on grammar and memorisation. This form of instruction may continue to influence secondary school students and their beliefs about language learning and teaching even after their transition to university. When such students enter university, the university teachers are often faced with different levels of English, as some students will be good in writing English, while most will have had less practice.

### **2.6.3 Higher Education**

Higher education in Libya includes three major sections: university education, higher technical and vocational institutions, and higher institutes for training.

When successful students get a secondary school certificate, or in the case of technical schools, a diploma and pass with a high average (65% and above), they may continue their studies in higher education through one of the nine universities, sixteen higher technical and vocational institutions, and seven higher learning institutes (Arabsheibani and Manfor 2001: 140).

University education includes different fields of study, such as economics, Islamic studies, basic sciences, humanities, languages and literature, engineering, industrial, medical and agricultural sciences, and environmental studies. It lasts four to seven years.

Higher technical and vocational institutions offer programs in fields such as electronics, mechanical engineering, finance, computer studies and medical technology. The qualification awarded after three years at vocational institutes and centres is the Higher Technician Diploma.

Since 1990, the Libyan universities changed their admission requirements. Students must now have a grade average of not less than 65% in order to be admitted to any faculty. Some faculties, such as medicine and engineering, require scores for admission which are more than 75%. Students who have an average below 65% are admitted to the higher training institutes and vocational training centres.

With regard to secondary school English teachers, over the last decade they have mainly been graduates of the Faculties of Arts. In 2000, education faculties were replaced with teacher training higher institutes and faculties of Arts. The Faculties of Arts prepare students to be English- Arabic translators. They study in a four year program that includes English language skills, English literature, linguistics, applied linguistics and translation. Most of these graduates work as English teachers, and due to the lack of English language teachers in Libya many of them will find employment.

Higher institutes of teacher training provide courses about teaching including courses about teaching English language. The higher institutes of teacher training enrol graduates of secondary education, and offer a four year course of specialisation in English language that also includes science and history.

With regard to university teachers, some have Masters Degrees in English language teaching, or applied linguistics from the institutes of higher studies in Libya, such as the Academy of Higher Studies. As well, due to the Libyan government's encouragement of students to study abroad, large numbers of university teachers have their degrees from English speaking countries such as the UK and Canada. Furthermore, because of the insufficient number of English language teachers in Libya, Libyan universities contract a number of Arab and Asian teachers from Iraq, Egypt, India and Pakistan.

The course content in higher institutes of teacher training and the MA programs in Libya are similar. They usually contain: theory, subject matter, language improvement, teaching methodology in which students study the teaching methods, and testing and teaching language skills. Information is presented in the form of lectures which generally do not take into account students beliefs or previous experience as students.

This transmission based approach focuses mainly on theory rather than practice. As a consequence, students do not have the chance to gain any practical experience before they start teaching. This educational context shapes to a certain extent the students' views about teaching. When they graduate and start teaching themselves, the only teaching models they know are the techniques used by their own teachers. Golombek (1998: 460) states that the way L2 teachers understand and respond to their students is affected by their experiences as teachers and learners, as well as their professional knowledge. Furthermore, teachers' previous experience as students plays a significant role in the formation of their ways of teaching (Crandall 2000:35). This could be one of the reasons behind the Libyan teachers' usage of the traditional methods of teaching, such as the grammar translation method and their focus on teaching grammar rules. They were taught this way, so they apply it in their teaching.

With regard to English language teaching, all the academic departments at the Libyan universities teach English as a subject. In addition, there are English language departments in which students study English language skills, literature, and grammar.

At the university level, teachers have more flexibility to design their courses and select syllabus for their students. In addition, there are no national exams at the university level. Teachers design their tests without the pressures of covering the whole textbook and preparing students for exams. Instead, their teaching is influenced by the students' mixed levels, large class size and a limited choice of textbooks. The textbooks that are used might have a structural syllabus, in which, according to Dublin and Olshtain (1986), the content is selected according to grammatical notions and elements such as nouns, verbs and adjectives. Alternatively, another syllabus is the functional-notional syllabus which is usually organised around functional language use such as requesting and apologising. A third type is the skill based syllabus which groups linguistic competences such as vocabulary and pronunciation into generalised skills such as writing paragraphs or giving oral presentations. The main aim of a skill based syllabus is to teach a specific language skill and to develop competence in the target language (Richards 1990).

It can be said that the way English is taught at high school influences the way it is learned by students at the university level in different ways. First, students start at the university with fixed assumptions about the teachers as sources of knowledge and they apply what the teacher says. Second, in high school, the materials are provided by the Committee of Higher Education and the teachers apply fixed and systematic syllabi without the need to look for suitable materials for their students which is the case at the university level. Thus university students face difficulties mainly at first year to find materials and use references in their assignment and look for books in the library. Third, teaching in high schools is exam oriented, so mainly students mainly memorise information in order to pass exams (Orafi and Borg 2009). As a consequence, students go into university with the idea of memorising and passing exams in mind. It is quite hard to engage them with tasks that require critical thinking and analysis.

## **2.6.4 Graduate Studies**

Graduate programmes are offered in a variety of fields in the Libyan universities and the Academy of Higher Studies. Students are enrolled in MA, Mc courses and preparing Doctorate. The largest number of students enters the field of medicine, educational sciences, social sciences, economics and finance, engineering and industrial sciences.

With regard to English language, all the Master courses include English language as subject. Most science and medicine courses use a content based syllabus that is organised around the subject matter rather than the language teaching. The main aim of using a content based syllabus is to teach students information through use of the target language. In such case students simultaneously learn the English language and the course content (Richards and Renandya 2004).

## **2.7 Teacher Training in Libya**

The General Committee for Education is the highest decision making power in Libya with regard to education. As stated in its report (2008:10), it is the responsibility of this committee to provide courses for teachers for 'preparing and developing the skills and knowledge needed to be able to keep pace with global developments in the areas of curriculum and teaching methods and the use of modern educational techniques'. However, the Committee does not provide any training courses for university teachers. The provided courses are for basic and intermediate education teachers. With regard to university level, most universities in Libya do not offer any pre -service or in-service courses for university teachers. This may be due to the following reasons. First, since most university teachers receive their MA/PhD degrees from the UK, it is widely believed that they are qualified enough to teach, since UK course requirements usually involve teaching methods and assessment. Second, the Libyan culture assumptions that people have about teachers as 'sources of knowledge' perpetuates the idea that teachers do not need further training. As a consequence, most Libyan and non Libyan teachers teach without receiving in-service training.



Secondary school teachers' in-service training was introduced in the 1970s to replace the non-Libyan secondary school teachers who made up the majority of teaching staff (Clark 2004:1). By the 1980s there was minor progress, but the country still suffered from an insufficient number of qualified teachers. Because of this shortcoming, the Secretariat of Education contracted a number of Arab teachers. This strategy, however, did not solve the continuing shortage of EFL teachers.

The system for teacher training was reformed in 1995/1996 for two reasons. First, the rapid development of basic education required an improvement of training institutes for basic education teachers. Second, there was, and still is a lack of teachers for scientific and technical subjects.

In 2002/2003, the Secretariat of Education organized centres for in service primary teachers as an attempt to solve those problems. The number of teachers enrolled was 188,552 at the basic education level and 47,268 teachers at the secondary level. The study plan for teacher training institution includes three types of subjects: (a) vocational and pedagogical preparation; (b) specialized and academic preparation and (c) general cultural preparation.

With regard to English language teachers, the Libyan Committee of Education introduced new training programmes for primary and secondary school English language teachers to meet the increased demand for qualified teachers. There are different in-service training programmes, including improvement courses for teachers whose level of proficiency is weak; cultural and vocational knowledge and methodology courses.

The only time devoted to these courses is a month in the summer holiday which is not sufficient and teachers are not motivated to attend. They usually cover English language teaching methodology and testing in terms of theory rather than practice.

## **2.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented a general picture of Libya's location, population and history. It can be said that the Turkish rule influenced the way of teaching in

Libya through introducing Quranic schools. The Libyan parents preferred to send their children to these schools to avoid entering the Italian schools which do not use the Arabic Language. These Quranic schools raised the importance of learning in the Libyan society and, to a certain extent, formed people's assumptions about the roles of teachers as sources of knowledge.

The chapter then provided a general picture of the teaching English language in the context of this study. It can be concluded that the Committee of Education in Libya has made remarkable progress in improving the educational systems of Libyan schools by reforming the educational institutes, upgrading the curricula, and introducing the English language from primary level to secondary education which occurred in 2006. However, the transmission approach still permeates the whole educational system in Libya including teacher education training courses. These challenges were presented in the General Peoples' Committees of Education Report (2008: 4-5). The situation is also evident in post graduate courses which depend heavily on transmitting information to student teachers rather than involving them in classroom observation and reflection. As a consequence, the teachers graduating from these programs lack the practical knowledge that they need to design their courses.

In contrast with basic and secondary education, the Committee ignored providing consistent materials and training courses for university teachers. Holding the assumption that the academic knowledge that the teachers have from their MA/PhD courses is sufficient for becoming qualified teachers; these teachers are left to rely upon their own means of self development to acquire pedagogical knowledge.

The following chapter discusses teacher cognition in order to consider how to investigate the types of knowledge and beliefs regarding teaching that university teachers gain from their formal education and from their teaching experience and reflection.

## **CHAPTER 3.**

# **LIBYAN UNIVERSITY TEACHERS' COGNITION**

### **3.1 Introduction**

There is a growing consensus that in order to understand language teaching better, we need to know more about teachers' cognition, what teachers know, how they come to know it, and how they draw on their knowledge (Freeman and Richards 1996). Borg's (2006) survey of research on teachers' cognition shows how the term cognition has been variously termed and included different elements such as teachers personal theories (James 2001); teachers' beliefs (Burns 1992) and beliefs, attitudes and knowledge (Woods 1996).

As described in Chapter 2, the teaching profession in Libya is under pressure due to the expansion in the education sector, so for this study 'attitudes are less important. Therefore, this research aims to focus on teachers' beliefs and knowledge and their influence in classroom practice because beliefs are the filter that teachers use to adapt the knowledge i.e. teachers modify and adapt the new knowledge according to what they believe is good for their students (Richards and Lockhart 1995:31).

In order to construct a theoretical framework for investigating teachers' cognition, defined by Borg (2003:86) as 'what teachers know, believe and think', this chapter provides an overview of the types of knowledge that a Libyan university teacher is likely to develop for teaching English as a foreign language, with particular focus on how the beliefs that the teacher have influence his/her teaching practice.

### **3.2 Teachers' Knowledge**

Verloop et al (2001:446) use 'teacher's knowledge 'as an overarching concept to refer to the whole knowledge that influences teachers' teaching practice, such as knowledge about learning difficulties, subject matter and teaching strategies.

The starting point for me in considering teachers' knowledge was considering the types of knowledge in education. Shulman (1986) lists six types of knowledge as: Content knowledge, General pedagogical knowledge, Curriculum knowledge, Knowledge of learners, Knowledge of the educational context, and Knowledge of educational purposes and values. Because the participants of this research are English language teachers, it was important to consider the classifications of knowledge in English language teaching contexts. In the ELT context Malderez and Wedell (2007:19) classify three general types of teachers' knowledge: (a) *knowledge about things*, which refers to content knowledge and curriculum knowledge in Shulman's list, such as knowing about the students and their needs, (b) *knowledge about how to do things* such as using new ideas to plan lessons or to assess students. Shulman (1986) uses the term 'pedagogical knowledge' to refer to such type of knowledge. (c) Knowing how to do things and knowing to use appropriate aspects of the other kinds of knowledge while actually teaching.

It was of particular interest in this research to investigate the knowledge and beliefs that the participants accumulated through their classroom teaching experience and reflection and the extent that these views influence their teaching practice. Shulman's list will be used as a basis in this research. To this list two types of knowledge are added, namely, Knowledge of self (Turner-Bisset 2001:16) and Personal practical knowledge (Clandinin 1985:362)), which are formed through the 'filter' of beliefs.

These kinds of knowledge are obtained through different processes: formal and informal. To investigate these points, the theoretical knowledge that the Libyan teachers learn from their education will be discussed first followed by a discussion of the types of knowledge that they learn informally and how it is structured will be presented.

### ***3.2.1 Formally Acquired Teachers' Knowledge about English Language Teaching***

According to Xu and Connelly (2009:221), teachers' knowledge is constructed formally by what teachers learn in their education. The Libyan post graduate courses provide teachers with theoretical information about the content knowledge and curriculum knowledge.

### **3.2.1.1 Content Knowledge**

Content knowledge refers to the amount and organisation of knowledge that the teacher knows. In Libya this knowledge comes from the undergraduate and post-graduate courses where students learn about grammatical rules of English language. With regard to EFL teachers, Roberts (1998:105) points out that having content knowledge means that teachers show knowledge of the systems of the target language and competence in it. This means that teachers should have declarative knowledge of the language. Knowledge about English grammar and phonetics for instance and be simultaneously proficient and confident users of it as they will become language models for their students. However, according to Medgyes and Ryan (1996:361-73), being fluent in the language and having competence in linguistics may be essential, but it is not enough to become a teacher.

Shulman (2004:749) points out three kinds of content knowledge that are essential for teachers: subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and curriculum knowledge. The subject matter knowledge and curriculum knowledge will be discussed first, as Elbaz (1981:47) considers knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of curriculum as the basic areas of teachers' knowledge. The pedagogical content knowledge will be discussed later as this type of knowledge is gained by teaching experience and based on the other types of knowledge (Turner-Bisset 2001:17).

Beijaard et al (2000: 749) mention that for teaching, knowledge of subject matter i.e. the theoretical information about the subject is one of the parts of a teachers' professional knowledge base. Subject matter knowledge has three components: *substantive knowledge*, *syntactic knowledge*, and *beliefs about teaching and learning*.

According to Shulman (1986:10), substantive knowledge is the substance of a discipline: the facts, ideas, and the theories of a subject. It also includes knowledge about the subject such as the major arguments within the field. Most teachers have few opportunities in their education to know the substance of the subject matter. As a consequence, they depend on their experience of teaching. Their experience helps to develop views that will help them to teach in a way that their students can understand. On the other hand, syntactic knowledge is the means by which new knowledge is presented to students i.e. knowing how to teach the substantive knowledge to others (Turner-Bisset 2003:15).

The teachers' beliefs about the subject influence what teachers choose to teach and how they choose to teach it. This is related to the fact that, teachers' have knowledge, beliefs, and an assumption about what works best for their classes (Richards and Lockhart 1995). Moreover, Verloop et al (2001:454) indicate that knowledge and beliefs might function as filters for interpreting new experiences or selecting new information about teaching approaches.

For this research, it is important to acknowledge the beliefs associated with the Libyan view of teaching and the role of the teacher involves general understanding related to the learning that teachers think to be true. As mentioned in 2.6.2, the typical view is focusing on form and keeping control and discipline are the main features of teaching English in Libya. This is related to culture and beliefs that the teachers formed about their roles in the class.

### **3.2.1.2 Curriculum Knowledge**

Curriculum knowledge is knowledge of curriculum in general and includes the materials and resources used for teaching particular subject as well as the structuring of subject matter and sequencing of different learning materials (Shulman 1986).

At the university level in Libya there are general outlines of the subjects that students should study each year but no clear guidelines about the content of each subject (see 2.6.3). In this context, one of the main roles that the university teachers play is to select and present the materials for their students.

Choices of syllabus can range from purely linguistics, where the focus is on grammar and structure, to purely semantic, where the focus is on content.

Tomlinson (1995:485) points out that material selection is the product of theory (about teaching and learning), teachers' cognition (beliefs, knowledge, attitudes and personalities) and teachers' experience (previous experience as teacher and student). By combining these three elements together, teachers make decisions about the appropriate materials for their students' learning levels and interests.

In such situations, curriculum knowledge enables the teachers to know that materials are not only available through textbooks; but through what they generate by themselves for a particular context or students. An important part of a teacher's job is to develop syllabus as mentioned in Section 6.3. In some cases this may mean making adjustments in existing materials for students and in others designing courses and teaching them (Roberts 1998: 174). For example, Libyan writing teachers usually edit and modify the content of the book to suit the students' culture. For example, it is not acceptable in Libya to ask students to write a letter to a boy friend/ girl friend as this kind of relationships is forbidden in Islam. In this case, the teachers usually change the prompts to write a letter to a pen friend for example.

The knowledge of curriculum will help the teacher to know the criteria of selecting materials. Harmer (1983:240) points out the criteria that teachers might take into consideration in selecting the material: practical considerations, layout and design, activities, skills, language type, subject, content, and guidance. Furthermore, knowledge about curriculum goals will enable the teacher to develop his/her own materials, make use of, or exploit course books and authentic material to suit their pedagogic goals (Fradd and Lee 1998:788).

### ***3.2.2 Informally Acquired Knowledge and Beliefs***

This type of knowledge is complex and fits several significant theoretical areas. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Libyan teacher education provides a theoretical course, on the transmission of information to students. As a consequence, Libyan teachers believe that they should transmit knowledge. When they start gaining, teaching experience, they start accumulating knowledge and formulating beliefs

about students and classroom context. This knowledge is of the following types: pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of educational context, knowledge of learners, knowledge of self and personal practical knowledge. These types of knowledge are discussed in turn in order to build a picture of the components of classroom practice to be investigated.

### **3.2.2.1 Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

Shulman (1986:8) defines pedagogical content knowledge as ‘a special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own form of professional understanding’. It has subject matter components, pedagogy components, and beliefs components. Some teachers obtain this knowledge through supervised teaching practice. In Libya, at university level, there is no such observed training, as stated in chapter 2, and it is assumed that a high level degree in the content is sufficient for teaching.

Hashweh (2005: 276) points out that pedagogical content knowledge is personal knowledge linked with experience, because teachers develop and accumulate in teaching a subject. It also includes knowledge about students’ previous knowledge and assumptions on how to deal with them.

Hashweh (2005: 273) adds that pedagogical content knowledge represents the blending of content and pedagogy into practice by teaching a certain topic over time. Teachers construct understandings of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented and adapted to the context that they work in and to students’ interests and levels. According to Shulman (1986:9) pedagogical content knowledge covers:

The most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations.  
In a word, the ways of representing the subject which makes it  
comprehensive to others. It also includes an understanding of  
what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult.

In ELT, the pedagogical content knowledge enables the teacher to present the information in a clear way. Ur (1991:12) points out that the ability to explain new information well is considered one of the most essential qualities of being a good teacher. By explaining the new material or instruction effectively, teachers might not only help students to understand the new information but also to



activate a learning strategy by linking the new grammatical rule with what they already know, for example. The teacher might also compare or contrast the grammatical rule with the structure in students' first language. For example, one of the techniques of teaching English passive voice to Arab student is to compare it with the rules of changing active voice into passive in Arabic language as they are similar in both languages.

### **3.2.2.2 General Pedagogical Knowledge**

This is generic knowledge about teaching gained from practice such as knowledge of classroom management i.e. how to attract students' attention, organise the class, design group work and select materials for students. Much of general pedagogical knowledge is constructed from different cases of teaching and has a substantive base (Turner-Bisset 2001: 15; Desforges1995:386).

Teachers' knowledge about managing classrooms and presenting lessons is influenced by their knowledge and beliefs about learners, learning and teaching. Theories about how students learn affect how teachers make decisions about their roles and how they interact with their students, often in an implicit way. For example, a teacher, who is influenced by behaviourist theory, understands the student's role in the class as a passive recipient of knowledge teaches differently than one who considers the student's role as an active participant in the learning process. The former usually presents information that students are expected to learn, followed by the practice of the presented information, while the latter might choose to present problem solving task designed to stimulate students' thinking and knowledge building (Pollard and Triggs 1997:209-11). This constructivist view of learning transforms students from passive receivers of information to active participants in the learning process (Schunk 2004:292).

Furthermore, beliefs about how students learn implicitly affect how teachers interpret their roles in the class. In the previous example: the first teacher often will play the role of *controller* while the second teacher usually opts for the *facilitator* role.

According to Turner-Bisset (2001:129) pedagogical knowledge can be linked to knowledge of context in that pedagogical strategies have to be shaped according to the educational context.

### **3.2.2.3 Knowledge of Educational Context**

This is broad knowledge of all settings where learning takes place: of schools, classrooms, universities, and the broader educational context of the community and society (Rainbird et al 2004:201). The educational context in which the teacher works in has important influence on his teaching, since different teaching settings involve teachers in different kinds of roles (Fradd and Lee 1998:768).

Consideration of the educational context is important in this research because it helps to understand how the teachers' knowledge leads to their practice. What role does the context of classroom, the university plays to mediate individual teacher beliefs and knowledge and how do these beliefs and knowledge mediate teachers' expectations of the classroom context.

### **3.2.2.4 Knowledge of Purposes and Values of Education**

Teaching is a purposeful activity: teachers have short term goals for a lesson or series of lessons; and a long term purpose of education. Educational objectives usually are the criteria by which materials are selected and content is outlined. All aspects of the educational program are really means to achieve basic educational purposes (Flinders and Thomson 2004).

However, because of their heavy workloads, many Libyan teachers may have little time to consider the long term aims of education; they may have aims, but these might not be explicitly expressed or discussed (Turner-Bisset 2001:17).

### **3.2.2.5 Knowledge of Learners**

Whether tacit or explicit, a teacher's knowledge of learners has important implications for how and what teachers choose to teach (Reynolds 1989: 21). It consists of two elements. First, *empirical knowledge* of learners: the social nature of learners, their interests, culture, and how they behave in the class.

Second, *cognitive knowledge* of learners, which consists of two elements: (a) there is the knowledge of theories of learning that affects the teaching practice; and (b) the assumptions about the students, of what they know, of what they can do. From this kind of knowledge teachers gain the skills and to adapt activities and representations to the needs of their students, (Turner-Bisset 2001:81). It is easier for the Libyan and Arab teachers to have this knowledge as they share the same culture and first language as the students, as well as expectations about students' learning levels and interests. The non Arab teachers usually need further information about the students' educational background and cultural issues.

Ur (1991:21) points out that after presenting new material; teachers usually encourage students to use the presented knowledge. Thus, it is important for university teachers in Libya to know about assessment procedures and different types of feedback, because not only it is one of their duties, but knowledge about learners requires assessing them as well (Richards 1990:15). Libyan teachers usually get this knowledge about assessment from post graduate courses where they study testing and assessment as a subject.

In addition to conducting tests, teachers need to correct and give students feedback. The common way in Libyan contexts is to correct all the mistakes and to give them comments on final products (McDonough and Shaw 2003).

#### **3.2.2.6 Knowledge of Self**

Extending the definition of knowledge developed by Shulman, Turner-Bisset (2001:16) mentions knowledge of self as an important knowledge for teaching. For Bisset the knowledge of self combines personal with professional knowledge because it has certain effects on teachers' teaching practices as teachers often need to reflect on their 'knowledge of self' when being a teacher. For the Libyan teachers, they depend and learn from their teaching experience. Thus, critical analysis of their practice is central element in their teaching (Farrell 1999:157).

In other words, through the process of reflection, teachers analyse their own practice and then modify those techniques according to the situation. A

reflective teacher, according to this definition, is one who critically examines his teaching, thinks of ideas to improve his performance to increase students' learning, and puts those ideas into practice (Richards 1990:118), i.e., what Schon (1991), cited in Akbari (2007), calls the cycle of appreciation, actions and re- appreciation. Schon makes a distinction between reflection 'in action' and 'reflection on action'. Teachers get involved in 'reflection in action' when they face a problem in the classroom while teaching. It occurs when experienced teachers are faced with a situation which they consider as unexpected. Rather than applying theory or past experience in a direct way, teachers draw on their store of examples to reinterpret the situation and find solutions. Reflection on action on the other hand, is the type of reflection that teachers get involved in before as well as after the session. It is the most common type of reflection that is encouraged and practised in universities and higher education institutes, and unlike reflection in action, which is an individual activity, reflection on action is usually practiced collectively and in groups ( Akbari 2007:194). For Schon (1991), reflection is an intuitive, personal, non-rational activity in which teachers get involved in the process of making new understanding of the situations of various experience.

Different attempts have been made to define the concept of reflective practice by means of its components. Calderhead (1989:64), for example, views reflection as consisting of three elements of comparison, evaluation and self reflection, while Korthagen (1995) regards reflection as consisting of organized, rational, language based decision making processes. A useful classification for investigating reflective teaching, however, is that of Jay and Johnson (2002:77-79). They regard reflective practice as consisting of three crucial steps of *description*, *comparison*, and *criticism*. The descriptive stage is the problem setting stage in which the teacher decides which aspect of the classroom or his/her practice should be the core of his/her reflective attention. In the second stage, the *comparison*, the teacher starts thinking about the reflection from a number of different aspects. For example, the teacher tries to make sense of other people's opinions which may be different to the ones he/she holds. This ability to distance oneself from the limits of one's experience might enable the teacher to discover more aspects of his/her own teaching that he never thought about. The final result will be a more comprehensive understanding of the

teaching context and its complexity. The last stage of reflection is the *critical* stage. At this stage, the reflective teacher evaluates different choices and alternatives and combines the new information and ideas with what he/she already knows. It is the decision making stage resulting from careful consideration and analysis of the situation. In this last stage the teacher will have the basis for alternative ways of teaching or approaching the problem (Akbari 2007:195). Based on this, asking teachers about changes that they made in their teaching practice will reveal their reflection on their teaching practice and how that changed their cognition about teaching.

Although there are different conceptions regarding the definition of reflection, there is general agreement on the importance of reflection as an activity and the examination of teachers' thoughts in order to improve their teaching. The assumption is that by thinking about their teaching and re-examining their beliefs, teachers can improve their teaching (Tomlinson 1995:39).

Richards (1990:119) believes that reflection is an essential component for understanding the complex nature of classrooms. Reflection may contribute to improve classroom outcomes, develop confidence and motivate teachers. It can be seen as a key component of teachers' development. Self inquiry and critical thinking can help teachers move from a level where they may be guided largely by intuitions or routine to a level where their teaching practice is guided by reflection and critical thinking. When teachers are guided by reflection and critical thinking they are more enabled to reinterpret and reframe their experiences from different perspective. Teaching practice cannot be separated from reflection because the teachers' methodological competence and the organisation become habitual and routine if the teacher does not reflect on the methods, goals and means. With reflections, it is possible to change traditions or practices inherited from their teachers (Postholm 2008:1720).

Personally speaking, reflection on my teaching experience and analysis of the tasks that I used helped me to think about the theoretical methods that I have learned in my schooling, and has helped me to develop different tasks to use for teaching. As a consequence, it has helped me to modify some materials and to change to certain extent my existing beliefs about emphases on grammar and on keeping control over the class all the time. According to Akbari (2007:193)

reflection on practice is paramount for those who likely teach as they were taught, because it might help them to replace ineffective teaching techniques with more useful ones. As a consequence, asking the participants about how they present their lessons and what prompts the change of their teaching practice might reveal their own reflection on their teaching and the factors that influence their teaching practice.

### **3.3 Personal Practical Knowledge**

What teachers know is connected with their knowledge, beliefs and with the specific contexts in which they work in. Teachers' beliefs and life experiences play a major role in shaping the kind of knowledge they develop about teaching, which we can call '*personal practical knowledge*' (Clandinin 1985:362). Xu and Connelly (2009:221) add that 'teachers' knowledge is a narrative construct which references the totality of a person's personal practical knowledge gained from formal and informal educational experience'.

Meijer et al (1999:60) define teacher's practical knowledge as the knowledge and beliefs that shape his or her teaching. This kind of knowledge is personal, based on reflection and experience and is partially shared with many teachers. It is also defined as the set of skills and information that shape the teachers' teaching practice (Bubb, 2005:5-6).

This knowledge takes the form of 'personal theories', defined as a set of beliefs, understandings, and assumptions about the teaching profession and what works best in the class, and which develop as a result of individuals' experience as learners and teachers (James 2001:4). These personal theories are important for many reasons. First, they help teachers make sense of their past and present professional experience as students and teachers. Second, they determine what teachers do in practice in classrooms, which has important implications for teacher education and development. Finally, personal theories affect teachers' understanding of the pedagogical ideas and professional skills published in books and discussed in classes (James 2001:5).

In the Libyan universities, where holding MA/ PhD is considered to imply that the teacher has developed a vision of teaching and is ready to teach, the knowledge

and the vision of teaching are accumulated through learning and teacher education takes place through experience in teaching. It is of particular interest in this research to ask about the way that this vision is structured as well as the factors that affect what teachers do in the class.

### ***3.3.1 The Characteristics of Teachers' Personal Knowledge***

Taking into consideration different terms that are used in different articles and the large number of definitions that can be found, it can be said that there is no agreement about the characteristics or the content of teachers' personal knowledge. According to Verloop et al (2001:443), and Bubb (2005:5-6), there are some common criteria of teachers' practical knowledge: it is personal, which means that each teacher's knowledge is to a certain extent unique, it is based on the reflection of experience, indicating that it may develop through experience in teaching, it is contextual and dynamic, meaning that it is adapted to the classroom situation and is reshaped by reconstruction of their experience through teaching, it guides teaching practice, and it is content related, meaning that it is related to the subject that is being taught

As we are discussing Libyan teachers, Golombek (1998: 460) in her study of the L2 teachers' personal practical knowledge suggests that the way L2 teachers understand and respond to their students is affected by their experiences as teachers and learners, as well as their professional knowledge. Thus it was beneficial in this research to ask about teachers' self development.

According to Borg (2003:95), over years of teaching, teachers accumulate experience which shapes their views and beliefs about teaching. Experienced teachers know more about their work than others do. There are probably many kinds of knowledge that are acquired by experienced teachers. They include knowledge about how to present the subject matter and pedagogical knowledge of what is involved in teaching, with consistency in different domains and different students (Ammon and Levin 1993:321).

In this sense, teacher's personal knowledge is not opposite to theoretical or professional knowledge. Instead, the knowledge which teachers may derive from their teacher education may to some extent, be implemented into their

practical knowledge. Nevertheless, teachers may differ in the extent to which they apply theoretical knowledge in their practical knowledge (Verloop et al, 2001:446).

The personal knowledge of each teacher is highly determined and shaped by his or her individual experiences, personality variables, and subject matter knowledge. This personal knowledge base is the teacher's filter for interpreting new information. It guides teachers' actions in specific situations (Verloop et al 2001:443).

### ***3.3.2 The Components of Teachers' Practical Knowledge***

According to Golombek (1998), Teacher's practical knowledge has three major components: teachers' past experience, their interpretation of their current teaching situation and their vision of the ideal.

Teachers' past experience (such as education and teaching) contributes to their personal knowledge. From their education, Libyan university teachers learn subject matter content, pedagogical techniques used by their teachers, and pedagogical theories from their educational courses (Crandall 2000:35). This past experience is dynamic i.e. it changes as new experiences interact with the store of ideas and skills that the teachers have. Even subject content knowledge changes overtime as a consequence of teaching that subject (Verloop et al 2001:495).

The current teaching situation affects a teacher's teaching practice by imposing some constraints on what techniques the teacher may use. The expectations of students, their level and numbers all affect the teacher's choice of certain approaches. For example, the use of interactive activities such as group work is not common in the Libyan classes due to students' large number (about 50 students in a class). A teachers' view of the current teaching situation is filtered through a set of practical principles about how to teach. Practical principles emerge from past experience, but they (1) include the teacher's aims for the current teaching situation; and (2) require decision and reflection dependent upon this situation (Verloop et al 2001:497).



Both the past experience and the interpretations of the current situation are linked to teachers' beliefs of what teaching should be like i.e. their vision of the ideal. The Libyan vision of teaching is characterised by teacher dominated classes with a focus on form and the provision of detailed explanations to the passive students. These views guide to a certain extent the selection of approaches to classroom teaching. Furthermore, these views depend largely upon a teacher' interpretation of curriculum, aims, beliefs, experiences, theoretical knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. This view gives the teacher a framework with which to make the adjustment that supports (1) the teachers' beliefs and knowledge and the principles of teaching with (2) the demands of the current situation (Duffee and Aikenhead 1992:495).

This vision of the ideal can develop further through reading books and discussion with colleagues (Shulman and Shulman 2004:261). According to Crandall (2000:395) these ranges of professional development enable the teachers to develop their professional knowledge. However, with limited opportunities for professional development in Libya as mentioned in 2.7, asking teachers about their vision of teaching and the resources they rely on might provide important information about their sources of knowledge and their beliefs about how writing is learnt/taught.

### **3.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the types of knowledge that Libyan university teachers accumulate through their formal and informal learning. The formal education provides Libyan teachers with content knowledge about the English language and theoretical knowledge about curriculum. With the assumption that the MA/PhD degree is sufficient for teaching, the teachers start teaching and selecting materials for their courses without practical knowledge about how to design courses or how to deal with students. Their previous learning experience plays to a certain extent a role in shaping their teaching practice, because the models that they know are mainly copied from their previous teachers. In addition the cultural assumptions that perpetuate an emphasis on teaching grammatical rules and keeping control over the class usually play a role in shaping teachers' choices.

Then, through teaching experience and reflection on their teaching, teachers acquire pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of educational context, knowledge of purposes and values of education, knowledge of learners and knowledge of self. These types of knowledge help the teachers to deal with the contextual factors that they face in teaching. However, the extent to which acquiring pedagogical knowledge changes the teaching practice varies according to the way the teachers' existing beliefs filter what they do in the classroom.

Teachers' informal learning is usually based on their self development and ability to having time to read books and attend courses. As a consequence, teachers form personal practical knowledge and vision of the ideal differently. This knowledge might, to a certain extent, influence writing teachers' choices of approaches, as explained in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4.**

# **APPROACHES OF TEACHING WRITING**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Selecting the suitable approaches for any teaching context is to a considerable extent influenced by teachers' cognition, teachers' views and knowledge (Richards and Lockhart 1995: 98). As mentioned in Chapter 3 these views of knowledge can vary from one teacher to another. Furthermore, Richards (1990:13) adds that the roles that language teachers adopt form the basis for their decisions on selecting approach, material, tasks, techniques, and assessment procedures.

As mentioned in 2.6.3, university teachers in Libya are usually responsible for designing their own courses. This requires selecting the appropriate approach to teach, the kind of classroom interaction that they think best supports their teaching, and consequently the material for their students, tasks, and activities. Their choice is usually restricted by many factors such as students' number and the teachers' knowledge of curriculum and students. Furthermore, the views of how writing should be taught influence both explicitly or implicitly teachers' selection of methodology. The following is an overview of the approaches to teaching writing.

### **4.2 Libyan Approaches to Teaching Writing**

#### **4.2.1 Product Approach with Underlying Principles of Learning and Teaching**

The product approach is a traditional, text based approach which is still used in many EFL classes, including the Libyan classes (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). The product approach is characterised by a focus on linguistic knowledge, including the appropriate use of vocabulary, grammatical rules and cohesive devices, (Tribble, 2003:37). The pure version of the product approach focuses on the production of a written text without reference to the process engaged in to

produce it. In Libya, this approach focuses on form and accuracy, and the written text is simply a means of assessing the students' ability to manipulate the grammatical structures practiced in the classroom (Richards 1990: 106).

It highly focuses on the input as it provides important source for imitation of language learning. Consequently, the product approach conceives writing as being mainly about linguistic knowledge, and thereby focuses on the appropriate use of vocabulary. Most of the time writing tasks encourage students to imitate given texts and transform models provided by teachers or textbooks. Accordingly the final product which reflects the writer's language knowledge is highly valued (McDonough and Show 2003:57).

The main focus of the product approach materials is the final product i.e. what students will write at the end of the lesson. Materials that apply the product approach are based around forms of genres such as topic sentences and description (Richards and Lockhart 1995: 310).

These materials are commonly used to teach writing in Libya because some teachers believe that it is important for students to write correct topic sentences and learn the organisation of the paragraph. Due to the assumptions that the teachers have about grammar and the importance of writing correct grammatical sentences, most writing teachers in Libya select textbooks that are organised around selection of grammatical structures and sentence patterns to be learnt. Grammatical structures in these syllabuses such as tenses, adjectives, and clauses are presented gradually (Nunan 1988:28). These syllabuses also can be organised around vocabulary in use as building blocks.

In this approach, writing instruction has four stages: familiarization; controlled writing; guided writing; and free writing. In the familiarization stage students learn specific features of a text. In the controlled and guided writing stages, the students write about the given topic with increasing freedom. In the free writing stage, the students use their writing skills in an authentic activity such as a letter, story or essay. A typical implementation of the product approach might involve the students to learn different descriptions of houses, by identifying, the adjectives used to describe a house, or the names of rooms. At the controlled stage, the students might write some simple sentences about houses or a piece

of guided writing based on a picture of a house. Finally, at the free writing stage, the students write a description of their own homes (Badger and White 2000:153).

In most Libyan classes, teachers usually explain the information and lecturing is the dominant talk in the class. Students usually take notes from the board in order to get the information for taking exams. Teachers often depend heavily on textbooks. There is little opportunity for students' to practice extended writing. The teaching practice is thereby characterized by the teaching of grammatical rules, sometimes by translating them into the students' first language, and most of the provided activities are on the sentence level. It values what students know about the language rather than what they comprehend or produce. From this view, what is important is what the students are able to write such as correct grammatical sentences, rather than fluent writing.

Because of the assumptions that Libyan teachers have about their main role of the class as a 'sources of knowledge', the widely used approach is one that emphasises presentation, practice, and performance. Teachers usually present the new patterns, such as adjectives for describing houses. This is followed by the practice phase in which the students try to use the new pattern of the language by writing some sentences that use the presented adjectives. For the performance stage, students might describe their own houses. This might be used as practice or as a test to check the students' understanding of the lesson (Richards and Renandya 2004: 94).

Cook (1992:136) mentions that the role of the teacher in this approach is to develop good language habits in learners, which is done mainly by pattern drills, memorisation or repetition of structural patterns. The explanation of rules is generally given when the language item has been well practised and the appropriate habits acquired. Brooks and Brooks (1999:7) add that teachers often transfer their thoughts to the passive students. There is not much opportunity for students to ask questions, think critically or interact with each other (Grabe and Kaplan1996:31).

It can be said that using the Libyan version of the product approach, which is influenced by the transmission approach, does have a number of limitations.

Littlewood (1985:91) states the following: first, the role of the students is usually a passive one; they are directed to respond correctly to stimuli. Product approach, with its emphasis on correct response, does not allow for learning from mistakes. Second, this approach neglects both the complexity of the processes involved in using language and the range of processes that can contribute to language learning. Third, there are not many opportunities for students to engage in the actual process of interaction and analysis in order to learn more effectively or discuss important features of language communication. The use of this approach in Libya does not develop the students' ability to write at length since much of this writing is at the sentence level. This clearly has its value in language learning, but as is stated by Hedge (2000:10), successful writing depends on more than the ability to write correct sentences. Matsuda (2003:19) states that sentence level grammar exercises do not help students to write original sentences, or to write freely.

#### **4.2.2 Process Approach with Underlying Principles of Learning and Teaching**

The process approach to teach writing is a way of looking at writing instruction in which the emphasis is shifted from students' finished texts to what students think and do as they write, i.e. the focus shifts from the text to the writer (Tribble 2003:38). Consequently, the teachers' role as assessor also shifts to that of a facilitator who uses writing activities that move students from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the production of a finished text by using a typical four stage process: prewriting, composing, drafting, revising and editing (Wyse and Jones 2001:172).

This approach transforms the student from a passive receiver of information to an active participant in the learning process. Often guided by the teacher, students construct their knowledge actively rather than just mechanically receive knowledge from the teacher or the textbook. In this sense, the students' errors are considered as a positive sign of their improvement (Schunk 2004:292).

Writing courses that apply the process approach can be organised around skills and process such as brainstorming, organising ideas, drafting, and revising (Richards and Renandya 2004: 310). Process based syllabus shifts the emphasis

from the product to the processes involved. This requires a move from transmitting information to students to interactive approaches that focus on the students' improvement.

A typical pre writing activity in the process approach might be to ask students to brainstorm their ideas on the topic of houses, or to write a list of ideas to be include in the writing exercise (Nation 2009:117). At the composing/ drafting stage they would plan to write a description of a house, as based on their ideas generated by brainstorming. After discussion, students might revise the first draft by working individually, or in pairs or groups. Finally, the students would edit their writing. In the process approach, the teachers most often aim to facilitate the students' writing and help them in organizing their ideas and revising their drafts. Teachers may use procedures as group activities, teacher/student conference, and peer work (Susser1994:36).

According to Hyland (2003), the process approach modifies teachers' role, so that teachers help students to construct knowledge rather than to reproduce a series of facts. Their role is not to convey knowledge but to provide students with opportunities and encourage them to build it up. Teachers are guiders and facilitators. The role of the teacher has two important components. The first is to introduce new ideas and, where necessary, provide the support and guidance for students to make sense of these new ideas for themselves. The other is to listen and diagnose the ways in which the instructional activities are being understood to inform further action. Teaching from this perspective is also a learning process for the teacher.

In the Libyan classrooms, some writing teachers attempt to apply this approach for different reasons. Some Libyan university teachers got their MA/ PhD from native speaking countries where they studied different approaches of teaching. Second, some university teachers in Libya are from other countries and they try to apply different approaches rather than the traditional ones. Third, some teachers tend to seek opportunities of professional development and attend workshops and seminars about teaching writing and they try to implement the provided techniques in their classes.

However, generally speaking, this approach does not widely influence the way of teaching English writing in Libya. This can be attributed to many factors. First, teachers' usually teach the way they have been taught. They usually use the procedures that they inherited from their teachers. The main reason behind this might be that some teachers are not aware of the various methods of teaching or they do not have the confidence to try other methods. As a consequence, most teachers find it difficult to leave the security of the traditional methods and take the risk of trying new ones. Second, how teachers enact their roles in the class play an important role in selecting the teaching method. When teachers understand their roles as assessors and their main duty is to teach students how to produce correct sentences, they will select the method that enables them to control the class. Finally, teachers do not prefer collaborative work such as asking students to work in peers or groups because of students' low proficiency and their large number. In addition, as mentioned in 2.6.2 working in groups will reduce teachers' control over the class.

Considering these reasons is important in this research in order to understand whether the knowledge that they teachers have from their formal and informal learning is reflected in their teaching practice as well as the role that the context and cultural views about learning play in the selection of materials and tasks.

From the above it can be claimed that the advantages of the process approach can be generalised as the following. First, it increases students' awareness of the process of writing and draws their attention to the importance of writing skills. Second, it does not focus on the accuracy of product, which is the source of students' frustration. Third, it encourages students' interaction with each other in peer response activities and focuses on the audience and purpose in writing. Finally, in a process approach, teachers concentrate on the development of students' writing as writing is more than the collecting of a final product (Graham and Kelly 1998:6).

However, Hedge (2000:10) argues that it is difficult to use this approach because while the process approach allows students to write and revise the drafts, they have to finish writing in a timed exam. The multiple draft approach is not suitable for timed exams. Furthermore, giving feedback on multiple drafts is



time consuming particularly in EFL context where writing classes are often large in number. This was demonstrated in Tsui's (1995) study in which an EFL teacher could not apply the process approach due to the duty of covering grammar focused syllabus and exam oriented teaching.

### 4.2.3 Genre Approach

The concept of genre helps teachers to identify the kinds of texts that students will have to write in their target academic contexts and to organize their courses to meet these needs. This approach perceives texts as an attempt to communicate with readers. The genre approach emphasizes the role that readers play in writing, adding a social dimension to writing research by elaborating how writers engage with an audience in creating coherent texts (Tribble 2003:46).

The Genre approach emphasizes that writing varies with the social context in which it is produced. Thus, there are different kinds of writing purposes such as writing business letters, or scientific reports linked with different situations and are used to carry out different purposes (Hyland 2007:151).

The notion of scaffolding emphasises the role of interaction with peers and 'experienced others' in moving students from what they can do now, to what are they able to do with out teachers' assistance. Hyland (2007:152) points out that students working together can learn more effectively than students work individually. This depends mainly on teachers' selection of tasks and involvement to scaffold writing from using controlled tasks to free tasks as students gradually understand the procedures of writing the given genre effectively.

In Libyan writing classes, scaffolding might take different forms such as modelling and discussion of texts, and teacher's instructions as kind of input. One way of providing this kind of support, is using *writing frames* which are outlines used to scaffold and prompt students' writing. These frames provide a genre outline which enables students to start, connect, and develop their writing appropriately while concentrating on what they want to say. Frames provide a structure for writing and can therefore take many different forms,

depending on the genre, the purpose of the writing, and the level of the students. The teacher usually introduces the frames after modelling and giving detailed explanation of the forms needed for a particular kind of text and can be used to scaffold planning or drafting.

Genre writing materials are usually planned around themes. Themes are chosen as real life activities in which people do specific things through writing. Using themes from real life such as health, smoking, work might motivate students to draw on their previous knowledge and personal experience.

More often, however, genre based writing courses are organised around the texts students will need to use in a particular target context. Writing courses may be arranged around written genres needed in particular work place such as writing scientific reports (Hyland 2003).

There are three stages in genre approach to writing. First, a model of a certain genre is introduced and analysed. Students then practice exercises which are relevant language forms to the genre and, finally, produce a short text. By using genre approach, students might read authentic descriptions of houses produced by estate agents to sell the property. As with product approach, the students would analyse the text identifying some grammatical structures like different adjectives and prepositions, taking into their consideration the social context (the fact that the text is based on a visit to the house); its purpose (selling the house); the audience (potential buyers); and that the words are supported by pictures. Students would then produce partial texts. Finally, they would individually produce complete texts (Badger and White 2000: 156).

The advantages of the genre approach can be described as follows: first, genre approach brings an important concept to writing: the reader. Second, it attaches equal importance to both the constraints of the writing situation and the writer's mental process, a dimension that is missing in the process approach. Third, it improves students' achievement in writing (Pasquarelli 2006:2). On the other hand, this approach received criticism because it focuses more on forms and styles than the process of writing.

#### **4.2.4 Process Genre Approaches**

This approach is combination of the previous two approaches. In this approach, writing needs knowledge about language (as in product and genre approaches), knowledge of the context and the purpose of writing and (as in genre approaches), and skills in using language (as in process approaches). The development of students' writing requires providing input to which students respond (as in product and genre approaches) and focusing on students' skills (as in process approaches) Badger and White (2000:157).

A typical example of process genre writing tasks might be writing a description of a flat in order to sell it. This purpose has implications for the subject matter, the writer/ reader relationship. While genre analysis focuses on the language used in particular text, in this approach the teacher needs to include processes by which students write a text reflecting these elements under the term process genre. This would cover the process by which students decide what aspects of the flat should be focused on as well as the knowledge of the appropriate expressions and structures to use (Badger and White 2000:158).

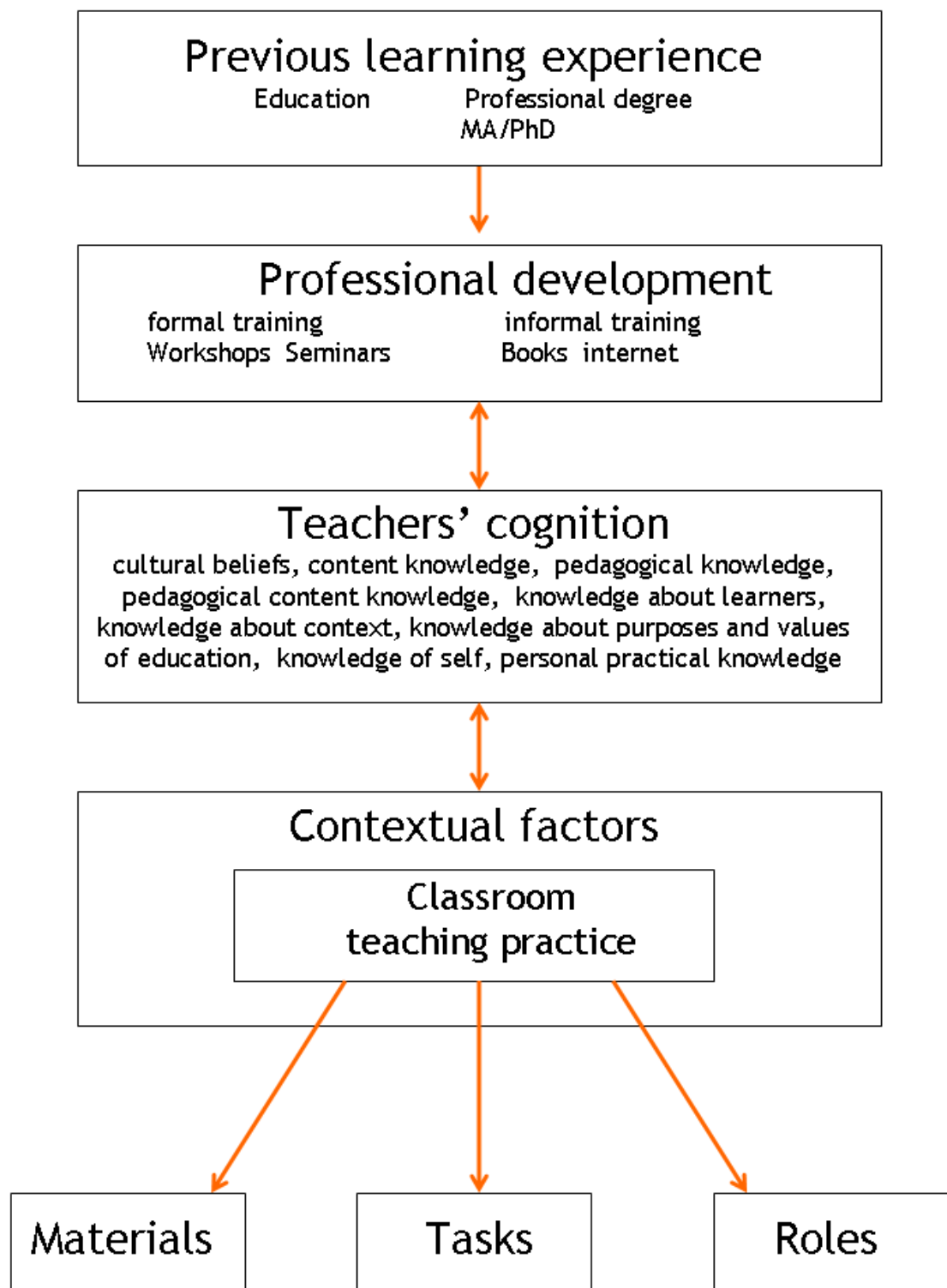
In such tasks writing teachers need to support their students to know the purpose of writing such a text and the social context. So those students need to identify the purpose of the activity i.e. selling the house, different ways to write descriptions, knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, and skills such as revising and redrafting to write a description of a house.

Providing such tasks depends on students' level and knowledge of the given topic. In the previous example, students who know various adjectives for describing a house might need less input than those who do not. Where students lack knowledge, writing teachers can draw on three sources: the teacher himself to provide input in terms of instructions or explanations, other students as they can work in groups and examples of the target genre as models to follow (Hyland 2007:158). Based on this, asking writing teachers about the tasks that they use and in what way they think they are helpful will help to understand the approaches that they use.

It is worth noting that like ESL/EFL writing teachers, Libyan teachers frequently use a mixture of more than one approach and that teachers frequently combine these approaches to suit their lesson plans and the goals that they try to achieve. As Byrne (1988:23) pointed out, few teachers use just one of the following approaches in their classrooms; instead, they tend to adopt an eclectic method that suits their purpose. However, in reality, You's findings from investigating teaching writing in China indicate that the product approach is commonly used in classroom practice with some attempts to adopt the process and the genre approaches (2004:105).

### **4.3 Areas to Investigate**

Reading and thinking about teachers' cognition and approaches of teaching writing mentioned above and how they give different pedagogical options to the writing teachers such as focus on structure or focus on content has led to forming a model of teaching practice for investigation (Figure 1) which is adapted from Borg (2003). It includes (a) *teachers' previous learning experience*, (b) *their professional development*. Those two form to a certain extent (c) *teachers' cognition* i.e. beliefs, views and knowledge about teaching and learning. The beliefs and knowledge usually are reflected in (d) the *classroom teaching practice*, and influenced by (e) *contextual factors in Libya*.



**Figure 1: Model for investigation**

The themes gathered from the literature review and shown in this figure will be used to design the questions in the interview guide.

Teachers' past experience of learning and teaching forms their personal knowledge and it is considered an important factor in the way they teach. Especially when the teachers do not receive any training, they tend to apply their own teacher's model of teaching (Winer 1992:62). In addition, teachers gain pedagogical knowledge about teaching through self development such as attending seminars and informal learning through using the internet.

This discussion shows how teachers' cognition (knowledge and beliefs) plays an important role in shaping their classroom teaching practice. This research focuses mainly on beliefs and knowledge because teachers might interpret new content on the basis of what they already know and believe (Freeman 2002:6). The beliefs that the teachers form through their previous learning experience and self development or informal learning influence their decisions about their teaching practice mainly in areas such as their selection of materials, tasks and roles. The relationship between teaching practices and cognition is interactive; each might affect the other as the teacher practice teaching. Over time, teachers modify their existing cognition according to the context they are working in. In turn; teachers' application of new ideas from their professional development depends on their beliefs (Borg 2003: 95; Breen 2001:473).

Furthermore, classroom teaching practices are shaped by different contextual factors such as time available and students' number. With regard to teaching practice, in particular, I decided to focus on three aspects of classroom interaction in which the practice is expressed as suggested by Hyland (2003: 86-119): the selection of, *materials, tasks and roles*.

*Materials* were chosen because they play an important role in most EFL classes because they provide the teachers with outlined lessons and activities. For the students, materials provide a contact with the target language. So asking teachers about the materials that they use and their criteria of selection will tell us a lot about their knowledge and beliefs of English language teaching in relation to the Libyan context.

*Tasks* are essential in learning to write and reflect teachers' beliefs of teaching writing because they are what students are required to do with the materials. Teachers' selection of tasks might reflect the goals that the teacher aims to

achieve and the factors that might affect the choice (Richards and Lockhart 1995).

Closely related to materials and tasks is the role that the teacher opt to teach writing and to apply the chosen materials and tasks. In the writing classroom the dominant structure of talk differs (lecturing, group work, pair work) according to the teachers' understanding of his/her role, the approach adapted and the tasks assigned. Richards and Lockhart (1995:100) list different kinds of teachers' roles in ESL contexts. I will adapt their list of the types of roles adding one role for the Libyan writing teacher as an assessor. In general, the roles that the Libyan writing teachers adopt are: (a) Needs analyst, Before selecting material or designing course, teachers will use their cognition to play the role of needs analyst to decide what his/her students' needs are in terms of their level in English and what they are supposed to learn (Nunan and Lamb 1996:24). (b) Controller/ facilitator: According to Richards and Lockhart (1995:106), the teacher's roles are dynamic; teacher's role might change over the lesson. For example, in the opening stage of the lesson where the teacher is presenting new information of the language, the teacher will choose to be a controller. At a later stage where students might be able to work individually or in groups, the teacher's chosen role might be that of facilitator to encourage students to work on their own and to focus on fluency more that accuracy, (c) and assessor: Clearly an important part of a teacher's job is to assess the students' work, to see how well they are performing (Harmer, 1981:201). In this task, teachers' cognition, their beliefs about what they are teaching and how students learn, plays a crucial role. Some teachers think that it is their duty to correct every single mistake whereas others might focus on fluency and encourage students to practice the new patterns of the language.

I think investigating the materials, tasks and the teachers' chosen roles might reflect writing teachers' understanding of the approaches, and the factors that influence their teaching practice.

In this research, I am exploring teachers' cognition and classroom teaching practice through asking the following questions:

-What do the approaches that the writing teachers use to teach English writing at the Libyan universities show about their cognition and classroom teaching practice?

-What resources do they draw on to support their teaching?

-What are the pedagogical implications for in-service training?

## **4.4 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter the approaches of teaching writing were presented to identify features of the materials, tasks and roles that each approach might make use of. The product approach was presented as a model that characterises most of teaching writing in Libya because it helps teachers to focus on teaching grammatical rules and keep control over the class. In contrast, using the process approach might be considered as a challenge because it requires students to work on drafts which are time consuming for teachers to correct. In addition, it reduces teachers' control over the class since students are asked to work in pairs and groups. The same can be said about the other approaches and that might show that the traditional methods of teaching such as the product approach still dominate the teaching practice.

After reading about teachers' cognition, knowledge and beliefs, the model presented above was developed to investigate the complexity of teaching writing at the university level in Libya. It starts by considering teachers' previous experience bearing in mind that they have different background as mentioned in 2.6; some university teachers are Libyan others are not and there are differences among the Libyan teachers themselves; some got their MA degree from Libya others from native speaking countries such as UK and Canada.

Furthermore, the model considers teachers' professional development such as attending workshops and reading books and how that affects their teaching and that extent that adopts their cognition about teaching. It can be said that the beliefs and knowledge that the teachers accumulate through teaching is influenced by contextual factors such as students' number and level. And this



might influence their teaching and in particular in their selection of materials, tasks and roles.

## **CHAPTER 5. METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Because the research aims to investigate teachers' cognition by looking at the classroom teaching practice demonstrated in the selection of materials, tasks and roles, I will look at these from three directions: interviews, observations, and workshops. In this chapter, the research paradigm and discussion of research tools are given followed by the context of the study, participants and ethical issues, pilot study and field study. Then, an explanation of the procedures of data collection and analysis, and the third phase of data collection i.e. the workshops are discussed.

### **5.2 Research Paradigm**

This research aims to investigate the process of teaching English writing and teacher's views of selecting roles, materials and tasks. This uses a qualitative framework to explore writing teachers' views of designing their courses and the factors that influence their teaching practice. Johnson and Christensen (2004:30) state 'qualitative research is often exploratory and is used when a little is known about a certain topic'.

Consequently, a qualitative case study was undertaken to study each teacher's teaching practice in their natural context. Case study, as defined by Johnson and Christensen (2000:376), is 'research that provides a detailed account and analysis of one or more cases'.

Despite the limitations of using a case study such as generalising the findings and the potential influence of the researcher's bias (Cohen et al 2007:255; Drew et al 2008: 43), it has been used in this research for the following reasons. First, case study data is 'strong in reality' because it provides examples of people working in real situations. As a consequence this helps the researcher to understand the

ideas more clearly than by presenting them from theories (McDonough and McDonough, 1997:217). Second, it focuses on individuals and their understanding of events as it follows an interpretive way in 'seeing the situation through the eyes of participants', (Cohen et al 2007:253). Third, a case study attempts to document the study and provide detailed information that can be 'step to action' by suggesting solutions or providing practical implications (Freebody 2003: 83). Punch (2009: 123) adds that the case study can provide understanding of the important aspects of the research area and conceptualise them for further study. Finally, this methodology was selected because it allows for a variety of data collection tools and methods of analysis.

Stake (1995) identifies three main types of case study: *intrinsic case studies* (studies that are conducted to understand specific case in question; *instrumental case studies* (examining a particular case in order to gain understanding into an issue or theory); *collective case studies* (groups of individual studies that are conducted to get a fuller picture).

Perhaps a more accurate description of this study is a *collective case study* because according to Punch (2009:119), this approach extends the instrumental case study to include several cases, to learn more about the phenomenon or participants. The multiple cases of the collective case study allow the focus to be within and across cases. In fact, it has been called *the multiple case study* which is considered more convincing in findings than a single case (Yin 2003:46).

### **5.3 The Data Collection Instruments**

Two major case study research methods are commonly suggested in conducting qualitative research in education namely: interviews and classroom observation (Punch 2009:121; Burns 2000:460). Gillham (2000:46) sees observation as 'the most direct way of obtaining data' whereas, Stake (1995:64) claims that the interview is the main road to multiple realities'. Therefore, both methods were used to capture the intricacies of teaching English writing in the Libyan classroom. Observations are also conducted to triangulate emerging findings; that is, they are used in combination with interviewing to substantiate the findings. Furthermore, Qualitative approaches using interview and observation have been shown to provide the sort of 'experiential understanding' that the

study aims to achieve (Stake, 1995:43). In addition, samples of text books are used to provide more understanding to teaching English writing at the university level in Libya and more specifically to frame the understanding of the teachers' choice.

### **5.3.1 Classroom Observation**

In research, observation is defined as 'the watching of behavioural patterns of people in certain situations to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest' (Johnson and Christensen 2004:186). Data collection for this research was based on observing the writing teachers in their teaching in the classroom. Richards and Lockhart (1995:12) mention observation is the common way of investigating teaching practice. Classroom observation has been selected for the following reasons: first, observation is an important way of collecting information about people because people do not always do what they always say they do (Johnson and Christensen 2004:186). As teachers' knowledge is reflected in their teaching and they may find it hard to articulate their teaching as using one approach not the other. This helped to answer the first research question about the approaches that the writing teachers use.

Drew et al (2008:195) mention that in qualitative research, observation is also classified as *participant* and *non participant* observation. In this research, I used non participant observation as one of the tools of data collection because data can be recorded directly by using semi structured criteria in an observation sheet (ibid 2008:197).

An observation schedule was used (see appendix A p145-46) to cover the research area: material, tasks, roles. The main aim of the observation is to obtain qualitative data about what roles the teacher play in the class, materials and tasks used. During the observation I wrote a detailed account of the teaching practice, collecting observation notes related to each item in the observation schedule.

However, classroom observation generally requires more time than other approaches. Furthermore, It might not be possible to determine exactly why people behave as they do through the use of observation and people may act

differently when they know they are being observed (Johnson and Christensen 2004:187). Therefore, classroom observation is combined with interviews to provide more understanding of the issues related to the teaching practice in teaching writing as Denzin and Lincoln (1998:89) state that observation findings are more validated when combined with other methods.

### **5.3.2 Interviews**

Burns (2000:423) defines interviews as ‘a verbal interchange, often face to face, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person’. Because interviews enable participants to express their ideas and understanding of the context that they work in they provide a useful way of understanding others (Cohen et al 2007:349; Punch 2009:144), they are an appropriate tool for collecting data in this research. Because the second research question is about the resources that the teachers have, it was important to ask about their sources of knowledge and what they do to improve their teaching practice. Interviewing is also the common technique to use when conducting case studies of a few selected individuals, (Merriam 2009: 88). In addition, interviews are used to get in depth information around the topic which might not be achieved by using other research tools such as questionnaires. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003:44) state ‘while other instruments focus on the surface elements of what is happening, interviews give the researcher more of an insight into the meaning and significance of what is happening’.

Having decided on the interview, as a method of data collection, the next step was to select the format of the interview. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 3) use a three way classification of structured, semi- structured and unstructured interviewing. In *structured interviews*, interview questions are planned and pre coded categories are used for responses. By contrast, *unstructured interviews* require interview questions that are not pre planned and standardized but instead there are general questions to keep it moving. Between these two extremes lies the *semi structured* (Punch 2009:145). Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003:45) point out that in the semi-structured interview, the interviewer sets up a general structure by deciding what area is to be covered and what main questions are to be asked.

Despite the drawbacks of using semi structured interviews such as the difficulty in the comparability of the interviewees' responses. Semi structured interviews have been selected to collect data for this research for many reasons. First, they aim to have something 'of the best of both worlds' by deciding on predetermined themes to be covered, but at the same time 'leaving the sequence and the relevance of the interviewee free to vary, around and from that issue', (Freebody 2003: 133). Second, those interviews have a structured framework but they are flexible for more follow up of responses (McDonough and McDonough 1997:183-84). This flexibility allowed me to ask for more clarification. Furthermore, this format allowed me to recognise statements and new lines of investigation, and to generate new questions based on the interviewee's answer (Merriam 2009:90).

An interview guide was used. As it was a semi-structured interview, the plan was that I would be able to add questions to ask for more details if it was appropriate.

As can be seen from the questions below, it was designed about the main themes of the investigation model (p59): teachers' previous learning experience and professional development, teachers' cognition based on cultural beliefs and knowledge about English language teaching, and reflected by teachers' selection of roles, materials and tasks and the factors that influence their choice.

#### **I. Questions about the teacher:**

1. What preparations (training) have you received to enable you be a writing teacher?
- 2 As a professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?
3. What are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing? How do you deal with them?
4. What changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching? What prompts these changes?
5. In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in teaching writing?

In the first section of the interview, the questions were designed to gain information about the participants' background. This included qualifications and degrees, their sources of knowledge (previous learning experience and professional development), their perception of the difficulties that they face in the teaching context and the background of the students and how they deal with them. From these questions I expected to find out features of their previous learning and professional development that would affect their choices in classroom practice.

## **II. Questions about teaching practice:**

### **-Material:**

1. What sort of teaching materials do you use, for example authentic material or course book?
2. What do you take into consideration in selecting the material that you teach? Why do you select this material in particular?

### **-Task:**

1. What tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary...etc?
2. In what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing? Can you give examples?
3. From your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students? What are they useful for?
4. To what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Can you give examples?

### **-The teachers' role:**

1. How do you present a writing activity? Can you describe the stages?
1. To what extent do you change your role at those stages? What prompts this change?

The second section looked at teaching practice to explore in more detail the effects of the 'cognition' on their selection of roles, materials and tasks. From

my background knowledge about teaching English writing in Libya, I knew that teachers usually start by selecting the materials and that influences their roles and selection of tasks. It was important to ask about how they select the materials as that might reflect the beliefs that they have about how writing should be taught and what are the expected roles that they will play in the class. Furthermore, the interview questions were designed to learn more about the teaching practice and teachers' beliefs and knowledge through asking about the tasks that the teachers think are useful and what are they useful for.

### **III. Questions about students:**

1. To what extent do you think that your students engage actively in the lesson? What steps do you take to achieve this goal?
- 2 At what stage do students write? What kind of writing is assigned?
3. Is it timed? Do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version? If so, how many drafts are collected?
4. How do you evaluate students' writing? How do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

In the last section of the interview the questions focus mainly on students' engagement in the class, the kinds of writing that they do, and the number of drafts because these kinds of questions provide more information about the tasks that the teachers use, the goals of the tasks, teachers' anticipation of the learning outcome and their views of how learning takes place.

## **5.4 Study Context**

In this research, I selected sites and individuals which I can access and where I can easily collect data. To ensure that the sample represented different universities, three Libyan universities, indentified as A, B, and C were selected. 'A' university is considered one of the largest and oldest universities in Libya. 'B' university represents universities that are not as large as 'A' and founded in the eighties of the last century. Finally 'C' university represents the faculties established recently. The samples selected consisted of writing teachers who teach English writing skill in the English departments in the selected universities.



As mentioned in 2.6.3, the English language departments in the Libyan universities where these teachers work provide four year programs that cover English literature, English language skills, and translation. Students who graduate from these departments are expected to work as English teachers.

#### ***5.4.1 Ethical Considerations***

The appropriate ethical arrangements were made before conducting the field study. The research tools of the study (semi structured interview questions and classroom observation sheet) were checked and approved by the ethics committee of the Faculty of Education of the University of Glasgow. Then Permission was sought from the Ministry of Higher Education in Libya to conduct the study at the intended research sites. The next step taken was to contact the heads of the English language departments in the mentioned universities, in order to get approval for conducting research. This initial phase required meeting the heads of departments and the staff members working in the departments where the study took place. These contacts gave easy access to the information about the time table and facilitate the task. The lectures to be observed were limited to writing lectures. Writing teachers were approached for permission and clarification was given about the procedures. There were meetings with the participants before initiating data collection procedures in order to explain and clarify whatever they may ask about. Before collecting data I have explained research ethical issues such as the aims of the research, the issues explored and who is sponsoring the research.

#### ***5.4.2 Participants***

I met 21 writing teachers who work in the English Language Departments in the three selected universities; seven females and fourteen males. 14 of them agreed to participate; two female teachers and twelve males. Six teachers were Libyan and eight teachers were non Libyan. The non Libyan teachers were from India, Iraq, Sudan, Philippines and Pakistan. The participants' teaching experience ranged from 2-27 years. The subjects that usually they teach are the English language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, English literature, grammar and translation. The students are all studying to become English language teachers. The interviews were conducted in English, though

participants occasionally used Arabic language where they felt it is necessary to explain a concept or to give examples.

## **5.5 Pilot study**

This pilot study was conducted in the English departments of two universities. As planned, I observed 9 English writing teachers and interviewed them about their teaching practice. The plan of data collection consisted of two parts:

1. The first part of the procedure involves observing the writing teachers.
2. The second part involved interviewing the teachers about issues related to teaching writing.

### **5.5.1 The Observation**

For the pilot study each observation lasted for ninety minutes. I designed the observation sheet to write down notes about the teaching practice: what was done, the level of engagement of the students; the materials that they use, the tasks and the roles that they play (see Appendix A p145-46). In most cases, I observed the class first then interviewed the teacher. However, I interviewed two of them before observing the classes because the teachers were busy and had other classes to teach. It was also good experience to try to form ideas from the interview about how the teacher will present the information and then observe the class to see the practice.

### **5.5.2 The Interviews**

I interviewed 9 writing teachers. The duration of the interviews was approximately thirty minutes. The priority was to seek the teachers' descriptions and interpretations of their own teaching rather than relying on my observation and interpretation.

Their experience ranged from 2-22 years. 9 interviews were audio recorded. I interviewed 5 Libyan teachers, 3 Indians and 1 Philippine. Four of the interviewed teachers had PhD and 5 Master degrees: two in English Language teaching, 2 in Applied Linguistics and 1 in Literature.

The interviewees did not have any difficulty in understanding and answering the questions. However, using prompts under each question was confusing for me. Because of the limited time I focused in certain themes and did not ask about the others. After conducting the pilot study I added more questions and did not use prompts.

From the pilot study, it was noticed that although all the participants have similar difficulties as they work in the same educational context, there is a variation in how they teach writing, and the activities that they use. Thus, the initial idea to focus the interview questions only on the teachers' selection of roles, materials and tasks was adjusted. In the main field study, questions about how the teachers deal with difficulties such as students' mixed level and the examples of the websites and books that they think are useful for teaching writing and for students were added. This was helpful to indicate the views and experience that the teachers have and how that affects the methods that they apply in teaching writing.

A difficulty arose at this stage because in the course of making my preparations, I had neglected the cultural aspects of my society which has an effect on my way of asking and on my participants' answers as well. I thought that I won't face problems in collecting data as I am working on familiar context to me where I share beliefs, views, religion and language with most of the participants. From the pilot study, I discovered that besides collecting data for this research I became more aware of Libyan cultural issues that I never thought of before.

In using the interviews, I faced two problems related to the beliefs and traditions that the Libyan have: where to do this and whether to record. As an Arabic Muslim country, Islam dominates Libyan society and the way people think and behave. Islam puts boundaries between men and women in society. Robinson-Pant (2007:182) mentions examples about the impact of culture and religion on educational practice. In one example given by Robinson-Pant, Howida Mostafe, an Egyptian teacher, explains how Islam dominates how men and women deal with each other in Egypt and how they communicate and treat each other at work or at the university.

Although the three departments that I collected data in are mixed (female and male students and teachers), it was not easy to organise meetings for interviews as most teachers, as I mentioned in 5.5.2, were men. In the Libyan society, it is not acceptable to sit in public place such as a café with a foreigner who is not a close relative. So the only place that I could interview the teachers in is the university, where teachers are usually busy in teaching. The only time that they are free in is the break between the lectures which is thirty minutes. This was another challenge for me, as I had to ask all the questions in the interview guide and more questions for clarification and examples in this limited time.

Another difficulty that I faced was recording the interviews. Some writing teachers refused to participate in the research because of the recording. This is mainly because they are not used to any kind of research and it was the first time for most of them to participate in any research. Some teachers tend to give brief, short answers while recording and speak in detail when the recorder is switched off. Another reason was that some of the participants were non Libyan so they consider recording the interviews as part of evaluation. However, explaining the aim of the research, and explaining the plain language statement and the confidentiality of the information helped to reduce the anxiety at least to those who agreed to participate.

Doing the pilot study for my research was beneficial for many reasons. First, observing the writing teachers and discussing issues related to teaching writing in Libya with them enhanced my understanding of the educational context and the factors that affect teaching writing. Second, to discover any problems related to the design of the interview and observation sheet in terms of its clarity. As a result of this pilot study I added more questions to the interview guide. Third, this pilot study was good training for me in using interviews and observation. Finally, the pilot study gave me self-confidence and interest about the topic as I started to enjoy being a researcher rather than a teacher.

## **5.6 Field Study**

After modifying the interview questions (see appendix B2 p 206-7), I conducted the field study. This time I interviewed 14 teachers. Five of the interviewed

teachers had PhD and 8 had Masters degree: 3 in English Language teaching, 4 in Applied linguistics and 1 in Literature).

It was easier this time to do follow up interviews with the nine participants from the pilot study as the participants were less worried about recording compared with the pilot study. However, for the new interviews I faced some problem with recording the interviews as some teachers did not want to be recorded.

Observing the classes was beneficial experience. The observation sheet was helpful and I managed to collect information. As the pacing of the classes was to a certain extent slow, I managed to write notes and descriptions of each stage. Using Richards and Lockhart (1995) tips for classroom observation such as arriving before the lecture starts and remaining an observer not an evaluator was beneficial in being objective and writing down notes using the observation sheet.

Observation was complementary to interviews in terms of collecting more information about the three areas of interest: teachers' role, materials, tasks and methods of teaching. This time I tried to focus more on how the writing teachers are dealing with the problems that they have mentioned in the pilot study such as students' mixed levels.

In the observation, I had examples of the materials that the writing teachers used to teach writing including printed and teacher generated material. They were usually taken from books that are commonly used by the participants namely: *College Writing* by Dorothy Zemach and Lisa Rumisek (first published 2003), *Successful Writing* by Virginia Evans (first published 2004), *Learn to Write* by Omar Elashab and Gorla Varalarkshim (first published 2008), and *III Year* writing generated by one of the participants.

Through interviewing the teachers who agreed to participate and record the interviews, I obtained useful information about my areas of interest mainly their roles in the class, their selection of materials and tasks. Through discussing the questions with them I got information about their teaching background and their views of teaching and learning.

I decided to forget about my previous experience as writing teacher to ask the participants more questions and to seek further explanations and examples. However, this encountered another cultural difficulty which is asking a lot of questions is considered rude and bad behaviour in the Libyan culture.

Furthermore, Libyans consider people who ask a lot of questions as stupid. This is mainly if they ask about issues that are considered by the listener to be clear and obvious. Generally, Libyans do not like to be asked in details about any issue. For example when I asked about the teacher's goals in teaching writing, the teacher said 'my goal is to make students write well'. In asking for clarification about what is meant by 'write well', the teacher was surprised because we are assumed to have a shared understanding and I am supposed to know what it means to 'write well'. As a consequence, to avoid being rude and stupid, I found my self obliged to explain that I need to ask in details because I need that depth of information in my research.

## **5.7 Validity and Reliability**

Producing valid and reliable knowledge and findings is a concern for all types of research (Merriam 2009:209). Validity and reliability have been discussed in terms of the relationship between the data collection process and the research questions and tools (Opie 2004:71). They can be achieved by giving careful attention to the way data are collected, analysed, and interpreted (Merriam 2009:210).

I adopted some strategies to establish validity and reliability in this study. First, I used *triangulation*, more than one method of research, to provide good evidence of the findings, (Johnson and Christensen, 2004: 254; Creswell 2004:197). Furthermore, the data was collected in different universities with different writing teachers. Second, to improve the reliability of the research and enable other researchers to replicate the study, the procedures of data collection will be explained clearly (Burns 2000: 475). Third, for researcher bias the researcher used *reflexivity* i.e. the researcher is more self aware and attempts to control her bias (Johnson and Christensen, 2004:255). This will be explained in the next section. With regard to the external validity, it is not the major aim of this research to generalise the findings as 'generalizability is not

the major purpose of qualitative research' (Johnson and Christensen 2004:255). The aim is to provide in depth understanding of the issues related to teaching writing in the selected context. Consequently, generalisation is left to the readers to relate the findings of the study to their situation (Burns 2000:477). Furthermore, Johnson and Christensen (2004: 256) mention that the findings of qualitative research can, to a certain extent, be generalised as we can generalise to other people and settings to the degree to which they are similar to the people and settings in the study. Overall, however, Creswell (2004:195) argue that 'reliability and generalizability play a minor role in qualitative inquiry'.

## **5.8 Reflexivity**

As a previous writing teacher in high school and at the university, I am to a certain extent familiar with the educational context and teaching writing in particular. So I know the materials and the contextual factors that affect the teaching. This familiarity with the context and with some of the participants had both advantages and disadvantages. Knowing more about the context gives me confidence and motivation to work harder and try to suggest solutions to the problems that writing teachers face in teaching writing such as the lack of training courses for university teachers. I feel that this research will enhance my understanding of the situation and how to deal with the problems that we face in teaching. For the disadvantages, being familiar with the context did not encourage me to ask more questions in the pilot study. This is what Goodson and Sikes (2001) call a danger of 'working in one's own backyard'. The main challenge was the transition from a writing teacher who is to a certain extent familiar to the context to a researcher who is trying to investigate the teaching practice. In addition, I was not really keen about asking for clarifications and examples in the pilot study because I thought that I already knew what was meant by responses such as 'write well' and 'correct paragraph'. In the pilot study, I tended to move quickly into the next section because I understood what the participants were talking about, as we had shared understanding.

With regard to observation, in the first two observations in the pilot study, I focused as a writing teacher more on evaluating the teachers and I kept thinking if I was in their place I would teach the lesson differently. Then I realised that I

was a researcher who was trying to collect data, not to evaluate the teachers' qualifications and abilities in teaching. I decided to apply Richards (1990) suggestion that an observer needs to be an observer. Furthermore, after a few observations and interviews, I started to be involved and to think about the different ways of teaching and the contextual factors that the teachers face.

Then I compared the assumptions that I have about teaching writing with what I recorded and observed in the classrooms. I found out that what I know from my personal experience is only a small part of the general picture as I met teachers who are from different nationalities and have different range of experience. This motivated me to observe more classes and to interview more teachers.

At the end of the pilot study, I was looking forward to the real field work, in which I pretended that I do not know a lot about teaching writing. This helped me to ask more questions and to ask for more clarifications and examples in the field study.

According to Smith and Lytle (1993:184) the struggle to be a researcher and the reflection on the way of conducting research leads to professional change. Certainly in my case, in the field study, I tried to probe in more depth and ask about what the interviewees' mean by terms such as 'write well'. I was more comfortable and confident to go back and try again with rephrased questions. Furthermore, in the analysis stage I tried to relate the findings to theories and literature rather than my personal interpretations. Despite this, it might be worth mentioning that my previous experience as writing teacher was helpful to relate the findings to the context and to understand the situation better. Furthermore, my teaching experience helped to connect the teaching practice to theories as in the Libyan context using academic terms is considered showing off. Therefore, some teachers tend to describe by using simple words rather than academic ones.

## **5.9 Data Analysis Procedures**

In multiple case studies, there are two stages of analysis: *within case analysis* and *cross case analysis*. In within case analysis, I dealt with each case individually. Then, I began cross case analysis by trying to provide general



explanation that fits the individual cases (Merriam 2009:205). The analysis has been conducted in depth following four stages: preparing the data and becoming familiar with the data, developing codes, developing categories and concepts, and interpreting the themes and reporting them (Cohen et al, 2007). It is important to point out that the analysis does not occur in a linear form and there was some 'back and forth movement between the steps' (Lodico et al 2006:302).

### ***5.9.1 Preparing Data and Becoming Familiar with the Data***

Taking into account the complex nature of investigating teaching practice, four sets of data were used to provide complementary information: classroom observation sheets, audio taped interviews and field notes from workshop. The other sets of data (field notes and books) were collected to enrich the study because they are related to the issues addressed and provide additional contextual information. These form the 'source of evidence' as Burns (2000: 467) calls them, as appropriate in case study research.

After data collection, this information needed to be put into a format that would be easier for analysis (Litchman 2006: 166). This required transcribing the interviews verbatim and organising field notes and the observational notes.

Then, the next step was reading the transcripts and listening to the tapes several times which was helpful to be familiar with the data. In the first stage, each participant was treated as a comprehensive case in itself. This required analysing each interview individually and trying to form general codes about each case. Once the analysis of each case was finished, a cross case analysis was done leading to generalisation about the teachers' teaching practice, their views and how do they deal with the problems that they face in teaching. During this process I started to write general ideas in the margins such as difficulties that the teachers' face and classroom activities.

### ***5.9.2 Developing Codes***

Due to the large amount of descriptive data from field notes and interviews, it was important to organise it by codes. The interview data were analysed with reference to this study's research questions. During this analysis I looked for

comments related to the beliefs teachers held and to contextual factors which influence the way teachers interpreted and implemented the curriculum. Interview data were initially coded under these two broad headings then gradually refined into sub-categories referring, for example, to different types of beliefs the teachers articulated and different kinds of contextual factors they felt influenced their teaching.

### **5.9.3 Themes/Categories**

The next stage involved identifying the themes as coding helped to organise the coded data into categories (Saldana 2009:8). By writing notes in the margin of the text in the form of short phrases, ideas or concepts arising from the texts and beginning to develop categories. The main themes were related to the model of this research: teachers' past experience, contextual factors, teaching practice. Those themes were supported by selected quotations from transcripts.

This stage involved clustering relevant data that represent different themes together by using transcripts, field notes that fell under the same theme represented by the coding category, then the coding category was modified and new categories were added. At this stage I designed different tables for different themes and grouped the answers according to the themes to compare them.

### **5.9.4 Interpreting the Meaning/Descriptions**

After identifying the codes and themes, I was becoming familiar with the data and it was ready for the final stage of analysis, i.e. interpreting (Cohen et al 2007: 480). This was an important stage for it moved the research from description to *inference* i.e. making meaning of the data.

## **5.10 Workshops**

In the analysis stage, and after identifying the contextual factors and the challenges that the participants face, as a researcher, I realised that there was potential for an extension to the investigation in this research. The participants showed interest in potential professional development and sharing knowledge with other colleagues. This was reflected in their answers of the last question of

the interview in the pilot study about whether they are interested to attend any workshops about teaching writing. All the participants mentioned that they were interested in attending workshops and, in a follow up question about which skills would they like to improve as writing teachers in the main field study, they mentioned the desire to know more about writing genres and new techniques in teaching writing.

Based on this and after thinking and discussing with my supervisors, I felt may be it would be good to identify the difficulties that the teachers face, but it will be better if I try to suggest guidelines for how to deal with those problems. Thus, I decided to apply the old saying '*light a candle instead of cursing the darkness*'. Having obtained the required ethical approach, I organised meetings in which I offered workshops as a form of professional development of the kind that the participants seek and asked for, as Wenger (1998) suggests providing teachers with opportunities to discuss the challenges that they face and to engage in communities of practice. Seferoglu (2010:549) adds that 'teachers need opportunities to share what they know, discuss what they want to learn, and connect new concepts and strategies to their own unique contexts'.

In this third phase of the data collection, I managed to do two workshops to explore approaches to professional development. In the first workshop, with four writing teachers, the principle activity was a lesson plan with different activities about 'describing a town'. I asked the teachers about how to teach it (see Appendices C2 p 304-5). I was particularly interested about what ideas they would produce and how they would work together. In the second workshop, with six teachers, I changed the procedure to less guided activity. I just suggested the title and asked teachers how to teach 'describing a town'. Mainly the two workshops provided forums for teachers to share how they deal with the difficulties they face and explore the tasks that they think are useful.

## **5.11 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, research paradigm and tools were presented. The selection of appropriate tools to collect data in this research, namely classroom observation and interviews, was based on literature.

This was followed by explaining the ethical procedures, and the selection of the participants. The participants were limited to writing teachers at three universities in Libya. Then the pilot study and field study were presented with mentioning the research problems such as recording the interviews and teachers' limited time that influenced to certain extent the data collection.

The pilot study was good practice for conducting the observation and interview. As a result, some questions that ask for more clarifications and examples were added to the interview guide. The confidence that I got from the pilot study played a major role in the field study and asking for more details and examples. Furthermore, the pilot and field study made me more aware of the Libyan culture and the way of asking questions.

Reflecting on the skills that I improved as a researcher at this stage was worth mentioning mainly because this will help to label the answers to the findings to the academic terms in the analysis stage. After the analysis stage, I conducted the third phase which was a trial of professional development through two workshops with writing teachers.

In the next two chapters, the findings and discussion of this research are presented.

## **CHAPTER 6.**

# **THE SIMILARITIES THAT THE PARTICIPANTS SHARE**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In the analysis stage, although I did not start out with any hypothesis about how to present the gathered data, there was an assumption that the data would be presented around writing teachers' selection of roles, materials and tasks because those are the main themes of the research. As I began to analyse the interview transcripts and observation sheets, not only I did face a problem of sorting out the data in a clear way, but also I was confused by the complex process of the teaching practice. On the surface, all participants seem to face the same problems and use similar roles and materials. For example, they all play similar roles in the class: controller, facilitator and assessor (Richards 1990). However, after reading through the data and discussion, I realised that there is a variation in their beliefs about how writing should be learnt and taught, and the goals that they try to achieve. These beliefs work as a framework for their selection of roles, materials and tasks (Richards and Renandya 2004:30).

It might be useful to present what the participants state that they have in common first, since they are working in the same educational context. The following section covers the difficulties that the teachers face in their teaching of writing and the sources that the teachers' use to deal with these difficulties.

### **6.2 Contextual Factors**

The current teaching situation affects a teacher's teaching practice by imposing some constraints on what tasks the teacher may use. Furthermore, the context sometimes 'mediates' the extent to which the teacher is able to use the tasks and materials that he/she thinks works best for his/her students (Borg 2006:284; Beach 1994:194). The interviews with the participants highlighted a range of contextual factors that influence their teaching.

However, it worth mentioning here that in articulating their views, teachers referred predominantly to factors external to themselves as teachers; they rarely refer to teaching professional development or qualifications in teaching. This can be due to two main reasons: for the Libyan teachers, because of the cultural assumption of teachers as ‘sources of knowledge’ (see 2.3), they find it difficult to mention that they need further knowledge or they are not aware of different methods of teaching writing. Second, for the non Libyan teachers, they were very careful about speaking about their teaching qualifications. This might be because they considered recording the interviews as evaluation of their skills in some way.

### **6.2.1. Difficulties in Higher Education**

The interviewed teachers mentioned that they all face the following difficulties related to students’ level, number and lack of materials.

Most of the interviewed writing teachers consider students’ mixed and low level as the main difficulties that they face. This is due to the fact that this problem affects the teacher’s choice of certain approaches and materials and even roles.

*ii) ‘It is important factor. It can hinder you from doing what you like to do. For example, the course book is from paragraph to essay. This is given to second year students and sometimes to first year students and you will find students who do not know how to write a sentence so how can you use this book?’. (T8: 1863-66))*

However, how teachers define ‘low’ level varies according to the skills that they focus on. For example, students’ level can be low in terms of lack of knowledge about general topics.

*iii) ‘Sometimes if I will ask them to write about information technology they did not know anything’. (T13: 2977-78)*

or ‘low’ means their writing contains spelling and punctuation mistakes.

*iv) ‘Even the bright students are not able to write perfect spelling or perfect punctuation marks’. (T3: 378-79)*

Those differences show that although those teachers work in the same context and indicate the same problems, how they define those problems and as a

consequence how they dealt with them varies according to their views of how writing should be learned/ taught. This will be discussed in more details in chapter 7.

With regard to class size, T2, T8 and T9 mentioned the large number of students (about 45 in each class) as another difficulty because it affects the classroom teaching practice. However, how the participants think that the number of students affects their teaching differs. For example, one teacher mentioned that the class size affects his choice of activities such as group work because the class will be noisy.

*i) 'If you want to apply any activity in the class, sometimes we are humbled by the number. So we can not divide them into groups, the class will be noisy'. (T8: 1698-70)*

This is mainly because teachers like to control 'most of what is said and done in the class' (Johnson 1998: 16). In this case, interactive activities such as group work challenges the teaching tradition as they require teachers to reduce their control over the class.

With regard to the materials, T1, T3, T5 and T9 identified the problem of lack of consistent materials. For university level in Libya, as mentioned in chapter 2, there is no established curriculum to follow in selecting the textbooks. Therefore, writing teachers select the books based on their experience of students and context. They might get suggestions from the head of the department or colleagues who recommend books that they used before.

*i) 'There is no authentic materials or course book assigned here for the university. We have to prepare our materials'. (T3: 404-05)*

*ii) we do not have curricula. It is changeable and sometimes it depends on the teacher. (T10: 2014-15)*

This problem seems to affect the teaching practice as students sometimes study the same content such as letter writing every year. Also it makes the task difficult mainly for the teachers who teach third and fourth year. As sometimes they find themselves obliged to start from the types of sentences where as they are supposed to teach writing essays.

ii)' *I teach first year the same material that second year take or study and I do not know about next year or the year after*'. (T1: 72-74)

One of the participants indicated the desire for guidelines and further improvement in how to design the writing course.

iii)' *the teacher should not be, as I think, should not be left like this to choose and select what he wants but there should be a general syllabus to be followed by all teachers*'. (T5: 814-16)

This indicates that some teachers are aware of the importance of using consistent materials. This can be discussed with other colleagues and suggesting outline for syllabus to be used.

### **6.2.2 Background Educational and Cultural Difficulties**

The interviewed teachers mentioned other difficulties that they think affect their way of teaching writing such as how writing is taught in secondary schools, lack of writing practice in either Arabic or English and the influence of L1.

Five of the interviewed teachers, T2, T3, T9, T12, and T14, think that the level of students is low because they did not study writing in secondary school.

i) '*The level of students they are very weak because they have not been taught writing in previous stages in primary or secondary school*'. (T2: 178-79)

ii) '*It could have been better and easier for me if have been dealt with properly in the school level*'. (T3: 365-366)

iii) '*and one more thing about secondary schools, sorry to say that I think the way of teaching writing is really completely different from the way we have here so at the university we start from scratch which does not work in students' situation*'. (T9: 2015-18).

The teachers think the way writing is taught in secondary schools is not helpful as it is usually exam oriented and students do not practise writing (see 2.4). University teachers often are obliged to deal with those students as beginners although they studied English writing for three years in secondary school. This is due to the fact that they enter the university with lack of the basic skills in writing.



The second difficulty that the teachers mentioned is related to teaching writing in Arabic language. Students often do not practise writing in both languages sufficiently. Even in Arabic language lessons, writing is taught mainly through focussing on micro level features and trying to apply the grammatical rules in writing correct sentences. In addition, Arabic writing teachers have the assumption that students are supposed to know how to write extended pieces of writing since Arabic is their first language. Thus less practice is given and usually they do not focus on style or organization.

*i) 'They have other difficulty as I said earlier they do not write in Arabic. Teachers usually do not ask them to write in Arabic. Their hands are not automatically used to writing, so when we ask them to write a paragraph in English they find it a little bit difficult to gather ideas and put them in words'. (T7:1377-81).*

The less practice in writing is also related to the culture as it is not common in Libya to write letters or send cards as a way of communicating with other people.

*ii) 'I think the main problem here in Libya is the culture. We are not used to write to each other even messages which is really a bad thing. And I'm going to say something about the system of writing here in Libya. We are not focusing on how to write for example I remember in my study when I was in primary school the focus was on dictation, spelling. (T9: 2018-23).*

This might also indicate that the way of teaching first language might influence teaching writing in English as teachers focus on micro skills and grammar.

Two teachers, T8 and T11, mentioned that students' first language which is Arabic affects the way they write in English as both languages have different structure. Those teachers are influenced by a behaviourist view which considers transfer as the cause of students' mistakes rather than the cognitive view that considers transfer as a resource that students draw upon in interlanguage development (Selinker 1972). According to Richards (1992:186) interlanguage is the language that SL students use in their process of learning another language. Students sometimes use their first language when they need to generate ideas and write about a given topic. McLaughlin (1987:50) mentions that students tend to think in their first language because they lack the required information in the second language. In addition, this can be linked to students' previous learning

experience in secondary school where teachers used grammar translation method and students used to translate the texts to Arabic. As a consequence students tend to think in Arabic and then translate their sentences into English.

i) *'They think may be in Arabic and write in English. (T8: 1695-96).*

ii) *'like when we say for example in our mother tongue we have the adjectives followed by the noun so we say for example student good or student clever in Arabic which should be a clever student'. (T11: 2531-33).*

This leads to many mistakes such as word order and wrong collocations. For example, in Arabic the adjective follows the noun whereas in English it precedes the noun.

## **6.3 Compensating for Lack of Professional Training**

In order to deal with these difficulties, teachers tend to rely on different resources including their previous learning experience, the Internet, their teaching experience, reading books and attending workshops.

### **6.3.1 Teachers' Previous Learning Experience**

As mentioned in Chapter 2 and 3, teachers' past experience (such as their own education and teaching) forms their personal views of learning and teaching (Borg 2003:88; Crandall 2000: 35). Britten (1988) points out that teachers have preconceptions about teaching based on their own experience as students. From their education, they learn content knowledge, and form to a certain extent some pedagogical knowledge by adopting activities used by their teachers.

This view is supported by three interviewed teachers, T1, T2 and T9, who mentioned that they adopted some techniques that their teachers used because they believe that they are beneficial in teaching writing. This is consistent with Johnson's (1994) findings in which she found out that teachers' selection of materials and activities very often was based on their personal learning experience.

i) *'I can say I go back to my previous study at university'. (T1:12)*

Nine teachers mentioned that they use activities from their MA/ PhD courses.

ii) *'Some materials that our teachers gave us from where we graduate and get our masters. Some of the activities they are few but useful ones'. (T12: 2724-25).*

iii) *'first of all, I used to rely on product as I mentioned the class size is one of the problems. I used to ask students to write homework and they bring it I have a look at it at home and correct it and give it back. Now I prefer to give more practice in the class, ask students to help each other in pairs or groups'. (T8: 1714-17)*

iv) *'Actually because I studied this when I went for a PhD, I took some courses on how to teach writing'. (T8: 1719-20)*

In addition to their education, teachers learn different techniques through experience in teaching and self-development. With regard to training, all the participants mentioned that they do not receive in-service or pre-service training in Libya.

v) *'I have no preparation course when I started teaching writing' (T1: 9-10)*

By contrast seven out of the eight non Libyan teachers mentioned that they received pre-service training courses in their countries. However, as T14 mentioned that they were not trained to deal with contextual factors as they need to adjust their knowledge to the Libyan culture.

vi) *'We have not been trained as teachers to go with this kind of enrolment so learn by our own and it requires some time to learn'. (T14: 3321-22)*

It was noted from the observation and the discussion with non Libyan teachers that they are hesitant about which techniques and topics to use with their students.

### **6.3.2 Self Improvement**

All the interviewed teachers mentioned different ways that they used to develop their teaching skills such as using *the Internet, their teaching experience, reading books and attending workshops.*

*i) 'Different resources not only from books but depending on the internet'. (T5: 802-03)*

According to Chen (2008:1016) the internet is one of the effective resources for EFL teachers. The resource that is commonly used is the internet. However, in a follow up question about examples of websites that the teachers use, only three teachers gave examples. T10 mentioned [www.cambridgeelt.com](http://www.cambridgeelt.com). The other teachers, search in Google and use whatever they find, which not necessarily to be the most suitable to use for teaching considering students' level and culture.

*ii) 'It is a matter of chance. I go to common websites Google for example and write writing materials'. (T1: 39-40)*

With regard to *teaching experience*, 6 teachers mentioned that they learn from their teaching experience. This is similar to Crookes and Arakaki (1999) who found that teaching experience is the source cited often by ESL teachers. According to Richards and Lockhart (1995:31), teaching experience is the main source of beliefs about teaching. By trial and error, teachers know what works best for their students.

*iii) 'the teacher is always like some one who is going to handle something. If he try one method and it does not work so he has to try another method'. (T10:2309-11)*

Furthermore, teaching experience enables the teachers to develop critical reflection on their teaching to evaluate the activities that they use. For example T7 attested to the advantages of using pre writing activities after noticing some improvement in her students' writing. Reflecting on her teaching helped the teacher to test the knowledge that she had from workshops and the internet in her class and this lead to changes in her selection of tasks. According to Borg (2003:95), 'cognition not only shapes what teachers do but is in turn shaped by the experiences teachers accumulate'. Crandall (2000:36) adds that reflection on practice helps the teachers to move from theories that they learned in their education to views of teaching consistent with their understanding of their situation and students.

*iv) 'Like what I said before the traditional way of teaching was not really helpful, we noticed that all students' levels were the same and would not improve at all. And has not developed at all but when we started using*

*brainstorming and techniques like pair work or group work and the internet etc. we noticed that they have improved a lot'. (T7:1396-1400))*

In addition, teaching experience enables the teachers to develop pedagogical content knowledge which does not seem to develop from teachers' education courses (Hashweh 2005:279).

The third resource that the teachers mentioned was *reading books* about writing. Casanave (2004) points out that reading is important resource for language teachers to get more knowledge about the issues related to their field. The participants mentioned different books that they use.

*v) 'Generally do not forget books. I usually read some books new series of books about teaching writing and developing your skills in teaching writing. I believe reading is the most important for teachers to improve them'. (T9: 1956-57)*

It was remarkable that some teachers refer to textbooks of teaching writing, not books about how to teach writing as sources of their knowledge. The textbooks that they have mentioned provide content knowledge about writing genres and structure rather than pedagogical knowledge about how to teach writing.

*vi) 'I depend on the internet and some textbooks. I use this book 'Learn to Write' and 'College Writing'. (T2:160)*

In addition, in discussing the selection of books the teachers tend to refer to their personal views rather than theories or books. This is common in Libya because using academic terms is usually considered to be showing off (see 5.9). Another possible reason for this is the difficulty that Libyan teachers face to relate theoretical theories to teaching practice because, as I mentioned in 2.6, the theoretical and practical knowledge are not integrated in the learning process.

The fourth resource that the teachers rely on is *workshops*. Workshops are considered one of the resources that the teachers use to improve their teaching skills. Richards and Farrell (2005:24) point out that 'a workshop is intended to enhance teachers' practical skills and help resolve problems, rather than simply improve theoretically understanding'.

One of the issues that those teachers mentioned is that the workshops that they usually attend in the British Council and the Academy of Higher Studies in Tripoli are for a different context. Therefore, they need to think about how to adapt the ideas and techniques mentioned to the Libyan context.

*vii) 'I think what we need is how to apply these kinds of workshops in the class'. (T9: 2245-46)*

Those workshops are usually not about teaching writing in EFL contexts. Rather they are about teaching English writing in English speaking countries that might not consider the difficulties that the teachers in Libya face such as the large number of students.

It was noticed that the participants did not mention any discussions with other colleagues and do not participate in any professional development activities in their departments. This might be related to teachers' limited time during their work. However the exception is some teachers such as T7 and T9 who work in language centres besides their work at the university. T9 mentioned asking colleagues as one of the sources of his knowledge.

*'Sometimes I used to ask my colleague who has very good experience in teaching writing; the way and his style of teaching writing. So this is the way that is helping me in developing me in my skills in teaching writing'. (T9:1985-88)*

Those teachers work with experienced and trained teachers who are usually from native speaking countries and that helped them to be involved in discussion with their colleagues. According to Shimahara (1998:457), 'one important way for constructing the image of teaching is the interactions with colleagues in the form of conversation'.

## **6.4 Discussion**

The findings so far indicate that the participants depend on their previous learning experience and professional development methods such as using the internet and reading books to deal with the challenges that they face.

This previous learning experience varies as the participants are from different countries and among the Libyan teachers themselves. Some of them received traditional Libyan teaching some Libyan teachers had their degrees from outside Libya. In addition, all the participants, Libyan and non Libyan, do not receive university provided in-service training and are required to design their courses.

Although the participants stated similar contextual factors, it was noticed that the teachers' state the difficulty according to their goal and focus. For example, not all teachers consider students level as the big challenge that they face in teaching writing. T13 mentioned that it was a lack of reading.

It was noticed that some teachers were more familiar with using internet resources than others. This indicates that there is potential for the participants to share their experience about using internet resources to select useful materials to their students' level and interest.

## **6.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the similarities that the participants share including the challenges of teaching English writing. Part of these challenges is related to higher education like students' level and number. In addition, in contrast with basic and secondary education, there is no consistent syllabus to teach in the higher education. For the non Libyan teachers, they might have practical knowledge about designing courses but they lack the knowledge of context and learners to select appropriate materials. The other challenges that the teachers mentioned are related to students' background education and culture such as the lack of writing practice in Arabic and its interference in learning English.

In order to deal with these factors, the participants mentioned different resources that they use. The first was their previous learning experience. The participants have different educational background since they are from different countries. The differences were among the Libyan teachers themselves. Some of them were taught traditionally in Libya whereas the others got their degree from UK.

Besides their previous learning experience, the teachers depended on different resources include reading books, using the internet and attending workshops. Using these resources reflected different abilities among the teachers. For example, some teachers were knowledgeable about certain websites to use whereas others search in Google. These resources reflect teachers' interest to improve their skills and this helped some of them to modify their beliefs about teaching writing.

The interaction between participants' learning experience, teaching experience, and self improvement by attending workshops and using the internet led to forming different cognition about how writing is learnt/taught. Furthermore, the challenges that the teachers face played a role in mediating their beliefs and knowledge about teaching writing. In turn, the teachers' knowledge and beliefs shaped teachers' conception of those challenges and how to deal with them. This was reflected on teachers' responses about the difficulties that they face. Students' level is the main concern but in terms of micro skills such as spelling for some, and macro skills such as reading and vocabulary for others.

These different beliefs lead to different teaching practice and different choices in the selection of materials, tasks and roles. The following chapter addresses the differences that appear in the teaching practice of the participants.



## **CHAPTER 7.**

# **VARIATION IN THE PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS ON TEACHING PRACTICE**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In the analysis stage, as mentioned in 6.1, it was noted that the participants have different cognition about how writing should be taught, and their conception of their roles and the culture of teaching that they accumulated through teaching writing and working in different contexts. Those different beliefs were reflected in the teachers' observed teaching practice and mainly in their selection of roles and tasks. This led to the idea of presenting the diverse and complex array of the gathered data loosely into three groups of writing teachers according to their beliefs regarding the teaching of writing, the goals that they try to achieve and their selection of materials, tasks and roles.

According to Richards and Renandya (2004:30) 'the beliefs that the teachers hold serve as the background to much of the teachers' decision making and action'. In addition, those different beliefs seem to influence in how the teachers deal with the problems that they face. In this chapter, the three groups of teachers are presented with regards to their selection of materials, tasks and roles. In my discussion of this, I will relate the classroom observation and the discussion of available textbooks to the interview responses.

### **7.2 Teachers' Views of How the Writing Should be Taught**

Although all of the participants work in the same context and face similar constraints, the way they teach varies. It appears that teachers' cognition about teaching are shaped and modified by various sources during their professional development. These sources include their education, teaching experience, and knowledge of students. Of these sources, personal teaching experience and teachers' cognition regarding the learning and teaching of writing seem to have the strongest influence on the teachers' selection of methods of teaching. Richards and Lockhart (1995:162) mention that teachers' teaching practice is

affected by their own beliefs regarding how the writing is learned and their own views on the type of methodology which best supports this learning process. Duffee and Aikenhead (1992:494) add that teachers' beliefs and knowledge about teaching provide a framework for teachers to make the decisions supportive of their own beliefs and knowledge and in response to the demands of any given situation.

As mentioned in the introduction, the participants have various knowledge and beliefs regarding how writing should be taught. Focusing on how the teachers answered the interview questions regarding the goals that they try to achieve and what they focus on in their teaching of writing, through observing their classroom teaching practice, such as their focus on grammar and vocabulary, led to the emergence of three broadly different views of teaching writing that the participants have: (a) focus only on micro skills; (b) focus on both micro skills and macro skills, and (c) priority on macro skills.

Three metaphors help to describe the three different perspectives belonging to these three different groups of teachers. The first group takes the view that 'you can not teach students to swim in the ocean, if they do not know how to swim in the pool'. Within this metaphor, the 'pool' is symbolic of micro skills such as spelling and punctuation while the 'ocean' is symbolic for the writing of essays or longer pieces of writing. In the second perspective for writing instruction, writing is considered to be 'like a table. It has four legs: grammar, punctuation, ideas and creativity'. Teachers with this perspective on writing instruction try to balance the micro skills with macro skills. The third group of teachers take the view that 'practice makes perfect'. Teachers in this group give more opportunity for students to practice writing and write extended pieces of writing.

### **7.3 Group 1**

Drawing upon a quote from one of the participants, this group is defined by the metaphor 'you can not teach students how to swim in the ocean, if they do not know how to swim in the pool'. This idea is linked to the goal that the teachers which I have grouped in group 1 are trying to achieve with their teaching. For these four teachers, T1, T2, T3 and T4, the general opinion is that writing should

be taught through grammar and a focus on accuracy. The goal for these teachers is the writing of correct paragraphs. Borrowing one of the participants' metaphor, (a teacher who fits within group two), 'writing is like a table. It has four legs'. The four legs of the table for the teachers within this group are: punctuation, spelling, grammar, accuracy.

*i) 'I think if they can if the students can write good sentences good grammatical sentences. This will help them to build a good paragraph'. (T2: 231-232)*

*ii) 'Of course in writing we must focus on grammar. Because how can you say that the students will be good if the grammar is not good'. (T4: 670-72)*

This focus on form influenced the teachers' teaching practice in the area of materials, tasks and roles as discussed in the following section.

### **7.3.1 Materials**

Since the teachers do not have clear guidelines from their departments regarding the curriculum, we should therefore assume that the personal views of learning play an important role in the participants' selection of materials. In addition, as mentioned in chapter 2, the teacher education courses and the master courses for the teachers who got their degrees from Libya do not include practical guidelines about designing courses and materials.

To support a focus on accuracy and writing correct grammatical sentences, teachers within this group selected course books which focus on teaching grammatical forms and they use sentence level exercises with a few controlled compositions. As Kenny (1996:450) discusses, it is still common to use the structural knowledge transmission syllabus. The teachers T1, T2, T4 utilize 'Learn to Write' to teach their students (see Appendix A3 p175). T3 developed a manual entitled 'Ill year writing' and used it in his teaching to third year students (see Appendix A3 p182).

How teachers define their goals in relation to their students might explain the decisions they made about teaching and their views of the tasks that are suitable for their students. For this group, accuracy and writing sentences which are grammatically correct are the main goals, so these teachers tend to focus on

teaching grammatical structures and provide guided activities for students to practice writing correct sentences.

With regard to the 'Learn to Write' textbook that the three teachers selected, it provides controlled tasks in which students are given a paragraph and asked to do substitutions or completion exercises. As can be seen from the examples in Appendix A3, for both the 'Learn to Write' and 'III Year Writing' textbooks, the focus is on structure, accuracy and writing correct sentences. According to Hyland (2003:3) this structural syllabus provides guided activities that have similar instructions such as using the correct tense or selecting the appropriate form of verbs.

Both textbooks apply the product approach and exemplify PPP (Presentation, Practice, Performance) and are organised as follows: (1) presentation of the new information, (2) the provision of guided activities such as form filling and, (3) more practice. The activities in the final stage are used to check that students have understood the new lesson.

With respect to their criteria of selection, all teachers in this group mentioned that they prefer to select materials based on their students' needs, interests, level and that they create their own materials, sometimes using supplementary materials from the internet.

*i)I use more than one. We can not use one book. As I said teach different abilities or mixed groups so I use more than one book. Sometimes I go to the internet to find suitable materials for them. (T1:35-37)*

*ii)Apart from these (books) I create my own sources depending on the need of my students. (T3:345-346)*

T3 adds that:

*iii)Depending on the topic that I select I go to the internet sometimes I use a newspaper, sometimes I use geography or English language teaching material from the internet. (T3: 416-18)*

However, the kind of analysis that they did might indicate that the teachers selected those books based on their experience and personal views rather than

the needs and the level of students. Furthermore, the answers of the non Libyan teachers show that they lack the knowledge of the learners and educational context within Libya. For example, T4 mentioned that:

*iv) 'According to my students most of them have no experience with regards to English when they were in primary and secondary schools. For them now only they have English'. (T4: 609-11)*

From my own personal knowledge and awareness of the Libyan context, I know that the students referred to by this teacher would have been studying English for at least 8 years. This includes 3 years of specialisation in English language in secondary schools. The teacher's lack of knowledge about her students' previous learning experience means that in her teaching, she starts from the beginning and focuses on micro skills such as spelling and punctuation which is repetitive for the students who would have already learned these skills in their previous schooling.

The teachers whom I interviewed mention that their criteria of selecting writing materials are those which suit the students' levels and interests. However, since these teachers teach mixed level groups, it is not easy to find a book which suits the variety of levels which their students are at.

*v) 'You need to take into account the level of your students in choosing the material. It is the most important factor in choosing the material'. (T1: 53-54)*

Although all the interviewed teachers mentioned that they aim to motivate their students by selecting materials that are attractive and interesting to their students, the degree to which they have applied this in their selection of the two textbooks 'Learn to Write' and 'Ill Year Writing' varies. The 'Learn to Write' textbook presents the information in black and white texts without pictures or diagrams (see Appendix A4 page 176). The 'Ill year writing' textbook is similar to 'learn to write' in its lay out, however the Information is presented in a less attractive design (see appendices A3 page 183). Richards and Renandya (2004:88) point out that teachers' selection of attractive materials for their students might affect students' involvement in the class. This is exemplified in T1's answer about his students' involvement in the class.

vi) *'In groups of 30-40, only two students take part'. (T1:129)*

This is consistent with my classroom observation that those books were less attractive to students as they felt bored and most of them did not really participate in the tasks.

### **7.3.2 Tasks**

With regard to the teaching of writing, there are different aspects of writing such as: content, organisation, fluency, accuracy, style and originality (Richards and Renandya 2004:309). The teachers which I have considered to be within group 1, apply aspects of the product approach by focusing on accuracy as their priority and using guided activities. They link it to students' needs and their own views. The interviewed teachers believe that their students need to learn how to write a paragraph correctly in terms of grammatical structure and punctuation.

From the classroom observation and interviews, in this group writing is taught as both means and an end of learning or using Harmer's terms (2009:112) 'writing for learning' and 'writing for writing'. In other words, teachers' selection of activities might reflect their goals. Some writing activities are used to enhance students understanding of presented grammatical structure for example by asking them to write three sentences using past simple tense. In other activities, writing is used to ask students to write about a given topic. The interviewee used some guided writing like filling the gaps with the correct tense. Then, in later stages, they asked students to write a paragraph on an interesting event which had happened to them the previous week. In this exercise the focus is not only on how to write a story but also how to use the past tense correctly.

The activities that they use are guided activities and the focus is on the sentence level. The books that the teachers selected provide controlled tasks in which students would be given a paragraph and asked to do substitutions or completion exercises as the provided examples from the 'Learn to Write' textbook in the appendix.

i) *'Sometimes I try to write a paragraph first on the board and ask them to write another paragraph like that just change some words'. (T2:268-69)*

From the classroom observation, the classes were organised as a whole class with students sitting in rows. T2 and T4 used group work in the last activity of the lecture which is the writing stage. A significant time was spent in dividing students into groups.

T2 used group work activity for his students to help each other and to help solve the problem of having a mixed level of students within the class. He mentioned that he started using it after attending a workshop. According to Hedge (2005:14) group work helps students to learn from each other and enable the teacher to monitor the class. According to T2, this will help him to be a facilitator and not controller who is supposed to provide detailed information to his students.

*ii) 'That can help students to help each other. They can get useful information from each other. They do not mainly depend on the teacher'. (T2:247-48)*

With regard to the other teachers interviewed, they did not mention any specific solutions to the problems that they mentioned such as mixed levels. Answers such as 'we try to balance' and 'we try to adjust the material to be used' do not seem to be practical as in my observation of their classes I felt that there was not any grade for the tasks and no balance in the topics given with regard to students' level. The teachers focused on simplifying the tasks and giving students extensive explanations and guidelines. I felt that this might work with the weak students but would work less well with regard to the more able students who appeared bored as the topics given were simple and they had already wrote about them before.

### **7.3.3 Teachers' Roles**

I found that teachers in this group mainly played the role of controller and assessor more than the role of facilitator within their teaching. The teacher taking on these roles, presents the new patterns, controls the students' performance and corrects it (Richards and Lockhart 1995:103).

They also tend to consider mistakes as something that they have to correct (McDonough and Shaw, 2003:57). This gives fewer opportunities for students to

practise writing as such teacher-centred role provides few opportunities for developing students' writing.

From the classroom observation, it was clear that all the teachers played the role of controller at the beginning of the lecture to present the new topic and give instructions. Then they asked the students to start writing. At this stage they changed their role to facilitator to ask students to write and provide them with feedback about their writing. Because accuracy is their main goal, they were strict about correcting every single mistake and they played the role of assessor in all the stages.

*i) 'I found out that I can not be facilitator here (in Libya) Because students need help as a teacher that is my role to help them'. (T4: 701-03)*

In the interviews, T1 and T2 mentioned the roles of controllers and facilitator. T3 mentioned other roles as friend and parent. T4 mentioned that she is only a controller in the class.

*ii) 'Sometimes controller for example and other time try to be facilitator to try to explain for them'. (T1: 98-99)*

Although facilitator means helper, teachers in this group associate facilitator with students' level. They think that if the level of students is weak, they can not work in their own and they need 'help' i.e. giving further explanations and examples. For example, T4 added that she changes her role according to the level of the students. She can be a facilitator if the level of the students is good.

*iii) 'I need to be controller at the beginning and facilitator at the end'. (T4: 715-16)*

Based on my observations, teachers in this group were sceptical in playing the role of facilitator. Even when they would ask students to write, they would keep explaining the instructions and giving examples. Teachers' personalities might play a role in that as well. As Richards and Lockhart (1995:170) mention 'some teachers like to be in control of a lesson'.

This is also linked to the teachers' understanding of their role as transmitter of knowledge who should explain all the needed information for their students. For



the Libyan teachers the culture and the assumptions that the teachers have play a role in their teaching. However, this varies from one teacher to another. For the non Libyan teachers, because they lack the specific cultural knowledge about students they try to apply what they think will be appropriate in terms of students' interests.

With regard to the other teaching roles, the four teachers did not mention being an assessor although, based on the observation, it is the main role that they played. They were strict about correcting students' mistakes. T4 used drills and asked students to repeat after her the pronunciation of the verbs with their forms.

For needs analysis, they conducted it in different ways. T1 depended on his knowledge of students and level. T2 asked students to give sentences orally.

*iv) 'I just asked them to write simple sentences or to describe themselves orally. I discovered that their grammar is weak'. (T2: 214-15)*

T3 realised his students' level when he was correcting their papers in the mid term exam. It was the first time for them to write and for the teacher to correct their writing.

*v) 'After the midterm examination when I had come through their steps. I found that even the bright students are not able to write perfect spelling or punctuation marks'. (T3: 377-79)*

This kind of needs analysis might reflect that the teachers depended mainly upon their own views of learning and teaching experience to assess the needs of their students rather than actually assessing the real need and levels of their students.

#### **7.3.4 Discussion**

On the surface, the teachers in this group appear to be eclectic in their teaching and they mentioned that they are using the process approach. However, from observing their classes, it was clear that the major feature that characterises their teaching was their tendency to maintain control and give information and less emphasis on encouraging students to practice writing and participate in the

activity. This dominates their teaching mainly in their selection of tasks which led to their focus on grammar and accuracy. Using these aspects of the product approach might reflect the cultural and professional identity of how that influences how the teachers enact their roles. In other words, teachers might decide to focus on accuracy because the culture of teaching that they accumulated through their learning and teaching experience makes them believe that their role in the class is to teach students how to write correct sentences. Most teachers have been taught by this approach and consequently, their cognition and understanding of language teaching are influenced by their learning experience. According to Freeman (2002:6), teachers interpret new content through existing understanding and modify the new ideas based upon their beliefs of what already works.

This might explain why the workshops on teaching writing which they mentioned they have attended did not have a remarkable influence on their teaching as they believe that the way they teach is the best to achieve their goal which is accuracy. It was noticed, however, the discrepancy between ‘reported actions’ and ‘observed actions’. In the interviews the teachers mentioned activities and process approach that they did not use in their teaching. This might mean that the teachers have the content knowledge about different approaches but they lack the pedagogical content knowledge to apply what they know. For example T2 used some aspects from the process approach such as working in groups but he neglected the stages of process writing such as pre writing activities (brainstorming) and he asked his students to write one draft. This contradiction between possessing the content knowledge but lacking the pedagogical content knowledge to apply their knowledge was also evident in their views about using attractive materials and new tasks and activities. I found that the ‘Learn to write’ and ‘III Year Writing’ textbooks do not seem to be interesting and, based on the classroom observation, students were not engaged actively to participate in the classroom.

This indicates that there is potential for those teachers to share more knowledge about material development and to share more on methods for adapting the existing materials or designing new materials that suits their students’ level and interest.

## 7.4 Group 2

Teachers in this group which I have classified as group two try to balance all the aspects of writing. The analogy for this group is that writing is like a 'table' where the legs of the table for these teachers are: grammar, ideas, creativity, and punctuation.

*i) 'I focus on grammar and spelling mistakes and discussing the ideas and vocabulary being discussed in that subject'. (T5: 931-32)*

These teachers tend to focus on micro skills within their teaching such as spelling but they also consider students' ideas and vocabulary that they use.

*ii) 'To create or let's say to find students who are at least able to express themselves on paper' (T5: 896-97)*

In addition, their goals focus on students' motivation to write rather than focussing mainly on accuracy and grammatical structure within writing.

### 7.4.1 Materials

For this group of teachers where the teachers try to balance accuracy with fluency, they tend to select course books which focus on the process of writing and which use tasks which begin with sentence level exercises with a few controlled compositions and then progressing to free writing tasks.

Four teachers in this group selected '*College Writing*' textbook for their teaching. In this book, the activities are presented according to the process approach: pre writing, writing, reviewing and revising (see Appendix A3 p187). Each unit of the book is based on reading passage to help students form ideas and learn new vocabulary related to the topic that they will write about.

The other three teachers selected some units from '*Successful Writing*' book. With respect to materials selection, all teachers mentioned that they like to select materials based on their students' needs, interests and level. However, it is not easy to use only one textbook because of students' mixed level. Thus, teachers mentioned that they would create their own materials and use

supplementary materials from the internet to solve the problem of mixed level groups.

*i) 'I depend on so many other things, most of it photocopying materials from other books, other writing books or my own idea. So you go through many books and you may come up with an idea that you may not find it exactly in a book'. (T10: 2336-39)*

*ii) 'I use other supplementary materials. I download or take them from the internet'. (T7: 1430-31)*

The 'College Writing' textbook comes accompanied with supplementary materials such as students' workbook and teachers' guides whereas the 'Successful Writing' does not. Some tasks in 'Successful Writing' textbook are dependent upon listening activities however and the cassettes which are supposed to be with the book are not available. As a consequence, the teachers skip those tasks (see appendices A3 page 198).

It was noted in this group that some teachers used resources external to the classroom such as articles from newspapers, posters and they ask students in advance to collect data related to the lesson.

*iii) 'I tell them to look for a word formation on television or on through the internet so the next day I noticed lots of students bring the material words, vocabulary, different verbs, scenes that are used in TV channels or on the internet and then from that we develop different types of ideas and choose from these ideas to write a paragraph'. (T7: 1565-69)*

From my observation, the students involved in this activity were interested in participation and brought pictures from free time activities for the new lesson which was focussed on 'writing an outline'. In addition, some students prepared lists of different content words such as verbs and nouns to use them in their outlines. I think asking students to prepare in advance saved significant time as they were prepared for the lesson.

#### **7.4.2 Tasks**

Teachers in group two tried to balance accuracy with fluency by using a variety of tasks that ranged from guided to free. They tended to link these tasks to students' needs and their own views. With regard to students' needs, the

interviewed teachers think that their students need to learn how to write a paragraph correctly and to express their ideas. It was noted from observing the teaching practice of those teachers that they have used a variety of activities, topics and roles. According to Hyland (2003:81) using a variety of activities and patterns of classroom interaction such as pair work/ group work helps to motivate students to write and participate in the provided activities.

*i) 'Yes in the middle and I try to go forward and backward. I try to satisfy the different levels. As I told you sometimes I focus on the genre, the organisation may be culture how English people think, language interference. Other times I just go back to the sentence level and vocabulary level to satisfy those who struggle to write one sentence' (T8:1774-78)*

Teachers in this group apply aspects from the process approach such as pre writing activities and brainstorming. According to Hedge (2005:13) using brainstorming enables students to generate lots of ideas about the given topic from which they can select the appropriate and most useful ideas within their writing.

From my classroom observation, I noticed a variety of activities that the teachers used to help their students elicit ideas at the presentation stage of the lesson such as asking questions about the topic, group discussion and using mind maps. For example, T7 used pictures and asked students to describe them by using content words. Then she wrote lists of those words on the board. She then asked students to group them and use the appropriate ones to write a description of the picture that they had selected from their writing textbook 'College Writing'.

*ii) 'In writing, let's take the pictures activity that I told you. They can collect as much words as possible in their writing' (T7:1502-4)*

Another activity that the teachers used is to work in pairs and groups to put the information that they got from their discussion and brainstorming in order (Hedge 2000:311). T5, T6, T9 and T7 used group work as an activity to deal with students' mixed level. According to Boughey (2008:86), group work is a useful technique for EFL teachers as it enables them to present information and comment on students writing in groups. This is useful as it is often difficult to provide individual feedback when groups are made up of a large number.

The teachers in this group tended to tailor their classroom activities to help with the challenges posed by mixed level groups. T6, T5 and T9 divided the students according to their level and used different activities to suit the level of the students. By contrast, T7 mixed groups from different levels so that they can help each other.

*iii) 'I try to put them in groups. I would choose one of the higher level and him with a weaker student and put them with a real weak student. This group technique really works with the weak students and tries to help them as much as possible. I am teaching you know I put time and effort in group work and it is really beneficial. Students who are good in English are trying to help each other students to improve their skills in writing or in any other subject'. (T7:1458-64)*

Teachers asked students to write about a variety of topics to particularly support students who were at a low level. Teachers who divided students according to their level would sometimes use three types of activities. T6 gave this example

*iv) 'For one group I asked them to make an outline for an essay. Suppose that I am teaching them essay. So I just tell them to focus on writing an outline but for the other group I tell them along with the outline write essay as well and then with the other group discuss the outline with them. I do mainly allow to do. I just speak about the whole essay so they get the whole general idea about the concepts of the essay and they are able to write something. (T6:1096-1101)*

However, using different activities in the classroom, though useful for accommodating mixed level classrooms, does not help with another difficulty which is that all students' will have the same mid and final exam.

With regard to lesson plans, it was remarkable that the teachers gave a variety of plans in the interviews that apply different aspects of the process approach stages such as brainstorming through discussion and then working on groups to write drafts.

*v) 'the first twenty minutes are devoted for discussion. Then we have 15 minutes to write a paragraph on board just to show them how to write and lets say to motivate them. After that I divide them into groups. This does not mean that I want some of them to write personally or individually but this is only a primary step for writing about the topics. Then, after finishing the lecture they are required to bring me something that they wrote about the topic. (T5: 1016-23)*

In addition, they highlighted the importance of scaffolding and giving clear instructions at the beginning of the task. According to Hedge (2000:308) it is important for EFL teachers to help their students understand the task and what is required.

vi) *'I used to introduce my topic and what we are going to do and what I am going to explain and what the students are going to do in the first stage and after that stage what they are going to do'. (T9: 2155-85)*

Three teachers in this group, T7, T9 and T10, work in language centres in Tripoli. They use timed writing exercises and asked students to write one draft. In addition from my observation, their teaching was like preparing for IELTS test.

vii) *'for example I say ok now we have brainstormed so you have seen minutes to write and I time with my stop watch or what ever I am using. When it is seven minutes say stop. When I say stop I am trying to teach them to write as much as possible but in a limited period of time'. (T7:1600-03)*

T10 evaluates his teaching in terms of his students' results in the exams.

viii) *'In teaching writing, my goal is the ends. Let's say the ends justify the means'. (T10: 2331-32)*

With regard to evaluating students' writing, the teachers in this group mentioned similar criteria based on grammar, spelling, vocabulary, ideas and clear message.

ix) *'I do care for accuracy in writing, in grammar and the coverage of the topic. Did they cover everything because I usually give them a topic sentence so they should develop this topic sentence? Whether they covered what is to be covered or not so accuracy and fluency. (T8:1916-19)*

By focusing on accuracy and fluency, teachers in this group try to balance focus on form with focus on meaning.

### **7.4.3 Teachers' Roles**

From the classroom observation, all the teachers in this group played similar roles as those observed within group one, but with different emphasis. Similarly, they were controllers at the beginning of the lecture to present the new topic and give instructions. Then they asked the students to start

discussion. At this stage they changed their role to facilitator to ask students to write and give them feedback about their writing.

*i) 'may be I forget to mention that I direct them at the beginning to make group and try to see what they wrote and try to present new ideas except when these groups when there is a competition between these groups. I find my self not able to interfere to be away from them and to just answer some general questions just for improvement or to correct some general mistakes'. (T5: 985-989)*

With regard to the other roles, the teachers did not focus on being assessors and correcting all the mistakes'.

*ii) ' even if I have something given at home, when I come to the class I try to select some written pieces and I write down some sentences and ask students to correct it or to say whether it is correct or false'. (T8:1908-11)*

The teachers within this group tended to try and only discuss the common mistakes such as subject verb agreement and word order at the end of the lecture.

#### **7.4.4 Discussion**

Of all the participants of this research, half fit within this group. This could be related to the participants' cognition and their professional identity that shape their roles differently from teachers in group 1. This can be seen in the fact that teachers in this group tried to balance focus on form with focus on content by providing guided to free activities (Griffiths 2008). In addition, they applied some steps of the process approach such as brainstorming, discussion, writing and rewriting. Within their teaching, they depend on different resources including their education, experience and the internet. They adopt new activities from workshops and the internet and do this more than the teachers in group 1 tend to do. Yet, they are, to a certain extent, hesitant to leave the security of focusing on form and discipline and using more activities for discussion and practice writing. According to Mok (1994), EFL teachers usually hesitate to use new techniques or methods that are very different from the rooted traditions of fixed roles and transmitting knowledge.

This suggests that culture cannot be ignored in an attempt to understand why teachers think and teach the way they do (Richards and Lockhart 1995). Opfer



et al (2011:446) add that changes in teaching practice do not occur in a 'linear process flowing from professional development activity' but is also influenced by structural, cultural and political aspects of a teachers' experiential context'.

## 7.5 Group 3

The teachers which I feel can be grouped into group three (T12, T13 and T14) view writing through practice. For these teachers, where writing is considered to be a 'table', the four legs of the table are structure, vocabulary, ideas, and fluency.

*i) One of my goals in writing teaching writing subject is to develop their thoughts to help them collect more ideas about the subject. So when they start writing, they should. (T13: 3003-06)*

*ii) 'I mainly focus on fluency and teaching them writing extended paragraphs but here and there sometimes we just teach the area of grammar but not too much'. (T14: 3376-78)*

In this group, teachers try to focus more on building knowledge about how to write therefore they selected course books which focus on the process of writing. They used activities which start with discussion and brainstorming, followed by a few controlled compositions and then free writing activities.

### 7.5.1 Materials

The course textbook materials selected by T13 and T14 was the '*Successful Writing*' textbook whereas T13 selected the '*College Writing*'. In the book '*Successful Writing*' the tasks are graded from easy to difficult. Each unit starts with brainstorming and presentation of new information then tasks are graded from guided to free practice applying the Process Genre approach. It contains a variety of activities that allow students to share information and express their thoughts. Alternately, some tasks exemplify guided activities such as ordering and filling in the blanks. As suggested by Harmer (1983) this balance between guided and free activities plays an important role in reducing the contradiction between accuracy and fluency.

In the '*College Writing*', the learning objectives are clear and the structure and skills within each unit can be found in the introductory section of the unit. The

presentation of the information and tasks is attractive. Similarly, in 'Successful Writing' the presentation of information seems to be clear. The book also contains photographs, charts and models that help to contextualise and clarify the presented information (see Appendices A3 p199).

Based on my observation, I can say that both 'College Writing' and 'Successful Writing' are interesting and both teachers and students enjoyed using them. Students were more involved in the tasks and practice writing more than within the other classes where teachers used the 'Learn to Write' textbook.

However, based on the classroom observation, the language of the 'Successful Writing' book is above the level of many of the students. Teachers who used this book needed to spend time explaining the vocabulary used and skipped many tasks that were too difficult for students to answer. In addition, this textbook required the teacher to spend long time in explaining the instructions to the students. For example, I observed T14 spend significant time in explaining the meaning of 'Gleaming, picturesque (exercise 5 appendixes A3 p200).

*i) 'I think they are ok up to students' level. They are not very difficult. Sometimes when they are difficult I just skip them I give them the easier ones because I know they won't be able to understand the difficult ones in this stage'. (T14: 3371-3)*

Teachers' within this group tend to base their criteria of textbook selection on students' needs and the quality of the exercise.

*ii) 'So students' needs are very important in terms of selecting the material. The quality of that material, the quality of the exercises available in that material. If there are no exercises, then I develop my exercises. They are developed according to students' comprehension level. (T13: 3039-43)*

In addition to textbooks, the teachers allowed students to use 'reference materials' such as grammar books and dictionaries to help students edit their work (Hyland 2003:105).

*iii) 'I just tell them to use a dictionary of Arabic or sometimes I give them. I tell them if they do not understand they have to go for Arabic dictionary and then try to explain them. They feel ok. They feel comfortable and they are able to write. (T14: 3440-43)*

From my observation, using dictionaries in particular was helpful for students to check their spelling and to look for alternatives of words to use.

### 7.5.2 Tasks

Teachers in this group consider providing tasks for students to practice writing as essential for their students to develop their writing. They link it to students' needs and their own views. With regard to students' needs, the interviewed teachers within this group think that their students needed to be working on longer pieces of writing.

*i) 'When we talk about activities especially in writing the best activity is to write' (T13: 3091-92)*

In the 'Successful Writing' textbook, the tasks combine the process of writing with the written product and contextualise the activities to give a sense of the reader. Teachers in this group focus on the tasks that students will need in their real life such as writing a CV, and an application letter.

*ii) 'I'm teaching third year writing. Students need to go for their jobs after graduation. So it includes CV writing, application writing, different types of letter writing, job application writing, business letters, business communication writing'. (T13: 2993-96)*

From the classroom observation and interviews, in this group writing is taught as end of learning or what Harmer (2009) considers 'writing for writing' (Harmer 2009). Most writing activities are used to enhance the students' understanding of the given genre by brainstorming and writing outlines. In other activities, writing is used to ask students to write about a given topic. The teachers in this group used some guided writing like filling the gaps with the correct vocabulary. Then, in later stages, they asked students to write a paragraph or essay on varied topics such as the university, the advantages of the internet, and the importance of education. In such exercises the focus is on students' practice of writing.

*iii) 'First activity to make them write in the class simple sentences, paragraph in the class. For example, writing topic sentences or how to write concluding sentences. So I feel the more practice that I give is more useful for students'. (T12: 2805-07)*

Due to the fact that all the teachers in this group are non Libyan, as mentioned in 2.6 they did not receive training in Libya, they are trying to contextualise the tasks and topics to the Libyan society more than the Libyan teachers themselves do. For example T14 mentioned that he changes the English names in the book with common Libyan names. This indicates that the teacher lacks the knowledge of context, explained in section 3.4.3. This teacher tries to use information about Libya in lieu of what is provided within the book. This reflects the potential for those teachers to discuss cultural issues with other Libyan teachers. This might help them to adjust the pedagogical knowledge that they gained from their education and training to the Libyan educational context and students' level and interest.

### **7.5.3 Teachers' Roles**

From the observation, all the teachers in this group played the role of facilitator more than the other roles. They were controllers at the beginning of the lecture to present the new topic and give instructions. Then they asked the students to start brainstorming and discussing the topic. At this stage they changed their role to facilitator to ask students to write and give them feedback about their writing.

*i) 'To begin with I'm only a facilitator in the class. I will give them the basics of writing. If I want them to write a paragraph, I will just talk about topic sentence, supporting details and concluding sentence. I will refresh their memories and I will give them to write. When they write, I go to each and every student whenever it is possible and I will try to help them to improvise, correct and change making it look better'. (T12: 2838-43)*

Because fluency is their priority, they were not strict about correcting every single mistake and they played the role of assessor only in a few occasions.

*ii) 'sometimes we need to act as controllers to maintain kind of discipline but mostly I try to be friendly and I just try to help them. I believe of the role of facilitator because we should give them independent to learn' (T14: 3446-48)*

Regarding the needs analysis of students for this group, T13 conducted needs based analysis to find out what students' need to improve with their writing and what kind of writing they require for their daily lives. T14 analysed his students writing to better know their abilities.

*iii) 'When I ask them to write, I go to each paper and try and see how many students are able to write sentences. How many of them have problems in writing and then that gives me an idea about what to do in the classroom'. (T14: 3397-3400)*

*iv) 'I would be very happy even if students are making noise or talking in the class for a constructive purpose. In a brain storming session, I find my class the noisiest but if you listen carefully. That noise was a discussion about the topic'. (T13: 3176-79)*

From my observation of their classes, I think those teachers have enacted their roles differently compared with the other teachers described in the other two groups. They were more friendly and flexible with their students. For example, students were allowed to move around from one group to another to borrow dictionaries and to discuss their ideas with other students.

#### **7.5.4 Discussion**

Teachers in this group rely on what Shulman (1986) calls 'wisdom of practice'. They have longer teaching experience than the other groups. According to Xu and Connelly (2002:221), teaching experience plays a major role in teachers' selection of lesson plans and classroom interaction styles. They are more confident about their teaching and give more opportunities for students to speak and to write. From my observation, their classes were the noisiest but still those teachers were interested about teaching and less worried about discipline. In addition, their students were involved in discussion and writing.

Teachers in group 3 have different understanding of their roles than those within other groups. They think that the main role that they should play is one of facilitator. This gives more opportunities for students to discuss, argue and practice writing.

In the course of analysing the gathered data, it was noticed that how teachers defined their role in relation to their students could explain the decisions they made about teaching and their views on a variety of issues related to teaching and learning.

Thinking about what makes those teachers different from the other teachers led to considering three factors: qualifications, beliefs and knowledge, and teaching

experience (Verloop et al 2001). Beliefs and knowledge combined together might explain the differences in the participants' teaching practice. They have different beliefs about learning (as I have also explained in section 7.4). According to Freeman (2002:6) teachers usually interpret new ideas through their existing beliefs and knowledge. Therefore, they modify new content on the basis of what they believe will work with their students.

Experience and education also seems to play a role. Yet the teaching practice of the 4 PhD holders, who participated in this research, is neither the same and nor is the practice of the experienced teachers. I think a missing component in the list of factors is personal preference. According to Richards and Lockhart (1995: 31), 'some teachers have a personal preference for a particular teaching pattern or activity because it matches their personality'.

The fact that there were no Arab or Libyan teachers in the third group made me think that teachers' professional identity and culture might play a role in the variation within the participants' teaching practice. As I have explained in 2.4 and 2.6.2 the culture of teaching in Libya as well as in most of the Arabic countries emphasises the role of teachers as knowledge providers who are responsible for explaining the new content to their students. As a consequence, this culture influences the expectations that the teachers have about their roles as controllers of the class and shapes their professional identity. Therefore, most of the Arab and Libyan teachers were in group two who were trying to balance using interactive activities such as group work with their focus on discipline and accuracy.

In thinking about the variation of the teaching practice among the participants, I thought of my own methods of teaching writing and to which group I might belong. Reflecting on my selection of materials, tasks and the role that I used to play in the class had led me to think that I belong to group two. Although I would like to be in group three but this is difficult for me. This is mainly because of the cultural view that I have about my role as a university teacher. I do not have the flexibility that the teachers in group three have about their roles in the class. I cannot let the class be too noisy because of the cultural assumption that I have that a 'good teacher' should control his/her class. I also consider what the other teachers will say about me if my class is too noisy.

## 7.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the different beliefs that the teachers have about teaching writing. It showed that the differences in teachers' cognition about how writing is taught/ learned and the goals that the teachers aim to achieve led to variation in their teaching practice. The first group of teachers focused on micro skills such as spelling and punctuation. They applied aspects from the product approach by providing models for students to analyse and imitate and using guided tasks. This was reflected in their selection of the 'Learn to write' textbook which has a focus on structure. The main role that the teachers played was controller and assessor more than facilitator this is to achieve there goal which was accuracy of writing.

The second group tried to balance focus on form with a focus on meaning of writing within their teaching. They applied an eclectic method of both product and process approaches to teach writing by using guided activities and texts as models at the same time using pre writing activities such as brainstorming. They selected books which apply the process approach and used a variety of tasks and topics. Yet, I also found that these teachers were hesitant about their roles in the class. They mentioned changes that they made in their practice through reflection and through trying new techniques. But many of their existing beliefs regarding discipline and maintaining control, providing detailed explanations and focusing on grammar within their teaching which had been formed through previous learning experience remained unchanged. The third group of teachers focused more than the other two groups on practicing writing by focusing on writing extended writing and improving students' vocabulary through integrating reading with writing. These teachers selected books and tasks that enable students to practice writing. These teachers tend to see their teaching role with greater flexibility and they were less worried about the discipline of their classroom than the other two groups of teachers.

In lining the three groups up, the concern arises as to how to support the participants. How to provide knowledge about students and culture to the non Libyan teachers? and how to encourage the Libyan teachers to use more interactive activities?

The diversity of teaching practice and the range of experience and nationalities showed potential for professional development for those teachers to meet, discuss and share their teaching experience. According to Knight (2002:230), continual professional development is essential because teacher education courses cannot provide all the pedagogical knowledge that the teachers need.

The next chapter presents a trial of workshops sessions in which I tried to bring writing teachers together to discuss the challenges that they face and how to deal with them.



## **CHAPTER 8.**

# **EXPLORATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS**

### **8.1 Introduction**

As I have explained in section 5.5, the information that I collected from the pilot and field study allowed me to think about extending the data collection in the third phase in which I met the participants in two workshops. Furthermore, as mentioned in chapters 6 and 7, I feel there is great potential for professional development and sharing between these teachers regarding ideas about useful tasks and methods for dealing with difficulties within teaching such as students' mixed level.

This chapter presents a summary of the professional development workshops: aims behind the workshops, the procedures of organising them, the main findings which arose from these workshops and participants' opinions and feedback on the sessions.

### **8.2 Reflections on Self Improvement**

According to Schostack (2002), the researcher usually has a 'double tracked journey'. *In one track*, the researcher goes through a journey of self development. Personally, I consider my PhD research as part of my professional self development. Through conducting this research, I have been able to acquire and develop new skills such as research methodology skills in relation to qualitative methods. In addition, reading articles and books about teachers' knowledge and cognition, theories of learning and methods of teaching has deepened my understanding of teaching and improved my critical reflection on my own teaching. This development had an impact on *the second track* i.e. participants of this research.

The skills that I have learned from my learning journey gave me the confidence and motivation to meet the participants for the third phase of data collection. In this phase I wanted to share the experience and skills that I have learned with my colleagues and participants. After identifying the difficulties that the teachers face, I wanted to organise meetings for them where they can discuss, share knowledge and experience. According to Hismanglu (2010:111), English language teachers are often ‘in need of effective professional development to keep pace with the rapidly changing and developing educational setting’.

### **8.3 Preparing for the Workshops and Research Problems**

In organising and doing those two workshops, I faced different problems related to my experience and competence in the English language. As I got approval from the head of the department to do a workshop, I contacted the teachers. Most of them liked the idea and were eager to attend. I was looking forward to meeting those teachers again and discussing issues related to the teaching of English writing with them. However, being a non native speaker of English and younger than all of the participants was big challenge for me. This is because those teachers had attended work shops in the British Council and the Academy of Higher Studies in Tripoli where the tutors are native speakers of English. For many teachers those native speakers are experts of the language and therefore experts on how to teach it. The age was another difficulty, because in the Libyan society older teachers are considered experts. Therefore, being younger than the participants with only three years of experience was not very encouraging.

In order to deal with these assumptions about running the workshops, I decided to keep my self motivated to work hard and to believe that I can achieve the goal of going back to Libya to run the workshops. To do this, first, I recalled the lines from Douglas Malloch (1936):

*If you can't be a highway, just be a trial  
If you can't be the sun, be a star,  
For it isn't by size that you win or your fail  
Be the best of whatever you are*

Personally, I think ‘be the best of what ever you are’ is the key. Since I am not an expert in English language teaching and I do not have the native accent to be the sun, still, I have personal teaching experience, interest about the teaching of writing and a desire to help teachers and that might enable me to be a star. According to Seidlhofer (1999:238) ‘this shared language learning experience should thus constitute the basis for non-native teachers’ confidence, not for their insecurity’.

In order to do my best, I tried to prepare well and search the internet about similar workshops and how they are done. In addition, I recalled the way that teacher trainers dealt with us as participants in a previous teacher’s professional development course in Exeter University that I attended. In this course the trainers emphasized the importance of sharing experience and information taking in consideration different methods for teaching the same lesson.

Considering the fact that some university teachers assume that they are qualified enough to teach, I made it clear from the beginning that I am not there to tell the writing teachers what to do. Rather we need to discuss difficulties that we all face and share our knowledge and teaching experience together. By this, I guess, the participants felt more comfortable and interested to participate and speak about their teaching experience. Furthermore, the workshops were not recorded so the teachers were less worried about expressing their ideas and more open about their opinions.

## **8.4 The Workshop Sessions**

The two workshop sessions were attended by a total of 10 participants. All participants had chosen to attend on a voluntary basis. Mostly, their attendance was inspired by interest in the topic or by the wish to improve their teaching practice. Another reason that some teachers mentioned was their dissatisfaction with their professional improvement. Opfer et al (2011:445) points out that ‘the more dissatisfied an individual is, the more likely it is that the individual will seek out new understandings and new ideas’.

### **8.4.1 The First Workshop**

The first workshop was attended by four participants and lasted 45 minutes due to the limited time of the teachers. It was an informal discussion for sharing ideas and suggestions about useful tasks in the teaching of writing. In this workshop, the four teachers were T3 and T2 from group 1, T5 from group 2, and T14 from group 3. The workshop was held in the meetings room in the English department of 'A' university. I mainly gave a lesson plan (see Appendix C2; 306-7) with different tasks about 'describing a town' adapted from Byrne (1988:38-39) and the 'Successful Writing' textbook. I asked the teachers about how to teach it. From their discussion, all teachers think that they should start by explaining the 'Location verbs and Prepositions' by giving examples about how to use them. Then, they selected practice tasks which mainly consisted of gap filling tasks. In the last stage they agreed to use the writing task to 'describe the city you have visited'.

During this workshop, the participants appeared to consider 'writing well' as a problematic issue for their students. To help their students, almost every participant appeared to use guided tasks such as gap filling and matching sentences tasks. During the workshop, the participants suggested activities which they feel are useful such as matching sentences and dictation and they discussed the limitations of each other's activities. For example, we discussed how a matching sentences task is a good task for weak students but the good students will be bored with such a task.

What was remarkable in their discussion was the focus they had, both Libyans and non Libyans, on form and how they all viewed their teaching role as controllers who are responsible of providing information, examples, exercises and detailed explanation to their students. It might worth mentioning that the differences in the beliefs among the participants were not clear compared with the findings from the interviews and classroom observations.

### **8.4.2 The Second Workshop**

In the second workshop, I tried a different approach: to prepare themes for the discussions. In addition, I asked the teachers to bring samples of the activities that they use in their classes.

In this workshop, I met six teachers both Libyans and non Libyans, who belong to the three groups mentioned in chapter seven: T1 from group one, T 7, T11, T8and T9 from group two, T12 from group three. I changed the lesson plan because I felt the first was a very guided activity. This time I just suggested the title and asked the teachers how to teach ‘describing a town’.

Although the participants belongs to the three groups mentioned in Chapter 7, their answers were similar and not very different from the previous group but it might be because the participants of this group have a variety of goals to achieve such as motivating students to write, writing longer pieces of writing, and writing accurate sentences. This group were more creative about their ideas and activities and discussed using pictures, games, and groups. For example, T7 suggested starting with pictures of different cities to help students brainstorm ideas. T11 suggested asking students to discuss in pairs the information that they use in describing a city such as the location and the main buildings. The fact that the participants hold different views and goals of teaching writing helped to enrich the discussion which was longer than the previous workshop. Furthermore, they used the activities that they brought to support their suggestions. For example, T9 brought a drawing that he used as a pre writing activity to help his students brainstorm ideas for writing about different activities that they can do instead of ‘cooking the dinner’ such as going to a restaurant or ordering delivery. I have included some examples from the tasks that the teachers brought in within appendix C3 p308-11.

Next, I asked these teachers about the difficulties that they face and how they deal with them. It was noticed in their discussion that the teachers who use group work and aspects from the process approach such as brainstorming tend to point out rhetorical errors such as Arabic transference rather than considering students’ low level as the main problem that they face. These teachers tended

to analyse the reasons behind students' low level such as the influence of their first language and the way they write in Arabic.

Another difficulty that the teachers mentioned is the lack of consistent materials. A lack of sequencing of syllabus can even contribute to a classroom learning at a mixed level as even students in the same year might study different books if they are taught by different teachers. This is consistent with the interview responses and my observation of T3 and T14 for example. Both teachers teach third year in the same department. T3 generated the III year writing and T14 used 'Successful Writing' text book.

My next question was about how they deal with these difficulties and the activities that they use. There was general agreement among the participants that grammar is very important for students' writing. However, many said it was not their main focus.

It was noted that the participants were particularly interested in listening to examples from personal teaching experience and activities which had provide positive outcomes. Guskey (1986: 7) points out that 'the change in students' performance usually leads to changes in teachers' beliefs and attitudes. In other words, those teachers were interested to know that using group work for example is applicable in the Libyan context and that it offers some advantages for students such as helping each other and leading perhaps to fewer papers to correct.

Despite the difficulties that they face, the participants demonstrated creativity in the tasks that they designed for their classes. They showed that 'an imaginative teacher can overcome the constraints of a resource poor school and make use of every day environment in creative ways to promote students' learning' (Hayes 2009:7).

Consistent with Hildebrandt and Eom's (2011:422) findings, the participants' motivation to improve their teaching was not impacted by the age of the teacher. That could mean that participants who have different range of experience were motivated to attend the workshops. A comparison between

experienced and non experienced teachers may show different levels of motivation, but such a comparison is beyond the scope of this research.

In discussing the roles that the teachers play in the class, they mentioned their responsibility for designing the courses, planning the lessons, offering explanations and giving feedback. This teaching practice appeared to be adopted by most of them. This teacher centred conception reflects the view of the teacher as the source of knowledge, who conveys information to students (Fareh 2010:3602). Rather than supporting students to practice writing, teachers who have a teacher centred view expect their students simply to apply what the teacher say. This conception did not vary dependent upon the age or qualifications of the teachers. On the other hand, two teachers mentioned student- centred approach within their teaching. Unlike most of their colleagues, these teachers seemed to be more flexible to give more chances for students to participate and practice writing. Within the discussion most teachers did show interest about using student centred activities but they were sceptical about students' level to work by themselves.

In discussing the resources that they use the participants mentioned different ones. The main resources were learning by doing i.e. they learn to teach by practicing teaching and reflection on their teaching. Through teaching they come to know what works with their students so they keep using it. According to Tomlinson (1995:39), this is important for teachers to improve their teaching practice. Furthermore, some teachers mentioned using new techniques recommended in workshops.

At the end of the workshops, I asked the participants about their opinions of the workshops. Two limitations were mentioned. The first was the time. Teachers suggested that they should be informed in advance about future workshops so that they can arrange their plans. Secondly, participants felt that the workshop should follow a more linear outline considering one point at a time as in the above mentioned workshops we tended to have a more general discussion regarding the difficulties that the writing teachers face and how to solve them, useful activities and websites and selection of materials.

## 8.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a report of the trial of two workshops with the participants of this research. Through reflecting on my self improvement as a teacher as well as the knowledge and skills that I acquired as a researcher, I gained the motivation and interest to go back to Libya for the third phase of data collection. These workshops were exploratory in terms of how the participants will work together and whether they would be willing to accept to work with me as a non native and younger colleague. In addition, the workshops were used to discuss with teachers the main issues related to this research such as the contextual factors and how to deal with them.

The fact that the participants have different cognition about teaching writing enriched the discussion with different examples of tasks and activities. Some teachers believe that writing is best taught through grammar and a focus on structure so they discussed activities such as dictation and gap filling as useful. Other teachers felt that such tasks are useful at the beginning but they won't improve students' abilities to write extended writing. Instead they suggested integrating reading with writing to help students learn the content words that they need in their writing.

This reflects the different cognition that the participants have about the teaching of writing such as writing is considered as a product and is best learnt through learning the grammatical rules and structure or writing as process where students construct knowledge about how to write instead of focusing on writing correct sentences.

Further, the workshops show that the participants can form a group of professional practitioners who can work together and share knowledge and experience (Seferoglu 2010:549).

The next chapter sets the conclusion, summary of the findings, and implications of this research.



## **CHAPTER 9.**

# **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **9.1 Introduction**

In the Libyan universities, planning courses to teach is one of the roles that the teachers play. Very often, university teachers are left implementing what they think is appropriate for their students without receiving any support from the university in terms of support for professional development. This research attempted to investigate the cognition of Libyan university teachers that is formed by contextual factors and the kind of teachers' knowledge and beliefs that influence practice in the teaching of writing.

This chapter summarises the findings of this research, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for Libyan universities as well as identifying areas for further research.

### **9.2 Summary of the Research Aim and Main Questions**

While there is large a literature on teachers' cognition and classroom practice, there is a lack of studies on how EFL teachers deal with the situation of their self improvement. Using a theoretical framework based on Borg's model of teacher cognition and classroom practice, this research aimed to investigate the process of teaching English writing at the university level in three Libyan universities. Three methods of data collection were used to collect data for this study: namely classroom observation, semi structured interviews, and workshops. The main research questions were:

- What do the approaches that the writing teachers use to teach English writing at the Libyan universities show about their cognition and classroom teaching practice?
- What resources do they draw on to support their teaching?
- What are the pedagogical implications for in-service training?

### **9.3 Summary of the Main Research Findings and Implications**

The process of building the theoretical framework and the analysis of the data gathered in the current research indicated the following findings:

Libyan culture and Islamic views of learning play an important role in shaping teachers' cognition about their teaching practice. For example, most participants' were hesitant to use interactive activities because they believe that this may reduce their control over the class.

Culture and beliefs influenced The Committee of Education Policy in Higher Education (2008). The Committee improved the curriculum and provides training courses for basic and secondary education teachers. In contrast, the Committee does not provide consistent material for universities and there is no training available for university teachers assuming that their MA/PhD degrees are sufficient for being qualified teachers.

In addition to forming assumptions about teaching and learning process, the Libyan culture also influenced how I conducting my research. This influence was seen mainly within my research methodology which involved the use of interviews and asking questions. In my data collection, I knew aspects of my culture that I was not aware of before, such as the way of asking for more clarifications and dealing with people from different genders.

The participants mentioned different challenges as the mixed level of students within classes, Arabic interference, lack of practice and inconsistent materials. These challenges mediate the teaching practices of teachers and teachers' choices of materials, roles and tasks.

To deal with this situation, the participants depend on their previous learning experience as students as they used some of the tasks that their teachers used. There were similarities among the participants in their professional development. They rely on a variety of resources such as reading, teaching

experience, the internet and attending elective external workshops to enhance their teaching skills.

However, the extent to which the professional development influenced their existing cognition about the teaching of English writing varies. There was a considerable individual variation in the teaching practices of the teachers included within this study. This can be related to the participants' different cognition that they formed through formal learning and their knowledge of content knowledge and curriculum knowledge. Furthermore, through their informal learning and teaching experience and self development they accumulate general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational context, knowledge of self and personal practical knowledge.

Most of the participants were hesitant about using new ideas of teaching and that indicated that the pedagogical knowledge that the teachers have is not always reflected in their teaching practice. This was mainly because of the views that the teachers have about their professional identity regarding the discipline and providing information to students. In the analysis stage, variation of teaching practice emerged and led to dividing the participants into three groups: the first group was seen to focus on form and accuracy; the second group was seen to try to balance a focus on form and a focus on meaning; and the third group was seen to tend to focus more on the meaning and fluency of writing. The hesitancy about using new information that the teachers gain from attending workshops and using the internet indicated to me that there was potential for professional development and sharing among these teachers. Such professional development could focus on collaborative groups and be delivered within the universities with peers rather than externally run workshops.

Identifying the difficulties that the teachers face and the variation in the classroom teaching practice was an initial step in considering how these challenges might be addressed. In the third phase of the data collection, I organised two workshops as an applicable suggestion for teachers' professional development. According to Seferoglu (2010:549) teachers should be encouraged to share ideas and help each other through discussions and reflection on their teaching.

The workshops sessions showed that the participants can work together to improve their teaching and share knowledge and experience. In addition, their attendance in the workshops and their feedback about how to improve them are positive signs for providing opportunities for professional development.

The two workshops have identified a number of areas where improvements might be made and it is hoped that the outcomes of this research will be able to make a small contribution to professional development in Libya.

The workshops were thought of as a practical suggestion for the following reasons. First, the participants expressed interest in attending workshops. Second, workshops are flexible to organise and provide good opportunities for teachers to discuss and adapt the techniques and activities to their students' level and interest (Richards and Farrell 2005:25). Third, through discussing their methods and activities, teachers enhance their ability to learn from their own and one another's experience (Shulman and Shulman 2004:264).

The findings as a whole present a picture of the teaching English writing at the university level within Libya as based upon teachers' experience and personal beliefs rather than clear goals and ideas about an educational policy.

## **9.4 Recommendations for Libyan Universities**

On the basis of the findings from the empirical fieldwork and my experience in teaching English writing in Libya, I would recommend the following steps for the heads of departments and university teachers to be clear about what constitutes good practice of teaching writing.

The use of a university graded syllabus which has clear learning outcomes, methods of presenting the content of the syllabus and criteria of assessing students' writing are essential at the university level. These features are likely to influence the consistency of students' level and progress in writing.

In order to apply the syllabus I encourage teachers to use a variety of approaches and be open about adapting techniques to the Libyan context and culture. For example, teachers could explore the use of the genre approach to

enable students to write for the different purposes that they will need in their real life such as writing CV and application for jobs.

Formal and informal forums of professional development to which all teachers have access should be provided to support teachers in their efforts to improve their teaching skills. For example, the workshop phase showed positive attitudes about shared professional development and improving their teaching skills through sharing ideas and experience and can be recommended as a way of professional development.

## **9.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

During the analysis stage as well as the writing-up stage several ideas emerged that could be of interest and worthwhile to investigate more thoroughly. It would be interesting to work with a larger number of teachers as that will undoubtedly allow greater chance for comparison between experienced and non-experienced teachers.

Despite the small number of participants, the workshop phase can be viewed as a pilot study for future professional development in the Libyan context. This is important because the findings of this research showed that university teachers showed positive attitudes towards improving their teaching skills. Consequently, the data collected throughout the three phases of the study not only provide background information about teaching English writing in the Libyan universities but provides more data about EFL teachers. Since this is the first time data of this kind has been collected in Libya, from my knowledge of the field and my literature searching, teachers' teaching practice and their participation in professional development sessions may be used as a stepping stone for further research in the field under investigation. Another interesting issue for further research is investigating the impact and effectiveness of collaborative, site-based professional development for university teachers.

## **9.6 Final Thoughts**

To sum up, it must be mentioned that this research as a whole has been a very enriching and rewarding experience at both an academic and personal level.

Professionally speaking, this research has investigated different challenges and factors involved in the teaching of English writing such as teaching mixed level groups and the availability of few opportunities for professional development. Nevertheless, the investigation of the teaching process, the attempts to find answers to the research questions and the links with the views of the participant teachers and links to theoretical aspects have all represented an important source of professional development for me as a university teacher and researcher. The three phases of this research has shown that, despite the difficulties, the positive attitudes regarding development which teachers of English writing possess are motivating signs for further improvement.

On the personal level, this research, involving the discussions with these teachers and my observations of their classes and better understanding of their desires to improve and give their best despite the difficulties that they face, has been an enlightening and life enhancing experience that enriched my teaching experience with new techniques and activities.

In deciding to investigate this area, which was not originally planned, I recall Robert Frost's (1915) poem:

*Two roads diverged in a wood,  
and I took the one less travelled by,  
and that made all the difference.*

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## APPENDICES. RESEARCH TOOLS

### Appendices A: Classroom Observation



The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

### *Appendices A1: Classroom Observation Sheet*

#### Researcher's Observation Sheet

Teacher's name..... Time.....

Class/level.....

No. of students..... Type of Lesson.....

\* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved

Stage	Materials	Task	Aim of the task	Teacher's role	T feedback	Classroom interaction (T/Ss)	Students' involvement 1-3*

## ***A2: Classroom Observation Samples***

### **Researcher's Observation Sheet**

Teacher's name.....T1..... Time...11:12:30 .....

Class/level.....First Year.....

No. of students.....40..... Type of Lesson.....writing.....

\* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved

Stage	Materials	Task	Aim of the task	Teacher's role	T feedback	Classroom interaction (T/Ss)	Students' involvement 1-3*
Opening	No material is used/ the T writes on the board	Definition of topic sentence	Not mentioned to students	Controller	Focus on accuracy and correcting pronunciation mistakes	T/ Sss Mainly those who sit in the front of the class	1 They are passive just copying from the board
Practice		The teacher writes a paragraph about Canada. Then he reads and explains the difficult words. Then he asked students to read.	Not mentioned to students	Controller		The teacher did not encourage students to participate and <sup>1</sup> did not praise those who answered correctly - he did not use their names and admitted that he does not know most of them	Students seem to be bored and there is no interaction. The teacher is the only speaker most of the time
		After reading the paragraph, the teacher	To identify topic sentence				

<sup>1</sup> This in contrast with his response to my question in the interview about students' involvement where he insisted that students' should be encouraged to participate

		<p>asked students to underline the topic sentence.</p> <p>T asked students to write individually about their hometown and try to focus on topic sentence. Then he asked students to read the topic sentence form their writing <sup>2</sup></p> <p>Students were asked to write about the given topic or any other topic as homework</p>					
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<sup>2</sup> The teacher applies presentation- practice- performance by presenting the topic, asking students to write topic sentences and then writing a paragraph.

## A2: Classroom Observation

### Researcher's Observation Sheet

Teacher's name.....T3.....

Time.....11:12:30.....

Class/level.....2<sup>nd</sup> Year.....

No. of students.....45...student.....Type of Lesson...writing.....

\* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved



Stage	Materials	Tasks	Aim of the Task	Teacher's role	T feedback	Classroom interaction (T/Ss )	Students' Involvement
Opening	No material is used The teacher writes on the white board	- the teacher writes the definition of description on the board and asks students to copy down	Not mentioned	Controller		T-sss	1 Students' were not involved
Presentation		The teacher asks students to read the definition from the board  Then he continued to write more information about writing description		Controller/ assessor	The teacher corrects their pronunciation mistakes	T-sss	Mainly the interaction was with the first line only <sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Most students were not involved in the lesson

Closure		<p>The teacher writes a passage on the board then asked students to underline the words that describe the place<sup>4</sup></p> <p>The teacher asked students to select a place and write description for it</p>		Controller		<p>T-sss</p> <p>The teacher selects individual students to reply</p>	<p>Most of the answers came from students who sit on the first row where as students who sit in the back were chatting and not involved in the discussion<sup>5</sup></p>
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<sup>4</sup> The task was difficult and most students seemed unable to answer.

<sup>5</sup> The teacher did not make much efforts to involve students or to encourage them to participate

### A3: Classroom Observation

#### Researcher's Observation Sheet

Teacher's name.....T4..... Time.....9:10:30.....

Class/level.....1<sup>st</sup> Year.....

No. of students.....50..... Type of Lesson...Writing.....

\* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved

Stage	Materials	Task	Aim of the task	Teacher's role	T feedback	Classroom interaction (T/Ss)	Students' Involvement
Opening	'Learn to Write' Textbook  Chapter 2	- Revision about past tense	Not mentioned	Controller	The teacher focuses on correcting pronunciation mistakes	T-sss	1 They seemed bored
Presenting		-forming past tense and action verbs <sup>6</sup>  - after explaining the form the teacher wrote exercise on the board and asked students to put the verbs in the past tense <sup>7</sup>		Controller  Controller		T-sss  No use of pair/group work. Teacher centred question and answer session.	1 most students were not involved in the lesson

<sup>6</sup> A great part of the lecture was devoted to teaching verbs. The lesson lacks variety

<sup>7</sup> The main focus was on grammar and the class was teacher centred

Closure		<p>Then the teacher asked students to work in groups of 5 to write a paragraph about 'unforgettable experience'<sup>8</sup></p> <p>Revision of irregular verbs</p>		Controller/ facilitator				
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<sup>8</sup> The writing was mentioned only at this stage without explaining to students how to write

## Appendices A: Classroom Observation

### Researcher's Observation Sheet

Teacher's name.....T5..... Time...1:2:30.....

Class/level.....2<sup>nd</sup> Year.....

No. of students.....40..... Type of Lesson.....Writing.....

\* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved

Stage	Materials	Tasks	Aim of the task	Teachers' role	T feedback	Classroom interaction (T/sss)	Students' involvement
Opening	The white board	Questions about the structure of essay: for/against essay	Revision	Controller	Focus on correcting students' answers about the structure of for/against essay	T-sss	2
Presentation		-divide the class into groups of 5 and suggest topics: Encouraging tourism, using mobile phones,		Facilitator		Groups of 5	Most students were involved in the discussion <sup>10</sup>
Closure		Each group selects a topic and starts brainstorming their ideas <sup>9</sup>		Facilitator			The teacher created a competition between the groups as he mentioned that he will select the best

<sup>9</sup> Their sitting in groups allowed the teacher to move around in the class trying to encourage them to discuss in English

<sup>10</sup> However, their division according to their level did not encourage the weak students as they said that they don't have ideas like the other groups

		Then they start writing the outline of the essay		Assessor  The teacher focused on correcting the structure of the outline			outline for an essay
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### Researcher's Observation Sheet

Teacher's name.....T7..... Time.....9:10:30.....

Class/level.....Second Year.....

No. of students.....47..... Type of Lesson.....writing.....

\* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved

Stage	Materials	Tasks	Aim of the task	Teacher's roles	T feedback	Classroom interaction	Students' involvement
Opening		-Revision: -questions about types of essays	Not mentioned	Controller	Focus on correcting mistakes	T ---sss	2 Students were partly involved
Presenting the new topic (writing an Outline)	Course book 'College Writing' Unit 9						
	The teacher used pictures of free time activities such as riding horses, reading and cooking	- pre writing activities: Brainstorming about outline for 'free time activities' <sup>11</sup>	To gather vocabulary	Facilitator	The teacher focused only on the common mistakes and explained them by writing the correct form on the white board.	Students work on groups of 5 <sup>12</sup>	3  3 Most students in this class were engaged in the tasks and the teacher tried to motivate them to participate <sup>13</sup> even by asking simple questions such as examples of
	Students brought pictures and information about different activities that they used to write an outline	- guided tasks completion of outline from the course book after explaining the structure of the outline	To practice outlining a topic	Controller to explain the task and instructions and then facilitator when students' start discussion			

<sup>11</sup> Using pictures at this stage was helpful to the teacher to attract students' attention

<sup>12</sup> There was kind of competition among the groups to write better outline

<sup>13</sup> Preparing in advance and bringing information and pictures motivated them to write. Most of them were involved in discussions.

Closure		<p>-Practice activities: the teacher asked students to select a topic and write an outline for it.</p> <p>The teacher summarises the main points in writing outlines and asked students to do some tasks as homework.</p>					their free time activities.
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## Appendices A: Classroom Observation

### Researcher's Observation Sheet

Teacher's name.....T9..... Time.....9:10:30.....

Class/level.....First Year.....

No. of students.....47..... Type of Lesson.....Writing.....

\* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved

Stage	Materials	Tasks	Aim of the task	Teacher's role	T feedback	Classroom interaction	Students' involvement
Opening		Warming up: Writing two sentences about their best friends: My best friend is.....because....		Controller/facilitator		T-sss	2
Presentation		The teacher explained using linking words such as so, with, relative clauses who, which and asked students to give examples.  -discussion about selecting a friend: age, interests in pairs		Controller          Facilitator	Focus on using the right tense and linking words	T-sss          In pairs	Students seemed interested to write about their best friends

Closure		<p>Then class discussion The teacher focuses on using content words: and wrote examples on the board: physical appearance/ personality <sup>14</sup></p> <p>Then the teacher asked students to write a paragraph describing their best friend.</p>		<p>Facilitator</p> <p>Assessor</p>	<p>At this stage the teacher focused on common mistakes such as subject verb agreement</p>		
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<sup>14</sup> Students used some content words from the list in their description of their best friends

## Appendices A: Classroom Observation

### Researcher's Observation Sheet

Teacher's name.....T12..... Time.....1:12:30.....

Class/level.....second year.....

No. of students.....45..... Type of Lesson.....

\* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved

Stage	Materials	Tasks	Aim of the task	Teacher's role	T feedback	Classroom interaction	Students' involvement
Opining	College writing Unit 8	-revision of the previous lesson 'thesis statement'	To know how to write thesis statement	Controller	No feedback	T-sss	2
Presentation		-the teacher starts explaining how to connect the thesis statement and essay		Controller		T-sss	2 Students were partly involved
		-the teacher asked students to look at the introductory paragraph and think about what should the body paragraph discuss for each thesis statement		Facilitator		Pairs	2



Practice		Write their own ideas first then discuss with a partner					
		In groups of 4 students asked to write thesis statement and select from: university study/ the internet/ music				Groups of 4	
Closure		The teacher used crossword task to review the definition of topic sentence, thesis statement, conclusion and to explain the differences between them <sup>15</sup> .					

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<sup>15</sup> This task was interesting for students and were engaged to do the crossword

## Appendices A: Classroom Observation

### Researcher's Observation Sheet

Teacher's name.....T13..... Time.....9:10:30.....

Class/level.....third year.....

No. of students.....47..... Type of Lesson.....writing.....

\* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved

Stage	Materials	Tasks	Aim of the task	Teacher's role	T feedback	Classroom interaction (T/sss)	Students' involvement
Opening	Successful writing Unit 3	Warming up: asking about objects that people like to keep e.g. family album, jewellery	To gather ideas about how to describe an object	Controller	no feedback at this stage	T-sss	3 <sup>16</sup> Students were completely involved
Presentation		- Brainstorming about the information that we need to mention when we describe an object: size, weight, colour, and material in pairs and to write two examples.		Facilitator		pairs	2 Students were partly involved

<sup>16</sup> Students were motivated to speak about things that they keep and some female students showed examples like burses and jewellery that they keep for long time

		<p>- Where we might find such a description? Catalogues, leaflets, stories. The teacher showed them examples that he brought from advertisements and catalogues</p>		Controller		T-sss	2 Students were partly involved
		<p>-Then the teacher asked students to read model in the book that describes the family album and underline the words which are used for description</p>		Facilitator			2

Closure		<p>-In groups of 4 students were asked to select an object and write an outline for describing it and the tenses that they will use.</p> <p>Teacher asked students to describe their favourite childhood toy and explain why they like it.</p>		Facilitator			<p>2 Students were involved in the discussion with their colleagues and moved around to discuss with other groups<sup>17</sup></p>
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<sup>17</sup> Students' discussions with their colleagues made the class too noisy. It was hard to listen to the teacher in some parts of the class.

## Appendices A: Classroom Observation

### Researcher's Observation Sheet

Teacher's name...T14..... Time...9:10:30 am.....

Class/level.....third year.....

No. of students...47..... Type of Lesson.....writing.....

\* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved

Stage	Material	Tasks	Aim of the task	Teacher's role	T feedback	Classroom interaction (T/sss)	Students' involvement
-opening	No material used	-revision questions about the previous lesson 'description of objects'	Revising to check students understanding	Controller	No focus on correcting mistakes <sup>18</sup>	T-sss To explain the instructions	2 The class is noisy
-presentation stage	'Successful Writing Book' Unit 4	-presenting the structure of the descriptive essay  -guided tasks from the book - practice activities The teacher asked students to identify the key words in pairs  - students start	To practice writing descriptive essay	Controller  Facilitator He is facilitator most of the time		Students are working in pairs  Students are working in groups of 4	Students move around to discuss with their colleagues and to borrow dictionaries

<sup>18</sup> The teacher focused on encouraging students to participate and answer the questions without correcting their mistakes

-Closure		writing in the class and will finish writing the essay as homework					
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# LEARN TO WRITE

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing is a creative process, where one discovers oneself. It is a process of reaching out for one's thoughts and discovering them. It is a communication process that transmits ideas precisely and effectively. The process of learning to write is life long and has its moments of ecstasy as well as agony.

Of the four language skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing-writing is the most complex and difficult skill that can't be acquired instantly. It requires an active command of vocabulary, grammatical patterns and sentence structures. It demands the mastery of conventions of writing like spelling and punctuations. Even more important is the high degree of organization, which is essential to achieve coherence.

**Learn to Write** is a new development, which contains a full programme of material specially designed for the student. In this book, the various aspects of writing skill are discussed. Only simple sentences are used. Most structural work is on paragraph writing. Essential and elementary features of writing in meaningful situations, which give a real opportunity for the student to express himself is emphasized. The main aim is to inculcate interest in writing.

What is the nature of writing? What is the role of writing? What is the best approach to develop writing skill? In the process of exploring the answers, one can understand the phenomenon of writing better. This course is to increase the awareness of some of the qualities of good writing, which are the first and the most important step towards change. We examined the different forms of guidance that could be provided at various levels and summarized here.

Chapter one offers assistance in writing simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, relative clauses and relative pronouns. All these topics that are covered give special emphasis to the problems that trouble beginning writers – particularly verb endings, subject-verb agreement, noun plurals, simple, compound complex sentences and sentence logic. It helps the student in each step from constructing a sentence through organizing a full-length paper.

Chapter two aims to achieve a satisfactory level of competency in spelling, punctuation and capitalization. The rules and the exceptions in writing spellings of noun numbers and change of tense are thoroughly discussed. Special focus is laid on fragments and run-on sentences.

Chapters three and four are to train students to write paragraphs on straightforward topics, which provide some opportunity for personal expression. The explanations are given with few references of situations based on day-to-day life. Main focus is laid on writing the topic sentence, developing sentences and concluding sentences. Different techniques of synthesis and combination are used

to make sentences logical and effective. An elaborate note on unity, coherence and the different methods to achieve is discussed. Special effort is laid on the use of several linking devices or connectives.

Chapters five and six provide a wide variety of appropriate material for essay work and letter writing, together with simple instructions on how to go about it. Developing the ability to write effective essays is essential because all technical documents contain a series of related paragraphs. Writing an effective paragraph, adopting a careful writing plan, which involves unity, coherence and logical development of ideas are the areas that gained special stress in this book. Letters reinforce personal and business relations and letter writing deals with the different types of letters including mainly formal and informal types. The subject matter is so arranged that the student will be able to work systematically at the writing of English over a long period.

**Learn to Write** is a suitable book for graduate students in developing the writing skill of English as a foreign language.

## CHAPTER 1

### SENTENCES AND CLAUSES

When you finish the chapter, you will be able to –

- Write simple sentences, compound sentences and complex sentences.
- Understand the way of conversion of sentences from one pattern to another.
- Use singular and plural subjects with the correct singular and plural verbs.
- Identify the clause patterns and use them correctly.
- Use the proper punctuations in writing sentences and paragraphs.

#### SIMPLE SENTENCES

A sentence is the expression of an idea and it gives complete meaning. Every sentence has a subject and verb, but not all groups of words with a subject and verb are sentences. A sentence should explain itself as clearly as possible.

'He went to –' this group of words has a subject (He) and a verb (went), but it is not a sentence because it doesn't explain itself. A sentence must give a complete meaning.

A sentence may be a statement, question, command, request or exclamation. The first letter of a sentence must be capitalized, and the sentence must end with a final punctuation mark in the form of a period (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation point (!).

If the sentence contains one idea, it is called a simple sentence.

He yawns.  
George smokes.  
Snow melts.

Each sentence above explains itself instead of raising unwanted questions. For example, George smokes. It explains the questions like who smokes? What does George do?

_____subject_____	_____verb_____
Who (or what)	does what?

The subject denotes the person or thing about which something is said. The part which refers the action, performed by the subject is the verb. A verb should agree with its subject. The subject is always a noun, or a word or a group of words that does the work of a noun.

The rich / are not always happy. (Subject – The rich)  
Talking much / is a sign of vanity. (Subject – Talking much)



The following table helps you to write simple, correct sentences.

**Pattern I - Subject + verb:**

Subject	Verb
I	Pray
We	eat
You	sleep
They	play
Mr. Mustafa	Prays
He	eats
She	sleeps
The child	plays

**Complete the paragraph using the correct form of the verb given in the bracket.**

Waleed \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a business man. He \_\_\_\_\_ (work) to his father's company. He \_\_\_\_\_ (live) in a flat in Tripoli. He \_\_\_\_\_ (like) reading, playing and watching TV. He \_\_\_\_\_ (speak) Arabic, English and French. His family \_\_\_\_\_ (live) happily.

**Pattern II – Subject + verb + subject complement:** the complement usually consists of a noun, a pronoun or an adjective.

Subject	Verb	Subject complement
This	Is	a pen.
My father	grew	angry.
Those books	are	mine.
The milk	has turned	sour.
Abdulla	looks	sad.
The children	kept	quite.

**Pattern III - Subject + verb + direct object:**

Subject	Verb	Direct Object
I	Know	his address
We	should help	the poor
You	must wash	your car
The boy	has lost	his money
Who	broke	the cup?

**Pattern IV - Subject + verb + indirect object + direct object:**

Subject	Verb	Indirect object	Direct object
The old man	told	the children	a funny story.
The teacher	gave	students	home work.
They	bought	her	some flowers.
She	didn't leave	us	any food.
You	must tell	the police	the truth.

**Exercise 1**

In the following sentences, decide which verb form is required for the subject and verb to agree. Under line the correct verb.

1. I watch (watch) (watches) for him every day at four.
2. The teacher (teacher) (teaches) something new every day.
3. It always (fall) (falls) just at the end of the month.
4. They all (want) (wants) to hear the concert.
5. We (see) (sees) your problem, but we can't help you.
6. You, Mr. Radh (take) (takes) only fifteen minutes for lunch.
7. The children (sell) (sells) ice cream after school.

**Exercise 2**

Read the following sentences and recognize where changes must be made in the verb to make it agree with its subject. Rewrite in a correct way.

1. He make better money than his wife do.
2. It take ten days for me to complete the exercise.
3. The man with the cane are going for a walk.
4. There goes the frightened dogs.
5. Here is five rule to follow.
6. Here come the stupid boy.
7. Where is the mistakes in your paper?
8. Here is the ones ready for action.
9. Does you know the news or not?
10. Is the next few pages as hard as these?

**Important points to remember:**

1. The subject "Each" refers to one person or thing and is followed by singular verb.  
Each of our friends **wants** to come to our party.
2. 'Both' refers to two things. When is used as the subject, the verb must be plural.  
Both the men **are** drivers.
3. 'All' can be used as the subject of a sentence in one or two ways.  
All her clothes **are** clean now.  
All his hair **is** falling out.

4. 'Anybody' and 'everybody' when used as subject, they take singular verb.  
Anybody here **is** my friend.  
Everybody **deserves** an answer.
5. When two singular subjects are connected by 'or' or 'nor' the verb must be singular.  
Either she or her mother **sits** there every day.  
Neither his friend nor his enemy **has** anything good to say about him.
6. When one singular and one plural subject are joined by 'or' or 'nor' the plural subject is written second and the verb is plural.  
Either she or her friends **always** drive to work.  
Neither my work nor my grades **have** ever been good.

### Exercise 3

Read the following sentences and underline the correct verb.

1. Anybody is entitled to (his) (their) opinion.
2. Everybody (make) (makes) (his) (their) own mistakes.
3. All our effort (was) (were) wasted.
4. All our garden (was) (were) destroyed.
5. Everybody said that (his) (their) picture was the best.
6. Neither the man nor his wife (were) (was) willing to help us.
7. Either the trainer or the owner (are) (is) at the track now.
8. Each of those plants (come) (comes) from Australia.
9. One of us (have) (has) to be there at five o' clock.
10. One of their problems (is) (are) over population.

### Exercise 4

Read the following paragraph and circle the verbs that do not agree with the subjects they refer to. Rewrite the paragraph correctly.

Since the time of Greeks, man's knowledge has been organized into separate groups; science, religion, works etc. Both our language and our education have been based on classifications instead of relationships. There is actually many other ways in which everybody could think about their world. When men begin to change his thinking, he will also be able to change these knowledge compartments.

### Exercise 5

In the following paragraph, some of the subjects and verbs do not agree. Rewrite the paragraph correctly.

We can remember people's tears when Marilyn Monroe died. Movie stars are worshiped because their worshippers' lives are unsatisfactory. Hero worship is an ideal relationship. If the real relationship in a person's life is empty, he has imaginary relationship with unreal hero.

## III YEAR WRITING

SESSION 2009-2010

(all groups)

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## Unit 1      The Writing Process

Writing in its broad sense—as distinct from simply putting words on paper—has three steps: thinking about it, doing it, and doing it again (and again and again, as often as time will allow and patience will endure).

The first step, "thinking," involves choosing a subject, exploring ways of developing it, and devising strategies of organization and style. The second step, "doing," is usually called "drafting"; and the third, "doing again," is "revising."

They're not really "steps," not in the usual sense anyway. You don't write by (1) doing all your thinking, (2) finishing a draft, and then (3) completing a revision. Actually you do all these things at once. If that sounds mysterious, it's because writing is a complex activity. As you think about a topic you are already beginning to select words and construct sentences—in other words, to draft. As you draft and as you revise, the thinking goes on: you discover new ideas, realize you've gone down a dead end, discover an implication you hadn't seen before. It's helpful to conceive of writing as a process having, in a broad and loose sense, three steps. But remember that you don't move from step to step in smooth and steady progress.

You go back and forth. As you work on a composition you will be, at any given point, concentrating on one phase of writing. But always you are engaged with the process in its entirety.

### Drafting

A *draft* is an early version of a piece of writing. Most of us cannot compose anything well at the first try. We must write and rewrite. These initial efforts are called drafts, in distinction from the final version. As a rule, the more you draft, the better the result. For drafting, the best advice is to do free writing, that is, keep going and don't worry about small mistakes. A draft is not the end product; it is tentative and imperfect. Writing becomes impossible if you try to do it one polished sentence at a time. You get lost looking for perfection. Keep the following points in mind:

- Rough out your report or article, *then* develop and refine, keeping the total effect always in mind.
- Accept imperfections. Don't linger over small problems. If you can't remember a spelling, get the word down and correct it later.
- If you can't think of exactly the term you want, put down what you can think of and leave a check in the margin to remind yourself to look for a more precise word. Your main purpose is to develop ideas and to work out a structure.
- Don't lose sight of major goals by pursuing minor ones—proper spelling, conventional punctuation, the exact word. These can be supplied later.
- In a composition of any length, consider stopping every so often at a convenient point.
- Read over what you've written, making corrections or improvements; then type what you've done.
- Seeing your ideas in print will usually be reassuring. If you don't have a typewriter or word processor, copy the section neatly in longhand; the effect will be much the same.

## Unit 2 Basic Concepts to understand before learning how to write

Our mental ideas, whether big or small, simple or complex acquire an external form only when they are expressed in one form or the other. This materialisation of innate ideas into concrete forms with the help of language is accomplished in four major forms of expression.

(1)Word (2)Phrase (3)Clause (4)Sentence.

### 1 Word

A word is that smallest unit which has a universal application and fits in every occasion. It has a rich semantic value and represents a single idea. Grammatically speaking, the parts of speech like nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs fall under this category but the real study of **word** is in knowing their differences and also in knowing what a particular word stands for and how it differs from other words of similar meaning or pronunciation. A study of synonyms, antonyms, word pairs and one-word substitution etc. in the vocabulary section will help you to study **word** at a later stage.

### 2 Phrase

A phrase is a group of words that makes some sense but not a complete one. It however constitutes a single complete idea/expression and therefore is considered one of the components of a sentence. It never takes a subject or a verb, auxiliary or principal, and therefore never interferes with the main action of the sentence. It may start with a preposition or a participle.

Phrases are divided into 3 types, according to their position and use in the sentence.

- (1)Noun Phrase
- (2)Adjective Phrase
- (3)Adverb Phrase

#### Noun Phrase:

A Noun phrase is so called because it functions as a noun in the sentence. It can therefore occupy any such place where the use of a noun is possible, e.g. as a subject or object

Subject  
To walk is good for health.  
Reading late can ruin your eyes.  
Flying kites is a sport.

Object  
 I want to eat an apple.  
 We enjoyed climbing the mountain.  
 I like reading novels.

#### Adjective Phrase:

An adjective phrase is so called because it functions like an adjective. It can therefore occupy any such place where an adjective, is used i.e to qualify a noun in a sentence. This noun may be the subject or the object in the sentence. An adjective phrase thus used is called an expansion, of that particular component.

Expansion of Subject  
The team, surprised by the victory, jumped and danced.  
A rose of red colour grows in my garden.

Expansion of Object  
 I saw a man standing at the gate.  
 He killed a snake of brown colour.



**Adverb Phrase:**

An adverb phrase is so called because it functions as an adverb. It can therefore occupy any such place where an adverb might be used i.e. to modify the verb to show the **place, manner, time and reason** of the action. An adverb phrase used thus is called an extension of the sentence:

I killed a snake	in the garden.(Place)	She is sleeping	in her room.
	with a stick. (Manner)	without a pillow.	
	in the morning.(Time)	just now.	
	to save the child.(Reason)	due to ill health.	

It is important to note that like any part of speech, a phrase can also have multiple functions depending upon the context and position which they are used in a sentence. The same phrase may function as an adjective phrase(AdjP) or as an adverb phrase (AdvP) or as a noun phrase (NP):

**Identify the type of each phrase underlined in the following sentences:**

- 1)The boy with a smile on his face has won the 1st prize. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2)The boy received the prize with a smile on his face. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3)The students in the exam. hall shouted loudly. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4)The students shouted loudly in the exam hall. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5)To fly kites is exciting. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6)He went to the field to fly kites. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7)He drove the car smoking a pipe. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8)Smoking a pipe is a bad habit. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9)The man smoking a pipe is my uncle. \_\_\_\_\_

**3 Clause**

Like a phrase, a clause also conveys some sense but not a complete one. A clause is larger than a phrase because it has its own subject and predicate(verb etc.). Moreover, a clause always begins with a conjunction. Since a clause does not give a complete meaning, it is always joined to another clause to achieve a complete meaning. A sentence that takes up two clauses joined together is called either a complex sentence or a compound sentence. This is determined by the position or function of the component clause. A clause may also function like a noun, an adjective or an adverb. It depends upon its position and context in a sentence. Therefore, clauses are also of three types:

- (1)Noun Clause
- (2)Adjective Clause
- (3)Adverb Clause

**Noun Clause:**

A Noun Clause is so called because it functions as a noun in a sentence. Therefore, it can occupy any such position where a noun might be used e.g. as subject, object etc. Look at the following noun clauses:

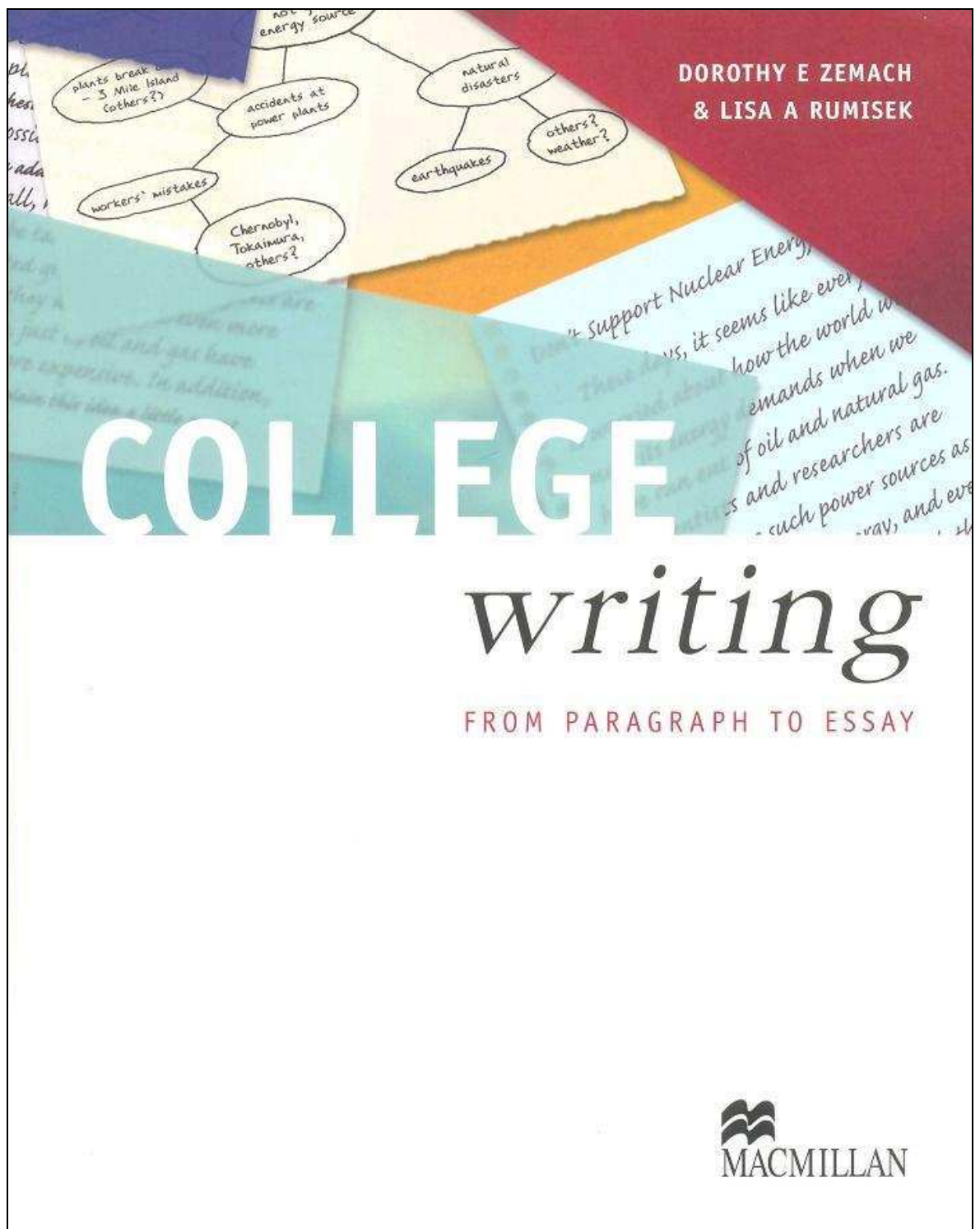
Subject

What I saw surprised me.  
That he stole my purse may not be correct.  
Whatever you just said has got no value.  
just said.

Object

You know what I saw  
 I know that he stole my purse.  
 I didn't understand whatever you  
just said.

Material 3:





## To the Teacher

Non-native English speakers who enroll in a college or university want to develop writing skills that will lead to academic success. This book is a combination text and workbook. Its focused lessons, specific exercises, and ample opportunities for practice are designed to help your students gain confidence in writing academic prose.

This book is designed to take university-level students with an intermediate ability in English as a second language from paragraph writing through essay writing. The course combines a process approach to writing (where students work on invention, peer response, editing, and writing multiple drafts) with a pragmatic approach to teaching the basics of writing (with direct instruction on such elements as topic sentences, thesis statements, and outlines).



The Introduction presents process writing to students. The tasks in the main units are graded. Students first work on recognizing and identifying key writing structures from model paragraphs and essays. Then they manipulate the structures in short, manageable tasks. Finally, they apply the structures to their own writing. There are opportunities for students to work independently, with a partner, and with a group. The exercises can be done either in class or as homework. Critical thinking is emphasized, so that students become aware of the impact of their choice of words, sentences, and organizational techniques on the effectiveness of their writing. The focus throughout is on academic writing—the type of writing used in university courses and exams in English-speaking institutions of higher learning.

In Units 1–6, students analyze and write the types of paragraphs that commonly occur in academic contexts. They practice writing topic sentences and concluding sentences, organizing the paragraph coherently, and using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and transitional devices in the paragraph body. In Unit 7, students write two-paragraph papers, in preparation for longer assignments. In Units 8–11, students apply what they have learned about paragraphs to essay writing. They work on developing and supporting a central thesis, organizing an outline from which to write, and writing effective introductions and conclusions. Unit 12 discusses strategies for timed essay writing, including understanding standard instructions, time-management techniques, and methods for organizing information.

Included in the Student Book are samples of the development of an essay from brainstorming to the final draft. There is also a guide to punctuation and examples of a letter requesting information, a personal essay of the type commonly required in college applications, resumes and addressed envelopes.

The Teacher's Guide supports the instructor by offering teaching suggestions, a discussion of marking and grading writing, ideas for supplemental activities for each unit, and photocopiable exercises and activities.

## 9 Outlining an Essay

In this unit, you will learn ...  
the purpose of an outline.  
how to write an outline.

What is an outline?

An outline is a list of the information you will put in your essay. You can see an example of an outline on page 65.

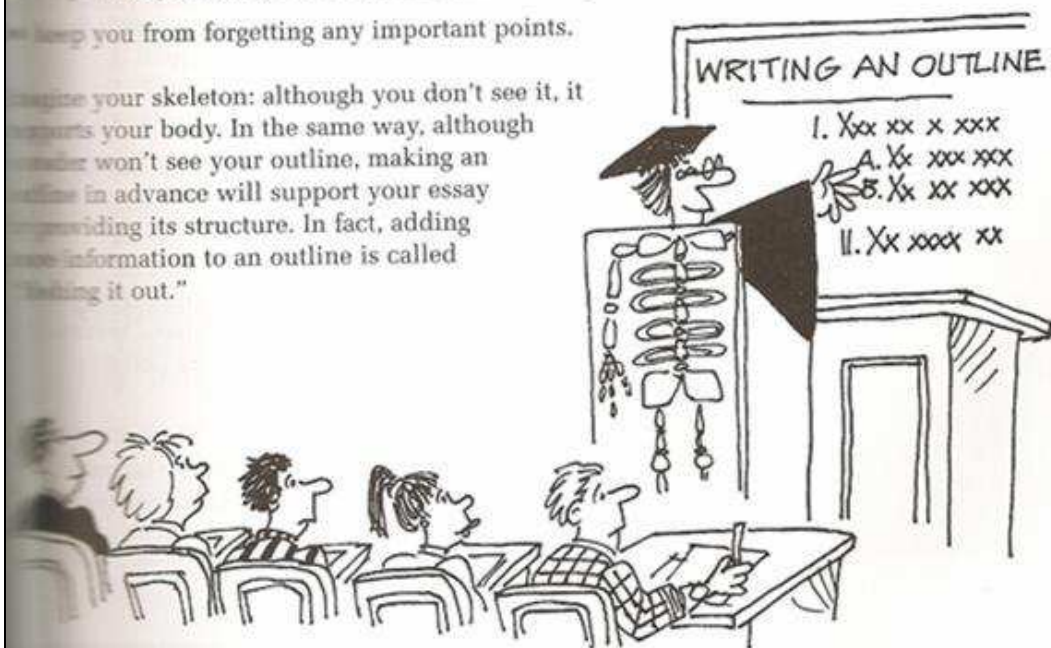
An outline ...

- begins with the essay's thesis statement.
- shows the organization of the essay.
- tells what ideas you will discuss and shows which ideas will come first, second, and so on.
- ends with the essay's conclusion.

Writing an outline before you write an essay will ...

- show you what to write before you actually begin writing.
- help make your essay well organized and clearly focused.
- keep you from forgetting any important points.

Imagine your skeleton: although you don't see it, it supports your body. In the same way, although a reader won't see your outline, making an outline in advance will support your essay by providing its structure. In fact, adding new information to an outline is called "fleshing it out."



## Looking at an outline

1 Read the outline on page 65. Answer the questions.

- a. What will be the thesis statement of the essay?
- b. How many body paragraphs will the essay have?
- c. How many supporting points will the third paragraph have? What will they be?
- d. How many details will the fourth paragraph have? What will they be?

## Writing an outline

### How to write an outline

Before writing an outline, you must go through the usual process of gathering ideas, editing them, and deciding on a topic for your writing. Writing an outline can be a very useful way of organizing your ideas and seeing how they will work together.

To show how the ideas work together, number them. To avoid confusion, use several different types of numbers and letters to show the organization of the ideas. Use roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, etc.) for your essay's main ideas: your introduction and thesis statement, your body paragraphs, and your conclusion. Write all of these first, before going into more detail anywhere.

- I. Introduction
- II. First main idea
- III. Second main idea
- IV. Third main idea
- V. Conclusion

Next, fill in more information for your body paragraphs by using capital roman letters (A, B, C, etc.). Use one letter for each supporting idea in your body paragraph. Complete this information for each body paragraph before going into more detail.

- I. Introduction
- II. First main idea
  - A. First supporting point
  - B. Second supporting point
  - ... and so on.

Finally, use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) to give details for your supporting points. Not every supporting point will have details, and some points will have several. It is not important to have the same number of details for every supporting point.

- I. Introduction
- II. First main idea
  - A. First supporting point
    1. First detail
    2. Second detail
  - B. Second supporting point
    1. First detail
    2. Second detail
    - ... and so on.



### **Don't Support Nuclear Energy!**

I. Nuclear power is not a good energy source for the world.

II. Very expensive

A. Nuclear fuel is expensive

B. Nuclear power plants are expensive to build and operate

1. Cost of construction
2. Cost of training workers
3. Cost of safety features

III. Nuclear materials are not safe

A. Nuclear fuels are dangerous

1. Mining fuels produces radioactive gas
2. Working with radioactive fuels can harm workers

B. Nuclear waste products are dangerous

1. Very radioactive
2. Difficult to dispose of or store safely

IV. There is a great possibility of accidents

A. Nuclear power plants can fail

1. Three Mile Island, U.S.A. (1979)
2. Tarapur, India (1992)
3. Darlington, Canada (1992)

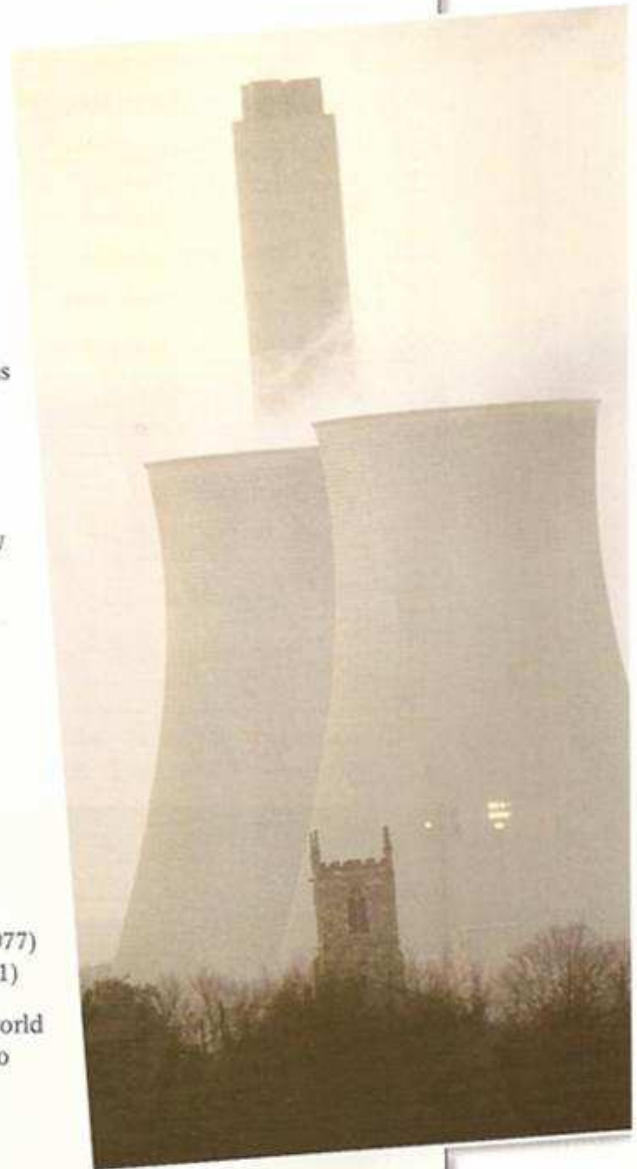
B. Workers can make mistakes

1. Chernobyl, U.S.S.R. (1986)
2. Kola, Russia (1991)
3. Tokaimura, Japan (1999)

C. Natural disasters can occur

1. Earthquake: Kozloduy, Bulgaria (1977)
2. Tornado: Moruroa, the Pacific (1981)

V. Because of the cost and the danger, the world should develop different types of energy to replace nuclear power.





- 2 Fill in this outline for the essay in Unit 8, exercise 1 on page 57. Then compare with a partner.

The Changing Vocabulary of English

- I. Thesis statement: .....
- II. Words introduced by .....
- A. ....
1. From an African language
  2. Now used all over the world to mean .....
- B. Jazz
1. Came from .....
  2. Exact origin unknown
- III. ....
- A. Cool
1. ....
  2. New meanings
- B. ....
1. "Original" meaning
  2. ....
- IV. ....: Existing ethnic groups in the United States as well as new immigrants will surely continue to bring new words to English and give fresh meanings to existing words.



- 3 Label each statement T for thesis statement, M for main idea, S for supporting point, or C for conclusion.

Title: The Benefits of Yoga

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a. .... Develops clear thinking          | i. .... Develops self-confidence  |
| b. .... Physical benefits                | j. .... Practicing yoga regularly can be good for your mind, your body, and your emotions.    |
| c. .... Improves concentration           | k. .... Makes you strong and flexible   |
| d. .... Reduces fear, anger, and worry   | l. .... Therefore, to build mental, physical, and emotional health, consider practicing yoga. |
| e. .... Mental benefits                  | m. .... Emotional benefits  |
| f. .... Improves blood circulation       |   |
| g. .... Improves digestion               |   |
| h. .... Helps you feel calm and peaceful |   |

- 4 Arrange the ideas in exercise 3 above into an outline. Compare your finished outline with a partner.

- I. ....
- II. ....
- A. ....
- B. ....
- III. ....
- A. ....
- B. ....
- C. ....
- IV. ....
- A. ....
- B. ....
- C. ....
- V. ....



## Evaluating an outline

### ○ The outline checklist

Before you start writing your essay, check your outline for organization, support, and topic development. If possible, have a friend or your instructor check your outline too.

#### Organization

- ☐ paragraphs in the right order
- ☐ supporting points and details in the right order

#### Support

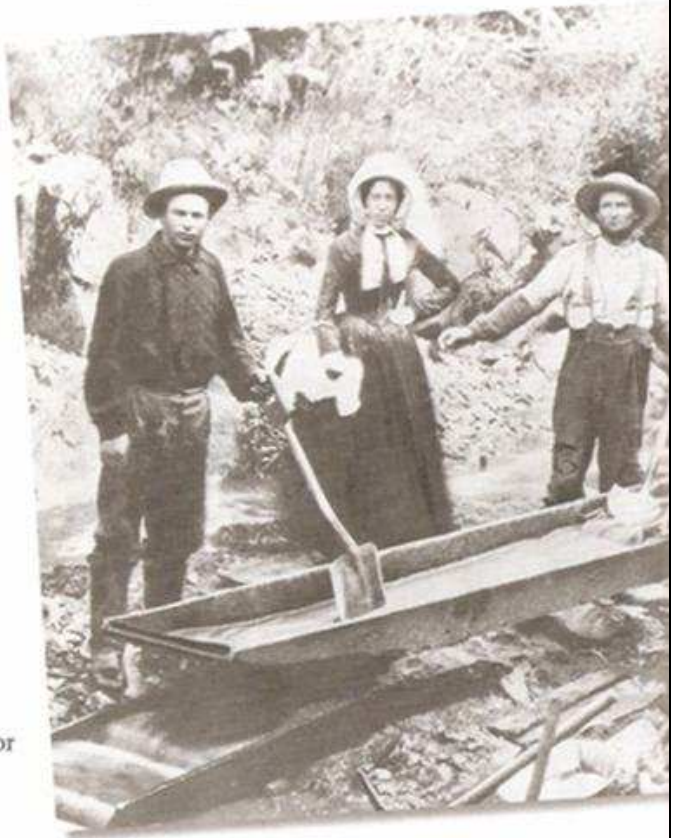
- ☐ each main idea related to the thesis statement
- ☐ each supporting point related to the paragraph's main idea
- ☐ each detail related to the paragraph's supporting points

#### Topic development

- ☐ enough (and not too many) main ideas to develop the thesis statement
- ☐ enough (and not too many) supporting points for each main point
- ☐ enough (and not too many) details for each supporting point

- 5 With a partner, check the outline on page 69 for organization, support, and topic development. What should the author add, subtract, or change in this outline? Share your ideas with another pair. Did you make the same recommendations?

In 1848, gold was discovered in California. People from all over the world rushed to California to look for gold—they wanted to become rich. This was called “the gold rush.”



The Effects of the California Gold Rush on the City of San Francisco

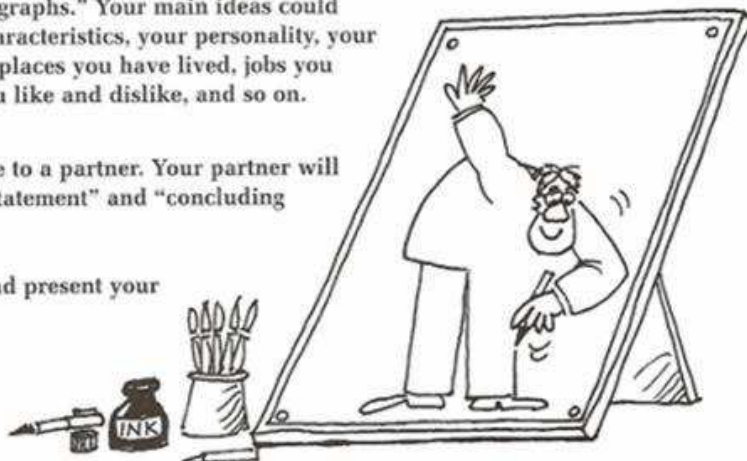
- I. The California gold rush changed San Francisco in ways that we can still see today.
- II. History of the gold rush
  - A. 1848
    1. Gold was discovered near San Francisco
    2. The U.S. president tells the country there's gold in California
  - B. 1864: the gold rush ends
  - C. 1849: the gold rush begins as people from all over the world go to California to look for gold. Gold is very easy to find.
  - D. 1850s: gold becomes more difficult to find; big, expensive machines are now needed to find gold
  - E. Gold rushes in other countries
    1. Australia (1851-53)
    2. South Africa (1884)
    3. Canada (1897-98)
- III. Effects on San Francisco today
  - A. People still come to San Francisco hoping to get rich
    1. Computer industry
  - B. Sightseeing is very popular in San Francisco
  - C. San Francisco is still an expensive city
    1. Houses and land
    2. Food & clothing
    3. Many new fast-food restaurants sell cheap hamburgers
  - D. Still problems in the city
  - E. Technological development is still important
  - F. There is no gold mining today
  - G. Character of San Francisco today
- IV. Changes in California in the 1800s
  - A. Population increased—more than 40,000 people moved to California in 1848-50
  - B. Everything became more expensive
    1. Houses and land
  - C. Problems with crime and violence
  - D. Technology to find gold improved
- V. The special personality of San Francisco can be traced in part to the famous gold rush of the 1800s.



- 6 Look at the thesis statement and topic sentences you wrote in Unit 8, exercise 8 on page 62. Write an outline for your essay. Then write the essay.
- 7 Exchange the essay you wrote for exercise 6 above with a partner. As you read your partner's essay, write an outline of the main ideas, supporting points, and details. Your partner will outline your essay. Discuss the outlines.

### Review

- 8 Write a simple outline of yourself or your life. First, outline only the "body paragraphs." Your main ideas could include physical characteristics, your personality, your habits, your family, places you have lived, jobs you have had, things you like and dislike, and so on.
- 9 Explain your outline to a partner. Your partner will then add a "thesis statement" and "concluding statement."
- 10 Join another pair and present your complete outlines.



# Successful Writing

PROFICIENCY

Virginia Evans



Express Publishing

## Introduction

### To the Teacher

**Successful Writing Proficiency** consists of nine units which cover all types of composition writing (descriptions, narratives, letters, discursive essays, articles, reviews) required at advanced levels. Each unit starts with a lead-in listening activity through which the basic plan for the type of writing the unit deals with is introduced. This also serves as a brainstorming activity, giving the teacher the chance to elicit useful language and ideas on the topic under discussion. Detailed theory and plans are provided to be used as a reference by students. A variety of models in which the theory is applied are followed by exercises to improve students' writing skills, focusing on register and style. The exercises are graded, leading to the acquisition of those skills needed for students to be able to write successfully at advanced levels. Topic identification, "discuss and write" sections and study check sections reinforce students' knowledge and remind them of the structures previously presented, thus helping them revise the writing areas covered in the book. The Teacher's Book provides answers to the exercises, model plans, transcripts of the listening exercises and useful teaching tips. At the back of the Teacher's Book are marked model compositions to help teachers mark students' compositions. The book is accompanied by a cassette with all the listening exercises.

The units can either be presented in the order they appear in the book or teachers can select the unit they want to present according to their own judgement and their students' needs. The course can be covered in approximately 30 one-hour lessons.

### Brainstorming Technique

The brainstorming technique can be used in all the units in this book. The technique may be applied each time the students come across a new topic, whether in a model or a writing assignment.

The technique is used as follows: the teacher invites students to think of as many words or ideas as possible related to the topic and writes them on the board. The teacher may choose to guide the students further by having them link or categorise related terms.

This technique aims to stimulate students' knowledge about the topic, thus drawing together ideas and vocabulary necessary for writing a successful composition.

e.g. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of technological progress.

Brainstorming: *computers, genetic engineering, information networks, unemployment, satellite communications, cloning, nuclear accidents, medical research, etc.*

Ss can then be asked to think of the positive and negative aspects of each item.

e.g. Describe a popular shop in your neighbourhood.

Brainstorming: T writes the following key words on the board and asks Ss to give him/her as many words as possible related to each key word.





# UNIT 4 Describing festivals/events/ceremonies

1 Read the following table, then listen to the cassette and tick the information mentioned. Finally, using the information from the table describe the festival.

Name of festival	Ch'u Yan Festival <input type="checkbox"/>	the Dragon Boat Festival <input type="checkbox"/>
Time	5th day of the 5th month <input type="checkbox"/> in Chinese lunar calendar	5th day of the 5th month <input type="checkbox"/> in Chinese solar calendar
Reason	to protect the river from dragons and spirits <input type="checkbox"/>	to remember the tragic suicide of a politician <input type="checkbox"/>
Preparations	repaint boats <input type="checkbox"/> train for boat races <input type="checkbox"/>	build boats <input type="checkbox"/> design route of boat race <input type="checkbox"/>
Actual day	throw rice dumplings into river <input type="checkbox"/> eat rice cakes <input type="checkbox"/>	boat races <input type="checkbox"/> search for Ch'u Yan's body <input type="checkbox"/>
Feelings	not very interesting <input type="checkbox"/>	an unforgettable experience <input type="checkbox"/>



- A descriptive composition about an event should consist of:
  - a) an **introduction** in which you mention the name/type, time/date, place and reason for celebrating the event;
  - b) a **main body** in which you describe the preparations for the event and the event itself; and,
  - c) a **conclusion** in which you describe people's feelings or comments on the event. Such pieces of writing can be found in magazines, newspapers or travel brochures, or as part of a letter, story, etc.

## Points to Consider

- When you describe annual events (e.g. a celebration / festival which takes place every year), present tenses are used and the style is formal. However, when giving a personal account of an event which you witnessed or took part in, past tenses are used and the style may be less formal. The passive is frequently used to describe preparations / activities which take place. e.g. *Pumpkins are carved and placed in windows and costumes are designed.*
- To make the description more vivid and interesting, narrative techniques and a variety of descriptive vocabulary can be used to set the scene and describe the atmosphere. e.g. *Bright lights sparkled over the water as the fireworks spread like huge, colourful flowers and the onlookers who crowded the harbour gasped in wonder and admiration.*

## Interpreting the topic

- The number of paragraphs depends on whether the composition task asks for only a description of events or also asks you to explain its significance or how important it is. Compare the topics below. "Describe a typical wedding in your country" This topic asks only for a description of an event. The style is impersonal. Present tenses should normally be used. "Describe a wedding you attended and explain why it made an impression on you." This topic asks for a description of an event in narrative form, together with reasons why you enjoyed the event. The style is rather informal. Past tenses should be used.

## Introduction

### Paragraph 1

**set the scene**  
(name, time/date of event, reasons for celebrating)

## Main Body

### Paragraph 2

**preparations**  
(decorations, etc.)

### Paragraph 3

**description of event**  
(costumes, food, atmosphere, activities)

### Paragraph 4

**explanation 1 and reason**

### Paragraph 5

**explanation 2 and reason**

## Conclusion

### Final Paragraph

**feelings, comments, thoughts**



- 2 Read the models and give the paragraph plan for each. What tenses have been used? Why? Where could you find such pieces of writing?

**MODEL A**

**Describe an annual event that you attended and explain why you enjoyed it.**

About four years ago I was invited to a Halloween party at the home of a friend. I was reluctant at first but I decided to go to help out with the arrangements.

On the afternoon of the party, I drove to my friend's house with a huge box of materials which I thought might be useful for the preparations. The children were full of enthusiasm as they worked on their masks and costumes. But the best part of all was making the lanterns. I was amazed at the imagination that the children showed when cutting grotesque faces out of the hollowed-out pumpkins. The mood of anticipation was so intense that, by the time the last costume had been made, I was as excited as the children.

By six o'clock, the party was well under way and the house was full of screaming children, with me running around in a mask trying to scare them. At one point during the evening, prizes were awarded to the children who had made the best costumes. Games were organised, including one where the children had their hands tied behind their backs while they tried to pick apples out of a barrel of water using only their teeth. When the party finally ended, the children left in a noisy group, running ahead of their parents and doing their best to scare any unfortunate passers-by.

Rediscovering what it is like to have fun without feeling embarrassed was a fantastic experience. My initial hesitation disappeared once I had decided to get involved. Helping with the children's games enabled me to enter into the party spirit. I saw it as an opportunity to experience the sheer joy that comes so naturally to children.

Another thing that made it a particularly enjoyable occasion was that it brought back memories of my own childhood experiences. I remembered my own excitement when we were dressing up in scary costumes, and the thrill of going from house to house, bags held open for whatever goodies would be put in when we shouted, "Trick or treat!" I also remembered the time we had been chased by a stingy neighbour after spraying his windows with shaving foam.

Since those days I had nearly forgotten about Halloween, but this party gave me so much pleasure that now it is a regular fixture in my diary. I think everyone should have the chance to feel like a child at least once a year.

**MODEL B**

**Describe an annual event that takes place in your country.**

Halloween, which takes place every year on 31st October, is an important event, particularly in America. It originated hundreds of years ago when it was believed that on this night the souls of the dead came back and walked among the living. Today, it is treated light-heartedly and celebrated mainly by children.

A certain amount of preparation is required of those who take part. Costumes and masks, typically of ghosts or witches, have to be made. Sweets are bought and parties are organised. Most importantly, a lantern is made. This is done by taking a large pumpkin and cutting out the inside, which is then used to make a pie. Next, holes are cut out of one side in the shape of an evil face, and a candle is placed inside the lantern so that the light glows through the eyes and mouth.

On the day itself, or rather in the evening, children wander around the streets dressed in their costumes. The custom is for children to knock on doors in their neighbourhood and say "Trick or treat". This means that their neighbours have to treat them to sweets or candies, otherwise the "ghosts and witches" will play a trick on them. Usually the adults offer them something, but if they fail to, then a practical joke might be played. This is usually something harmless such as putting shaving foam on the uncooperative neighbour's windows.

If a party has been arranged, then the lights are turned out and the children take part in a variety of activities. This might include anything from telling ghost stories to dancing. Although the parties are based on a rather frightening theme, the emphasis is, of course, on having fun. A typical party game for Halloween is played by putting apples into a barrel of water and inviting the children to pick them up with their teeth. Special drinks are made, which are served with the traditional pumpkin pie.

Many people enjoy Halloween as an excuse to dress up and have fun. It is unique in that its theme is essentially not a pleasant one. However, it remains popular and is eagerly anticipated every year by people of all ages.

## Unit 4 Describing festivals/events/ceremonies

**3** Read the following topics and underline the key words. Which tenses should you use? What information will you include in each paragraph? How will you adapt the paragraph plan shown on p. 34 to organise your composition?

- 1 Is there a festival in another country that you would like to attend? Describe it explaining why it is important to you.
  - 2 Describe a religious ceremony in your country.
  - 3 Describe a celebration you attended as a child. Why do you remember this one especially?
  - 4 Describe the ceremony of a national event and explain its importance to the people in your country.
- 4** Rewrite the following paragraphs in the passive. What tenses are used? Why?

**A** We hold the festival of Shrove Tuesday on the eve of Ash Wednesday, when the 40-day fast before Easter begins. The English have come to know the day as *Pancake Day* since, traditionally, housewives make pancakes to use up the last eggs and milk which they do not eat during Lent. Until the 19th century, villages celebrated Shrove Tuesday by holding carnivals during which they played ball games and ate pancakes. Carnivals which people hold in other parts of the world keep the same tradition alive.

*The festival of Shrove Tuesday is held on the eve of Ash Wednesday ...*

**B** Everyone awaited the Park Jazz Festival with anticipation. The local newspaper published articles about the arriving musicians, and hotel rooms which the local council had booked were filling up fast. On the first night, people packed the park and the mayor introduced the first act. During the weekend over twenty-four soloists and bands performed modern and traditional jazz and blues. It was a festival which lifted everyone's spirits.

**5** Use of sophisticated adjectives or adverbs when describing events makes the description more vivid. Read the short extracts below and replace the words in bold with words from the lists.

**A** *handsomely, exhilarating, picturesque, gleaming*

The San Fermin is a(n)  
1) **nice** July festival held in Pamplona, Navarra. On the first day young men, 2) **well dressed** in 3) **bright white** with scarlet bandanas and sashes, are chased through the 4) **nice** medieval streets by fierce bulls.



**B** *blissful, striking, quaint, romantic, gifted, radiant*

Marie and Victor's wedding reception was held at a 1) **good** seaside restaurant. Marie was in her 2) **nice** wedding dress and looked 3) **good**. After the meal, the 4) **happy** newly-weds led their guests in dancing accompanied by a group of 5) **good** musicians playing **nice** waltzes and jazz numbers. Everyone was on the dance floor.



**C** *delicious, gorgeously, heartily, fantastically, rousing, huge, bizarre*

In my home town, the carnival is celebrated in a 1) **nice** way. People dress up in 2) **strange** costumes and pull 3) **nicely** decorated floats through the streets while bands play 4) **music** and people dance and sing **happily**. It all ends with a 6) **bonfire**, followed by an outdoor meal with 7) **nice** food.



- 6 Read the model below and correct the highlighted words. Write **S** for spelling, **WO** for word order, **G** for grammar, **P** for punctuation or **WW** for wrong word. What is the topic of each paragraph? Underline the topic sentence of each paragraph. What tenses have been used?

**Describe an event you have attended and explain why it was important to you.**

Excellent S

Our community decided that a sponsored bike ride would be an **excellent** way of raising money to send a 12-year-old local boy to America for major surgery. So, last July **in** a beautiful sunny day, hundreds of people gathered in Witherington town centre to **take place** in and support the event.

In the weeks leading up to the special day various preparations **were been made**. Meetings were held to plan the day itself, the route was agreed upon and officials were chosen to line the route. Sponsor forms were printed and distributed to participants so they could collect names and **addresses** of people wishing to sponsor them, and a huge advertising campaign was launched in and around the town centre to **rise** awareness of the event.

**The day it was** a huge success. **Early everyone woke** and gathered at the starting point outside the Town Hall. A huge hot-air balloon was launched and it hovered over the crowds and cyclists throughout the event. Moments before the starting pistol was fired, I glanced round to find myself **surrounded with** cyclists and bikes of all shapes and sizes. Cycling through the streets, I barely had time to notice my tiredness. **Crowds cheering** lined the route waving flags, banners and balloons. Thankfully, refreshments were handed to us as we rode **passed** various points along the way. Everyone managed to finish, and **were given all** a huge round of applause.

Never before I **had** realised how much can be achieved through cooperation. We not only managed to achieve our aim but also strengthened our sense of community spirit. All those **which** participated in the Witherington sponsored bike ride were left with a feeling that almost anything can be achieved through community effort and now we are planning another event to raise money for a new library.

**Participated** in this event also gave me a sense of personal satisfaction for having helped, in however small a way, to save another human being's life. This moving experience actually **effected** my future. I am now studying to become a nurse so that I can help those in need of medical care.

The event will be remembered and talked about for a long time to come. We were all delighted to **listen** that young William Stokes received his operation and is now **in the perfect** health. After all, deeds are better than words when people need help.



**DISCUSS & WRITE**

- 7 Look at the following composition task instructions and answer the questions below, then write the composition in 300-350 words.

*Describe a festival you have attended and explain its popularity.*

- 1 What are the **key words** in the task instructions?
- 2 What kind of festival can be described?
- 3 What tenses are required? Why?
- 4 What reasons can you think of in answer to the "explain" part? Give examples or justification for each reason.
- 5 What would a suitable paragraph plan for this composition task be?

## Appendices B: Interviews



University of Glasgow | Faculty of Education

The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

### *B1. Pilot study Writing Teacher's Interview Schedule*

Location:.....	Start
Time:.....	
Room No:.....	
Duration:.....	
Date:.....	Audio recorded

#### Interview Questions:

##### I. Questions about the teacher:

1. What preparations (training) have you received to help you in teaching English writing? What are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

##### Topic areas to me:

(a) Previous learning experience

(b) Self development

(c) Teacher's knowledge

2. What are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

3. What changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching? What prompted these changes?

4. In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in teaching writing?

**Topic areas to me:**

kinds of goals: pedagogical, personal, policy

students' expectations

Cultural values

**II. Questions about the teaching practice:**

**-Material:**

1. What sort of teaching materials do you use, for example authentic material or course book?

2. What do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach? Why do you select this material in particular?

**Topic area for me:**

(a) Teachers' pedagogic goals

(b) Students' needs/ expectations

**-Task:**

1. What areas do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary, writing extended paragraphs...etc? Why?

2. From your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

3. What are they useful for? What do they give the students the chance to improve/ practice?

4. To what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Why?

**Topic area for me:**

(a) Teachers' pedagogical knowledge of teaching writing or how the writing skill is learned.

(b) Teachers' awareness of student needs

**-The teachers' role:**

1. How do you present a writing activity?

**Topic area for me:**

(a) Theories of approaches for teaching writing

2. To what extent you change your role in the class at different stages, for example from controller to facilitator? What causes this change?

**Topic area for me:**

what roles are teachers aware of (controller, monitor, facilitator, assessor)

factors that affect their choice of roles

(c) Cultural expectations

**III. Questions about students:**

1. When do students write? What kind of writing is assigned?

**Topic area for me:**

(a) What are the views on the contribution of writing to language learning?

(b) Theories of approaches to teaching writing

2. Is it timed? How many drafts are collected?

**Topic area for me:**

(a) What is the best way to practise writing, to develop the skill of writing?

3. In what ways student involvement is encouraged in the lesson?

**Topic area to me:**

(a) Does the lesson plan allow for student activity?

(b) Is that a goal that the teacher has in mind when planning the lesson?

(c) What are the opportunities for improving the writing skill in the lesson structure?

4. To what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

What steps do you take to achieve this goal?

## ***B2. Writing Teachers Interview Guide***

### **I. Questions about the teacher:**

1. What preparations (training) have you received to enable you be a writing teacher?
- 2 As a professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?
3. What are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing? How do you deal with them?
4. What changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching? What prompts these changes?
5. In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in teaching writing?

### **II. Questions about teaching practice:**

#### **-Material:**

1. What sort of teaching materials do you use, for example authentic material or course book?
2. What do you take into consideration in selecting the material that you teach? Why do you select this material in particular?

#### **-Task:**

1. What tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary...etc?
- 2 In what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing? Can you give examples?
3. From your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students? What are they useful for?
4. To what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Can you give examples?



**-The teachers' role:**

1. How do you present a writing activity? Can you describe the stages?
2. To what extent do you change your role at those stages? What prompts this change?

**III. Questions about students:**

1. To what extent do you think that your students engage actively in the lesson? What steps do you take to achieve this goal?
2. At what stage do students write? What kind of writing is assigned?
3. Is it timed? Do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version? If so, how many drafts are collected?
4. How do you evaluate students' writing? How do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

1                    **B3: Interview Transcripts**

2    T1

Teacher: T1	Degree: MA/UK	Teaching Experience: 2 years
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3

4    R: thanks for accepting to answer this interview questions which are related to  
5    my PhD research and do you have any Questions before we start?

6    T1: No. you are welcome.

7    R: what preparations or training have you received to help you in teaching  
8    English writing?

9    T1: thank you. To be honest, I have no preparation course when I started  
10    teaching writing to my students.

11    R: what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

12    T1: I can say I go back to my previous study at university and from getting some  
13    experience in teaching English for more than ten years. From this one I try to do  
14    my best to help my students.

15    R: what about you're previous learning experience? You have mentioned the  
16    university stage. Does it affect the way you teach?

17    T1: that's go back to ten years ago but as experienced in fact teaching writing  
18    for two years now..

19    R: if we talk about the difficulties, what difficulties do you face here and how  
20    do you deal with them?

21    T1: I think I face many difficulties with my students. First of all, we can talk  
22    about the material that we use. The lack of materials. We have to work hard to  
23    avail or to apply the syllabus. Another difficulty that what is called we can say  
24    the level of students. But there is something like the individual differences  
25    between students.

26    R: the mixed level groups?

27    T1: yes or the mixed abilities. So these are the most difficult points because you  
28    cannot imagine/ manage to deal with all these differences.

29    R: so how do you deal with that?

30    T1: in fact, it is a difficult task but I did my best to find a material that match  
31    with most of them. I can not say all of them. I have tried to find a material that

- 32 match with most of the needs of students and as you know it is very difficult to  
33 make that balance.
- 34 R: so do you use the same material now:
- 35 T1: I use more than one. We can not use one book. As I said I teach different  
36 abilities or mixed groups so I use more than one book. Sometimes I go to the  
37 internet to find suitable material for them.
- 38 R: do you have any specific websites?
- 39 T1: it is a matter of chance. I go to common websites Google for example and  
40 write writing materials.
- 41 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
42 experience in teaching?
- 43 T1: to be honest. I'm not experienced. It is matter of two years. I'm trying to  
44 make the syllabus or the material suitable to students and easier how can they  
45 understand. To put them in the way, I think we are in the first step.
- 46 R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?
- 47 T1: when we talk about goals, you may for example come with your goals but  
48 when you face these difficulties so you have to change your goals according to  
49 the for example the ability of them. So now I will be satisfied or very happy if  
50 they for example by the end of this semester or this year write only one write a  
51 paragraph.
- 52 R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?
- 53 T1: first of all you need to take into account the level of your students in  
54 choosing the material. It is the most important factor in choosing the material.
- 55 R: what areas do you focus on in your teaching writing for example,  
56 grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary or writing extended  
57 paragraphs?
- 58 T1: I think I should for example go in two parallel ways. I should focus on  
59 accuracy and how to write well and convey their ideas to communicate with  
60 others. As you know writing is not accuracy. In addition you have to try to  
61 convey your message.
- 62 R: in what way do you think that will help students to develop their writing?
- 63 T1: I think when we focus for example, grammatical structure. In this case, we  
64 teach them how to write a correct sentence for example from this aspect or this  
65 side. And you know for example the teaching process is not a matter of one

66 year. We put them in this way and they will continue next year. This is one step  
67 and this is another problem. There is no connection.

68 R: what do you mean?

69 T1: there is no connection in the materials.

70 R: that is why you teach second year but you have to start with them from the  
71 beginning.

72 T1: I can say more about this one. You know more about the materials. I teach  
73 first year the same material that second year take or study and I do not know  
74 about next year or the year after.

75 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
76 teaching writing for students?

77 T1: this year we are so lucky. As I said we are so lucky that I found a book that is  
78 called College Writing. So in this book you may find some activities that might  
79 help you as the strategies of writing like brainstorming writing the first draft,  
80 rewrite, and proof reading.

81 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

82 T1: sorry?

83 R: for example, you have mentioned brainstorming and discussion. So do you  
84 use the activities as they are from the course books or you change them to suit  
85 the Libyan context?

86 T1: no here, you have to be realistic. You have to be objective. You can't for  
87 example follow the steps in this book. It is impossible or too difficult. I hope to  
88 use this ready material but it is difficult.

89 R: so you adjust them?

90 T1: I try to adjust them to make them appropriate.

91 R: how do you present a writing activity?

92 T1: I think when we talk about teachers' roles; I think that we have to get rid of  
93 the traditional way of teaching and traditional methods of teaching. We should  
94 for example give them tasks to do during the lecture. This is what I prefer to do  
95 for example with all teaching all skills not only writing.

96 R: to what extent do you change your role in the class at different stages, for  
97 example from controller to facilitator?

98 T1: no, sometimes controller for example and other time try to be facilitator for  
99 example to try to explain for them.

100 R: what causes this change? Why do you change your role from controller to  
101 facilitator in the same lesson?

102 T1: I think sometimes you are forced to do this. For your students need help so  
103 you have to help them.

104 R: when do students write and what kind of writing is assigned?

105 T1: what do you mean by when do students write?

106 R: I mean do they write in the class or you talk about writing in the class and  
107 give them tasks as homework?

108 T1: here, it is a matter of time for example. I try to ask them to write in the  
109 class and then I should give some tasks to do at home.

110 R: what kind of writing is usually assigned?

111 T1: It depends on the topic that we are studying for example sometimes  
112 description of building or description of town/ country. It depends on the topic.

113 R: is it timed writing?

114 T1: I think I should give them time, For example, 5-10 to write. As you know, the  
115 time is limited other wise they will waste it.

116 R: how many drafts are collected?

117 T1: as I have mentioned before it is matter of time, it is only one draft.

118 R: in what ways students' involvement is encouraged in the lesson? Do you  
119 encourage them to participate?

120 T1: I think it is not accepted to keep your students passive. They have to  
121 participate, to take part in the tasks. This is the good way to my knowledge.

122 R: is it one of your goals?

123 T1: yes, this is my goal. I will be so happy if they participate, take part. This  
124 makes the lesson more interesting.

125 R: and easier for you

126 T1: they will encourage me.

127 R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

128 T1: I'm not satisfied about what is happening these days for example in each  
129 group, in groups of 30-40 only two students take part. What about the others? It  
130 is big dilemma.

131 R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

132 T1: first of all, it is a matter of psychology so I try to encourage them and then  
133 try to find a suitable material to according to our culture, according to their  
134 level, according to their needs. So that you know students in this age take part  
135 in some topics. So I try to find those appropriate topics to make them active, to  
136 respond to my aims.

137 R: how do you evaluate the out come of students' writing?

138 T1: yes. I give them marks for example. For me it is not so important to think  
139 about marking. We have to think about their mistakes and how can we avoid  
140 these mistakes in the next task or in the future. That is the most important  
141 point.

142 R: how do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

143 T1: you can evaluate as you are marking on these activities gives to students so  
144 you can know that from this side.

145 R: thanks and one more question: if you have the chance to attend any workshop  
146 what skills would you like to improve as a writing teacher?

147 T1: as a writing teacher

148 R: yes

149 T1: I hope so if I have time to go to attend. It is another goal of me.

150 T2

Teacher: T2	Degree: MA/Libya	Teaching Experience: 10 years
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151

152 R: what preparations or training have you received to enable you being a writing  
153 teacher?

154 T2: In fact I did not receive any training course in writing but what I'm doing now  
155 is according to my experience in teaching for a long time.

156 R: as a professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching  
157 writing?

158 T2: yes. I depend on the internet and some text books.

159 R: can you give me examples?

160 T2: I use this book Learn to Write and College Writing

161 R: what about the internet resources?

162 T2: sometimes I use some websites that present some topics about writing.

163 R: do you use any specific websites?

164 T2: No, in general.

165 R: you did not receive any training what about your previous experience as  
166 student at the university?

167 T2: yes we had some courses about writing but in general not a specific one or  
168 training.

169 R: do you think that your previous experience affects the way you teach?

170 T2: to some extent

171 R: in what way?

172 T2: because I have been taught some information about writing so I could get  
173 some benefits from the courses at the Academy?

174 R: have you learned any specific activity that you use in your classes now?

175 T2: yes group work and peer work and things like that. That is what I am using  
176 now.

177 R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

178 T2: in Libya, the level of students they are very weak because they have not  
179 been taught writing in previous stages in primary school or secondly school so  
180 now they are suffering too much in writing. Also the large number of students in  
181 one class 35 to 40 students. You can not make your work as it should be.

182 R: how do you deal with these problems?

183 T2: I depend on working in groups. I divide them into groups. That is it.

184 R: what about the level. You have mixed level groups

185 T2: I have mixed levels some are ok others are so weak. That is why I mix them  
 186 into groups. For example, two by two; two good students and the other two  
 187 should be weak.

188 R: what changes have you made in you way of teaching writing as you gained  
 189 experience in teaching?

190 T2: really, I do my best to invent something new for them I try to help them by  
 191 explaining things first to simplify things and show the idea that they should  
 192 follow. Then, when I divide them into groups while they work, I give them some  
 193 advices.

194 R: like what? What kind of advice?

195 T2: I explain the situation for example if they are writing about for example car  
 196 accident I give them some vocabulary that can help them then I try to make  
 197 them write simple sentences by using these vocabulary to help them.

198 R: and why you have started using it?

199 T2: because I discovered that students level is so weak so I tried to help them in  
 200 another may that is why I use this method.

201 R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

202 T2: my goal is to make them learn at least how to write a good topic sentence  
 203 and good supporting sentence. That is it for this year.

204 R: so it is only the sentence level.

205 T2: yes because they have zero level.

206 R: have you done any test at the beginning of the course to know their level.

207 T2: No, later I did it and now they are better.

208 R: so how do you know that they have zero level?

209 T2: because through my work with them at the beginning I asked them to for  
 210 example give some sentences orally. I found that they could not do any thing. I  
 211 just asked about simple structure, simple sentence later. I started to try to  
 212 make something to help them to write.

213 R: you did not ask them to write?



214 T2: no I just asked them to write simple sentences or to describe themselves for  
 215 example orally. I discovered that their grammar is weak. This is so I decided to  
 216 start with them from the beginning now to write sentences.

217 R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or  
 218 course book?

219 T2: book I use a course book only 'Learn to Write' and 'College Writing'.

220 R: what do you take into consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

221 T2: the first criteria is students level and because that they are beginners.

222 R: we are talking about criteria of selection and you have mentioned students'  
 223 level.

224 T2: yes students' level.

225 R: and is it easy to find a material that suits their level.

226 T2: I'm doing my best to do that the material suits their level. I try to make  
 227 balance

228 R: what tasks do you focus on in your way of teaching writing?

229 T2: grammar and vocabulary grammatical structure first.

230 R: in what way that will help.

231 T2: I think if they can if the students can write good sentences good  
 232 grammatical sentences. This will help them to build a good paragraph.

233 R: do you think that will be helpful in writing.

234 T2: if the some students could write correct sentence ok he can make progress  
 235 in writing paragraph. The sentence is the corner stone of the paragraph so if he  
 236 does not know how to write a correct sentence he would never be able to write  
 237 a paragraph. This is my focus from the beginning to make them know about the  
 238 sentence how to write a good sentence. This is my idea later he will be able to  
 239 write a paragraph.

240 R: what do you mean by correct?

241 T2: free of grammatical mistakes and also free of misuse of punctuation marks.

242 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
 243 teaching writing?

244 T2: useful activities..... (Thinking). Work in groups.

245 R: what are they useful for?

246 T2: this makes students help each other ok and reduce the mistakes by  
247 themselves. That can help students to help each other. They can get useful  
248 information from each other. They do not mainly depend on the teacher.

249 R: do you find that useful since you have mixed level in one class? How do you  
250 divide them?

251 T2: my groups are mixture good students with weak students because this will  
252 help them students to gain benefits from their classmates.

253 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

254 T2: yes I change them according to the Libyan culture, I change the names and  
255 sometimes you may find vocabularies that are found in our society.

256 R: can you give me examples?

257 T2: for example for drinks I change whisky to milk or tea for religious  
258 prospective and our society culture and some names I change them

259 R: why?

260 T2: because in 'College Writing' there are some names from Asia so they are  
261 difficult for students to pronounce.

262 R: if we talk about your role in the class; how do you present a writing activity?

263 T2: I usually explain first then I ask them to write. Then I just try to help them  
264 to simplify things.

265 R: to what extent do you change your role in those stages?

266 T2: really I have different roles.

267 R: like what?

268 T2: for example sometimes I try to write a paragraph first on the board and ask  
269 them to write another paragraph like that just change some words.

270 R: and then when they start writing?

271 T2: I'm only facilitator.

272 R: what about being assessor.

273 T2: yes I evaluate all their work one by one.

274 R: what prompted the change in your role?

275 T2: because from time to time I find that students are still suffering. Still have  
 276 problems with some issues in writing so I try to change my role to help them and  
 277 give more information.

278 R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

279 T2: now I found that some of them are doing well. Others still but still they have  
 280 been motivated compared with beginning of the year there are some changes.

281 R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

282 T2: sorry

283 R: how do you try to motivate them?

284 T2: every lecture I give them one exercise to work on them and I give them some  
 285 work. That should be done as homework so every lecture they are trying to do  
 286 better.

287 R: and is it one of the criteria in selecting the material.

288 T2: yes exactly.

289 R: at what stage do your students write?

290 T2: at the end of the lecture after discussing and giving them an idea about the  
 291 topic ok and also I ask them to write a list of the vocabulary related then they  
 292 start writing.

293 R: what kind of writing do they usually write about?

294 T2: descriptive paragraphs.

295 R: only one kind?

296 T2: yes

297 R: and when they write in the class is it timed?

298 T2: yes exactly 20-25 minutes.

299 R: do you ask for more than one draft?

300 T2: no. Only one draft because before they start writing as I told you I ask them  
301 to list the words that they will use for example nouns, adjectives, adverbs  
302 related to the topic so every thing here is ready. They have just to write the  
303 draft.

304 R: and how do you evaluate their writing?

305 T2: I evaluate them about the grammatical structure, the punctuation mark, the  
306 content, and spelling mistakes.

307 R: about college writing do you teach them the whole book or you will be  
308 selective?

309 T2: selective to suit their level.

310 R: Can you give me examples of the units that you decided to cover?

311 T2: yes. The structure of the paragraph, development of the paragraph, and  
312 descriptive and process paragraph.

313 R: only three units and what about the rest of the book

314 T2: If I got time, I will go through but the time is not enough. We are at the end  
315 of the year and also I started with them late.

316 R: if you have the chance in the future to attend a workshop about teaching  
317 writing, what skills you would improve as writing teacher?

318 T2: really writing reports because I do not have good experience in writing  
319 reports.

320 T3

Teacher: T3	Degree: PhD/ India	Teaching Experience: 15 years
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321

322 R: thanks for accepting to answer this interview questions and if you have  
323 questions that are not clear please ask?

324 T3: I do not have any questions.

325 R: what preparations or training have you received to help you be a writing  
326 teacher?

327 T3: first of all I am postgraduate in English language and literature. I have my  
328 Bachelor degree in teaching. I am specialised to teach language. I got Master in  
329 Education. Besides I have done master degree in literature. I am proficient in I  
330 also I have done my doctorate in the teaching of literature in using the language  
331 or integrating language with literature.

332 R: what about the training courses?

333 T3: I also had some special language training courses in India. In four universities  
334 which deals exclusively with language skills.

335 R: does that include teaching writing?

336 T3: yes writing is used in every branch of the training course held there.

337 R: as professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching  
338 writing?

339 T3: The main sources here available in Libya are some books. Some books are  
340 available. But other sources to great extent are by myself. I use mostly the Rain  
341 and Martin text which is exclusively tent for teaching language which also  
342 contains a special section for writing. The other sources that I use are the  
343 secondary school text books which the students already gone through which are  
344 skilfully drafted by the British linguists. These are the only sources available  
345 here. A part from these I create my own source depending on the need of my  
346 students.

347 R: can you give me examples of the sources that you have created?

348 T3: the ones that I created here mainly basics. The basic skills that students lack  
349 here: punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, essay writing which is available  
350 or useful in daily usage for practical purposes.

351 R: What are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

352 T3: the great difficultly that I am facing is with the students. They lack basic  
353 fundamental skills of reading and writing. Some of students have the capacity to  
354 understand the language spoken they are also able to speak. They have the first  
355 two skills listening and speaking but it is disappointing that most of them are  
356 very poor in both reading and writing. The basic skills of writing like  
357 capitalization, punctuation marks, creating a simple structure of a sentence is  
358 lacking in them.

359 R: how do you deal with them?

360 T3: the classroom I have been explaining to them through the lecture that they  
361 have to go into entire process of this course in which they are weak. Explaining  
362 to them again and again with many examples. How capitalization is used, where  
363 to use punctuation marks like full stop, coma. Writing mainly depends on the

364 knowledge of punctuation and capitalisation fundamentally they do not have the  
365 knowledge of these skills. So I have deal again, it could have been better and  
366 easier for me if have been dealt with properly in the school level. They came to  
367 graduation level without these basic skills and I am struggling again to revise  
368 them in classroom to make them understand where to use these skills through  
369 many, many examples. This one point, the other difficulty that I face is mostly  
370 the spelling part. They are writing very bad spellings. Some of them are writing  
371 English. It is really disappointing to see their spellings in after high schools. So I  
372 am trying to deal with these areas capitalisation, punctuation, and spelling.  
373 Once they gain some ground on these it will be easier for me to work on higher  
374 skills.

375 R: all the students suffer from these problems or a few of them?

376 T3: earlier when I notice some of them speak fine English I thought that they will  
377 be good in reading and writing skills too. But after the mid term examination  
378 when I had come through their steps I found that even the bright students is no  
379 able to write perfect spelling or perfect punctuation marks. Of course some of  
380 them are good but not up to the mark or perfect as I can say.

381 R: What changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
382 experience in teaching?

383 T3: the same answer I would give you the changes that I am making in writing  
384 skills, give them dictation often. I write the mistakes that they write on the  
385 blackboard and ask them to come to the blackboard, have check to the mistakes  
386 and correct the mistakes so that even the other students see, notice the  
387 mistakes that are made and how the mistakes are corrected. So mostly I'm  
388 exposing them to the blackboard writing.

389 R: what prompted these changes in your way of teaching?

390 T3: so their writing prompted me to make certain changes. Their writing is so  
391 poor that I need to step to their level and make some practical changes that are  
392 really needed by them. Spelling, grammatical mistakes, paragraph writing are  
393 the areas in which I make some changes required for them this being dealt  
394 seriously through writing books and through some activities.

395 R: in this teaching context what are the goals that you try to achieve?

396 T3: so the major goal is not of high standard since I am stopping their basic  
397 level. The major aim of writing here is mostly the use of capitalization properly,  
398 the use of punctuation marks properly and very specially to improve their  
399 spelling and then gradually. I am going to make them write simple sentences,  
400 simple paragraphs and at a later stage, I want them to write an essay with the  
401 help of those basics in which they will become proficient.

402 R: what sort of teaching material that you teach, for example authentic material  
403 or course book?

404 T3: there is no authentic material or course book preparing assigned here for  
405 this university. *We have to prepare our material.* So I am not straight away  
406 teach them literature, drama, novel, poetry when I have to deal mainly with  
407 what is required for them. I can not ask them to swim in an ocean if they do not  
408 know how to swim in a pool. The material which is used is simple written  
409 English. I ask them to write autobiography about themselves, I ask them to write  
410 a biography about the person they like may be their family members because  
411 they will have some knowledge about them. I also give them vocabulary in order  
412 to prepare them for better English in order to make them understand literature  
413 course books which they have to study besides writing. I also give them certain  
414 vocabularies which are useful for them for daily usage.

415 R: can you tell me the title of the book you are using?

416 T3: yes, depending on the topic that I select I go to the internet sometimes. I  
417 use a newspaper; sometimes I use geography or English language material from  
418 the internet.

419 R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

420 T3: my criteria of selection are always depending on the need of students, the  
421 need at present is the basics, fundamentally the basics for the first three  
422 months. Once the basics are revised and dealt with. The second term I am  
423 dealing with paragraph writing, essay writing, autobiography, biography, letters  
424 and so on.

425 R: so you select the book according to students needs? Have you done needs  
426 analysis?

427 T3: in the beginning I asked them to write a few points about themselves and  
428 especially after the mid term examination through their answers I found that  
429 they are lacking the basic skills in English language so this is helping me to  
430 choose the material required for them.

431 R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing?

432 T3: After seeing their level in English language, I have decided fundamentally to  
433 focus on basics so I have started with the use of capital letters, the use of  
434 punctuation marks then the use of spelling, grammar structure, the range of  
435 vocabulary that will be useful in their writing partly in literature.

436 R: In what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing?

437 T3: obviously that will help them to write correct spelling, correct grammar and  
438 using correct vocabulary. Besides fundamentally they will know how to use  
439 capitalisation, use punctuation marks properly.

440 R: so you focus more on accuracy?

441 T3: of course this is for accuracy. This writing skill is not an ordinary easy skill. It  
442 is not as easy as listening, speaking or reading. This is a skill which is obviously  
443 to be written on paper. It is evidence only from script we will be able to  
444 understand whether they had a writing skill or not so I have to concentrate  
445 mostly on basics and from that I can go a step higher in writing paragraphs or  
446 writing essays or letters.

447 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
448 teaching writing for students?

449 T3: in writing what I use is I write a few sentences on the board and ask students  
450 to correct. I ask them to mark a punctuation mark in blank sentence. I also if it  
451 is a paragraph or essay writing I ask them to bring points from home. So it is like  
452 home assignment. When they gather these points and bring them to the class. I  
453 ask them to write them in the board in the presence of every body and those  
454 points that are written in the board I ask them to separate them into suitable  
455 paragraphs and ultimately we design an essay from the points in that are the  
456 classroom. Within the classroom itself I think the students will be able to  
457 comprehend how to create a paragraph, how to use different points to write a  
458 suitable paragraph and create an essay.

459 R: do not you think that it is too late for third year to focus on punctuation or  
460 spelling?

461 T3: yes. I thought that they will have great standard in school level so that they  
462 will be able to deal with a higher level in graduate level. I'm told be officials  
463 here first and for most to suit their level. Writing is a part of every other  
464 subject: drama, novel, literature or what ever the subject is. They have to write  
465 on a paper during the examinations. So writing is the evidence of their final skill.  
466 When I've noticed, observed that they lack these fundamental basic skills. There  
467 is no fun in dealing with higher topic that is what I said I can not ask them to  
468 swim in the ocean when they are unable to swim in a pond or small pool. So they  
469 need to learn the basics perfectly. It is really disappointing that we need we  
470 have to teach basics at graduation level but it is what otherwise if I will ask  
471 them to write an essay none of them will succeed.

472 R: To what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

473 T3: that what I have spoken is according to the Libyan context.

474 R: I mean when you use those activities do you change them according to the  
475 Libyan context?

476 T3: I can't use it as it is. It is very, very hard for students to comprehend so I  
477 have to make required changes before using the content.

478 R: can you give me examples?



479 T3: for example I ask them to write an essay about Libya. I took them from a  
480 text or from Atlas. It would be different from what are they able to write. So I  
481 make necessary changes.

482 R: so those changes are according to students' level? Not culture?

483 T3: yes. Students level and at the same time in the information, the content  
484 they know the content it is not new for them. What Libya is. If I am going to ask  
485 them to write it in Arabic they will do it but when they have to write it in  
486 English they need the vocabulary suitable. So in the class, first we discuss then I  
487 ask them to write their points. And through their points I give them the suitable  
488 vocabulary to frame a sentence with the knowledge of Libya that they have. For  
489 example like the words like population, government the words like geography,  
490 borders, currency, region. This is the vocabulary that they lack and when it is  
491 expressed they write it but in wrong spelling and I help them to write proper  
492 essay with the help of this vocabulary and this content.

493 R: How do you present a writing activity? Can you describe the stages?

494 T3: for example today when I was talking to them in an essay. Some of them  
495 they do not know the meaning of essay. Some of them know it. Others do not  
496 know. So I needed to explain to them what an essay is. So before dealing with  
497 essay writing, I will tell them what a paragraph is. So I go step by step. First, I  
498 tell them complete information about an essay when I ask them to divide them  
499 into proper paragraphs. So those points need to be rearranged in different  
500 paragraphs to form ultimate essay and if they will be able to write five to six  
501 paragraphs of course with certain mistakes but ultimately it goes well and I hope  
502 that they understood and they will be able to write better essays later.

503 R: To what extent do you change your role at those stages?

504 T3: I have to change my role in different angles sometimes such a friend,  
505 sometimes such a parent and sometimes as a teacher and sometimes as a taught  
506 master mainly to have their attention and discipline in the classroom. It is really  
507 hard for me. As I am a foreigner I can not impose serious punishment on them. I  
508 do not; my role is not to chase them out of the classroom. I keep them, I try to  
509 cancel them make them involved in the learning process.

510 R: what affects your role in the class?

511 T3: mainly discipline, sorry mainly indiscipline and lack of interest those prompts  
512 the change.

513 R: you've mentioned teacher and friend in which stage you will be a teacher.

514 T3: when I want to give them information when I want them to learn something  
515 very seriously. I become the teacher and when there is indiscipline when they  
516 show lack of interest and when they are bored then I take the role of friend and  
517 try to be a little bit easy and try to integrate interest in them.

518 R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

519 T3: .....(pause) the motivation of writing they most of them just sit and watch  
520 the fun like audience or spectators. This problem is mainly with the boys. Some  
521 of the girls who are really enthusiastic, they sit in the first pinches so I  
522 understand that they are keen in writing. Some come late, sit behind and talk  
523 and that causes a lot of disturbance. I can neither ask them to go out nor ask  
524 them seriously even if they show seriousness it is only for few minutes so....  
525 writing g, motivation for writing. Some do not bring notebooks and come without  
526 pens and pencils. I go to each and every individual. I ask them. I request them. I  
527 tell them politely to take down notes at least, the ones on the board. So it will  
528 be useful for them in the examination. It will be useful for revision. So I do oral  
529 encouragement and in certain cases I ask them to write forcefully even by  
530 borrowing some papers from neighbours.

531 R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

532 T3: whatever is written in the blackboard they write and whatever I ask them to  
533 write in the classroom also is written by them both in their note book and in the  
534 blackboard. The black board is not only used by me. It is also used mostly by  
535 students. I always involve to the blackboard mostly the weak students to do the  
536 writing practice. I do not involve the clever students though they are always  
537 ready to write anything they want anything that I ask them for. So the stages  
538 that require students are everything in everyday and every moment. What ever  
539 is written in the black board or in the discussion has to be written in their note  
540 books and they are also given home assignment which they write, bring and show  
541 me but this is not done by all students a few of them respond properly.

542 R: At what stage do your students write?

543 T3: I ask them to write on the topic which I will deal with a head in the next  
544 lecture. Ask them to bring certain points gathering here and there. That will  
545 make them involved in writing. So they will gain both the knowledge of the topic  
546 and as well as the writing skill.

547 R: can you give me an example?

548 T3: one is about an auto biography which I dealt with in the previous lecture. I  
549 asked them to bring points about themselves. To give them thought. Some of  
550 them bring points in the classroom. With the help of each I made them  
551 understand how to write an essay with the help of those points. Write them in  
552 different paragraphs similarly about their country Libya. I make them to do some  
553 points that they might have learned in school level or from any other source.  
554 The points are written in the blackboard presents to the whole classroom and  
555 they were written into an essay.

556 R: you say write an essay what kind of essay they usually write?

557 T3: mostly, they write autobiography which is an essay a biography is also an  
558 essay. Ask them to write about their own country. It is an essay. Normally I ask

559 them to write essays which are informative, which are given knowledge and in  
560 the future I would like to take them slowly to literature so they will be able to  
561 write about different writers or about a book or a novel or a poem.

562 R: is it timed?

563 T3: time fixed. Some of them are able to write very fast, some of them take  
564 time so I wait for every one more or less to complete it. And then depending on  
565 the time of the lecture some of them are able to write others are not able to  
566 complete it.

567 R: do you ask for more than one draft?

568 T3: no I do not go to redrafting any assignment only a single draft. I know if they  
569 will repeat it they will have the same mistakes so I focus on single draft.

570 R: do they write in the class?

571 T3: they write both classroom assignment and home assignment obviously the  
572 ones that will help them to improve their skills in the future.

573 R: is it related to what they will study next year?

574 T3: I don't know. At the university we do not have systemized syllabus for  
575 writing.

576 R: Are you satisfied about the course?

577 T3: I am really satisfied about students who are able to acquire these skills  
578 which will help them in the future to write better English and write the needed  
579 English in other subjects like literature, grammar, poetry and other subjects.

580 R: if you have the chance to attend writing workshop, what skills would you like  
581 to improve as writing teacher?

582 T3: yes, I will definitely attend and it would elaborate the writing skill and it  
583 will be useful for literature.

584 T4

Teacher: T4	Degree: MA/ Philippine	Teaching Experience: 8 years
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585

586 R: thank you for allowing me to observe your class and for accepting to answer  
587 my interview questions which are related to my PhD study?

588 T4: you are very much welcome.

589 R: thank you. First of all, I would like to ask about the preparations that you  
590 received as writing teacher. What preparations (training) have you received to  
591 help you in teaching English writing?

592 T4: well, based on my experience, I have attended so many trainings in  
593 Philippine. I have attended seminars so that helped me so much to achieve my  
594 goals in writing and helped me to use those training with regard to my teaching.

595 R: what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

596 T4: when it comes to the main source of ideas of course best ideas that we can  
597 use is the experience especially for students. When I have started teaching  
598 writing, first thing to do is to ask them to write about their first hand  
599 experience. That they encountered in their life. When they were child, their  
600 childhood and their adulthood and during the time when they are mature.

601 R: so you gained a lot of ideas from your experience?

602 T4: of course. Because it will help to sort out their ideas. They should be  
603 familiar with those experiences.

604 R: do you have any other sources?

605 T4: apart from experience, I depend on Internet.

606 R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing? And how do you  
607 deal with them

608 T4: actually there are so many, many difficulties when it comes to English  
609 writing. First, the grammar. So according to my students most of them have no  
610 experience with regards to English when they were in primary and secondary  
611 schools. For them, now only they have English. But I sorted out that though they  
612 find it difficult so they can even adjust themselves to the situation. Because  
613 they are trying to learn more and more based on what activities I give them  
614 every day. Actually, this difficulty might not be difficulty any more. Since these  
615 students are really active as you have seen based on your observation. They are  
616 trying to answer, cooperate, to maintain the discipline. And that is their purpose  
617 because they would like to learn. They like to learn how to write good grammar  
618 and good context.

619 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
620 experience in teaching? What prompted these changes?

621 T4: we have as teachers I need to teach them the basic grammar as you have  
622 seen based on your observation, that we talked about verb and from that the  
623 concept of course and they need to use it in writing. That is why I made group  
624 activity for aim to use all the input they have acquires in that activity. And you  
625 know, I am very glad knowing that those students can learn and even use good

626 English. So ok that some students find mistakes. They find errors. You know  
627 through those mistakes and errors they learn so much and that is good for them.

628 R: so they are sign of learning for you?

629 T4: Mistakes are sign of learning because you know that you learn from your  
630 mistakes.

631 R: In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in  
632 teaching writing?

633 T4: my goals for my students, well I want them to learn to write correctly. I  
634 want them to know that writing is really interesting. For a teacher like me of  
635 course the goal is to let them write. To let them sort out ideas and use these  
636 ideas in real life situations because it is easier to write if the situation is real.

637 R: what do you mean by write correctly?

638 T4: write without grammatical mistakes.

639 R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example, authentic material or  
640 course book?

641 T4: when it comes to materials. When it comes to references, we have to use  
642 different resources; good books that really suits the ability. Of course, I use  
643 pictures. You know that they are of great help to students. They can even  
644 manage, they can even get ideas. They can even write stories or essays based on  
645 what they have seen in the pictures and they can apply this and what they have  
646 seen in the pictures on real situations.

647 R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?  
648 Why do you select this material in particular?

649 T4: I take of course we need to know the level of students and ability of  
650 students. If the students are intelligent of course you need material that be best  
651 for them. For students who are left behind, of course you have to adjust the  
652 material to be used. But In my groups, group A and B, I have two groups here.  
653 They are very good. Some of them have problems but I assure you I can say that  
654 student have enough time to adjust themselves to the situation because they  
655 would like also to join with students activity and they can follow what ever  
656 activity I have given them and so nice for them to know about it.

657 R: that is why you have used group work to encourage them work with each  
658 other?

659 T4: Of course in group work they can adjust themselves to the situation and you  
660 know that in group work that is the benefit for them to give them ideas to  
661 impact their knowledge and those students who are listening to them the one  
662 who is exert in the group and also I am doing individual activity but individual

663 activities. It seems that it is a little bit boring. So in group work they feel that  
664 they are excited. There is an excitement in group activity. Actually I do it in all  
665 lectures because it is really of great help. They can develop self respect and of  
666 course socialization and cooperation. Those are the values that should be  
667 developed with students.

668 R: what areas do you focus on in your writing, for example, grammatical  
669 structure, the use of range of vocabulary, writing extended paragraphs? Why?

670 T4: of course in writing we must focus on first on grammar. That is why we have  
671 to start from the very basic. Because how can you say that the student will be  
672 good if the grammar is not good. And through that when it comes to vocabulary.  
673 I ask students to use dictionaries in writing. I will let them open dictionaries  
674 because it helps them a lot especially in solving their problems in ... (Pause).

675 R: in spelling?

676 T4: yes in spelling. That is one thing. Mainly at the beginning they find it hard to  
677 spell but they have a lot of ideas. They love writing. So the more they write the  
678 more they will learn. And that is why so it is not just they are in the corner.  
679 Ideas are really run and I want them to give more emphasis on idea so it is not  
680 the structure. So I let them feel free so that they could get a very good output.

681 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
682 teaching writing?

683 T4: actually the activity should be always be based on the objective for the day.  
684 On the day activity. So I usually use Group work, dialogue, real life situation  
685 based on what they have seen/heard on TV on their experience, based on what  
686 happened in the past, their past experience, and of course what is going to  
687 happen every day.

688 R: what are they useful for?

689 T4: actually, those are very useful since when it comes to real life situation. So  
690 it is real life situation. They can improve themselves. They can adjust  
691 themselves to the situation.

692 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

693 T4: so I am so sorry that I do not know the culture of you. I am trying to adapt  
694 myself to the situation and the culture of you I am still learning. I am trying to  
695 let my students adjust themselves to the situation with those activities so that  
696 they will be able to maintain their position as human being and to make  
697 themselves aware of the different situations that are going to happen here. And  
698 of course they could be able to apply what they have learned based on what  
699 they have learned in the university.

700 R: how do you present a writing activity?

701 T4: I usually start from general to a specific because I found out that I cannot be  
702 facilitator here. Why? Because students need help as a teacher that is my role  
703 to help them, based on the observation, I can say that students can even  
704 manage themselves based on what I have given them based on the activities but  
705 as I said that is general. It means to say I am going to present it in board and so  
706 as the lesson goes by students might even understand and learn the basic  
707 knowledge and be able to use it in writing. And that is a guided activity. Because  
708 you cannot allow them to do it alone. It must be guided. This is the training  
709 ground for them they must be able to use what they have learned correctly  
710 based on what is happening in the day to day activity.

711 R: to what extent you change your role in the class at different stages, for  
712 example, from controller to facilitator?

713 T4: it depends on the ability of the students. Of course If they are really  
714 intelligent you can be a facilitator but as I said based on what you have observed  
715 and based on my experience I need to be controller at the beginning and  
716 facilitator at the end to let them do it alone. Why? You cannot let them do it  
717 alone. But sooner or later, I can assure that the teacher can be a facilitator only  
718 and my role there is to let them know how to be facilitating. And that is a good  
719 start so I cannot say that I might do it in three months, I am saying by the end of  
720 the school year, my students can do it alone and my role is just a facilitator.

721 R: when do students write?

722 T4: of course, generally, they write in the classroom and at home.

723 R: as homework?

724 T4: as homework so very necessarily for students. It is crucial for students to  
725 write after the discussion, how can you approve that students learned from  
726 those topics from grammar, experience if they will not write some thing about a  
727 given topic or about grammar that they have acquired for a day and as I said  
728 they should not only write in the classroom to give more emphasis to them. They  
729 should even write at home based on the different writing it can be based on  
730 their experience, based on birthday celebration, based on what they have seen  
731 on TV. Different topics they have read from magazine and what more. .

732 R: is it timed writing? How many drafts are collected?

733 T4: of course time should be allotted to them. Why? If they will get longer time  
734 they might not be able to write. They have to be able to think quickly. And when  
735 it comes to writing, you need not to spend much time because time should be  
736 divided into different activities.

737 R: and how many drafts are assigned?

738 T4: When it comes to number of drafts of course and generally they should write  
739 number of drafts as long as they can find errors.

740 R: in what ways students' involvement is encouraged in the lesson?

741 T4: Actually, when it comes to involvement, I let all my students to be involved  
742 in the activity. I do not want my students to be tented because it is a writing  
743 class so I let them speak when they speak because through speaking they will  
744 learn so much even. Even for pronunciation, I am very much aware of  
745 pronunciation. Through pronouncing the word clearly, they will be able to write  
746 it definitely correct. And my students are encouraged to do so because they  
747 already my techniques.

748 R: to what extent, do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

749 T4: I do present different activities so that I can assure 100% the maximum  
750 participation of the students. Before, during my first time here in Libya. In my  
751 first day I find out that most of students are shy and when I collected their  
752 names they smiled to me and said no English. But I do not believe that they do  
753 not have any English from the start because why they are here? To learn and to  
754 be improved and so I decided to use different activities. From them I will be  
755 able to let my students participate actively. Everyday I have a goal that they  
756 should participate. Those who kept sitting making noise. I know that those need  
757 more attention. I let them stand, speak up, say something about the activity. I  
758 believe the more they participate the more that they learn and everything not  
759 only in writing even in my conversation class I do this. I am very grateful to them  
760 because I found that here in Libya that students in this university really improve  
761 and I am so proud of them. And I would like to say thank you so much for  
762 observing my class. They were really excited about seeing you there.

763 R: one more question: would you like to attend any workshops about teaching  
764 writing?

765 T4: of course this is to enhance my ability in writing and to be able to use it to  
766 my students because I believe that the more seminars I will attend will be of  
767 great help to me in the future.

768 R: what skills you would like to improve as writing teacher?

769 T4: more ideas about how to deal with students' level.

770 T5:

Teacher: T5	Degree: MA/ Iraq	Teaching Experience: 7 years
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771

772 R: what preparations or training have you received to enable you be a writing  
773 teacher?



774 T5: I'm not a writing teacher but I graduated from college of education and we  
775 are qualified to teach different subjects. Got my BA in applied linguistics  
776 in...(thinking) in 1998 exactly at that time or since that time I was teaching  
777 grammar, translation subjects like these in the field but writing really I found it  
778 is a matter of experience beside it is a matter of interest in writing because it is  
779 not a matter only to be studies. This subject needs should to gain from both  
780 teacher and interest at the same time. The teacher first should be highly  
781 educated because he is let's say, the master of the situation. He has sometimes  
782 to select the topic to direct the students and should be very intellectual and  
783 have enough experience and control over so many topics related with our daily  
784 life or lets say educational topics from different fields besides the students also  
785 should be interested in this matter and to be qualified also that especially in our  
786 countries, students should acquire rules of grammar, should acquire many  
787 vocabularies to use them in a proper way and lets say to make use of the  
788 vocabularies their rules then to have sentences than building paragraphs.

789 R: what about training courses? Have you received any courses here or in Iraq?

790 T5: no I did not.

791 R: so what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

792 T5: the main sources..... I really make use of some books, different books, and  
793 different sources.

794 R: could you please give some examples?

795 T5: such as Oxford books.

796 R: what is the title of the book?

797 T5: the title is' Oxford guide for writing by Tomas Scan. This book as I think is  
798 very important for students in the lets say first steps in writing because it has  
799 fundamental concepts about writing, some information that should to be  
800 acquired by students about how to write, kinds of writing, strategies, mechanics  
801 of writing...things like that. All these information that should to be acquired by  
802 students of writing then I got another resource. Different resources not only  
803 from books but depending on the internet. There are some websites that are  
804 really useful. In presenting tests you can also you can find so many simple  
805 information about how to direct students about certain topics and to reinforce  
806 their response.

807 R: can you give examples of those websites?

808 T5: examples so many. I do not remember them exactly. They are stored in my  
809 laptop.

810 R: What are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing for students?

811 T5: first of all, the first to be discussed here is that the syllabus itself, there is  
812 no syllabus intended for teaching writing it mainly depends on the teacher  
813 himself/herself to choose, or select or collect the topics or subjects to be taught  
814 and to be presented to students so the teacher should not be, as I think, should  
815 not be left like this to choose and select what he wants to but there should the  
816 teacher be a general syllabus to be followed by all teachers and that syllabus  
817 should be systemised and written by those are specialist in curriculum design to  
818 have a general curriculum lets say to be taught in Aljmaherea in general. This is  
819 one of the obstacles or difficulties that students or teachers of writing may face.  
820 The second one depends on or appears when teaching students here. First, as I  
821 said before that they are not interested in writing. Some of them of course not  
822 all of them. Besides writing this subject needs so many information about daily  
823 life for example activities topics related to politics, history. It needs  
824 encomuniacion of experience and information and all these information should  
825 be acquired by students of writing. So I do not really for me I do not encourage  
826 teaching writing at early stages of learning. This should come at late stages of  
827 learning. For example, not in first year or second year but should be in third  
828 year or fourth year to have sort of students that are able to think to write to  
829 have got knowledge in syntax to be able to build sentences, paragraphs to be  
830 able to choose topics because the process of writing demands strategies and  
831 those strategies are not easy to acquire. For those students they acquire within  
832 the passage of time and experience. So it needs time.

833 R: how do you deal with these problems?

834 T5: to deal with this problem I have to use different resources and I think  
835 sometimes I find my self to be obliged to be very close to my students to specify  
836 their level and lets say to simplify some of the material to the way all students  
837 able to acquire at least the minimum for should be given to them and to select  
838 sometimes subjects that are able to be understood or matching the level of  
839 students. That is the only solution to this problem.

840 R: since you are teaching different levels at which level do you focus more?

841 T5: any way I try to focus on the intermediate level and the beginners. I try  
842 sometimes to increase their level or try to upgrade them and those who are  
843 clever students I try to deal with them in isolation.

844 R: how do you do that?

845 T5: Yes... sometimes I find myself obliged to divide them into three groups but in  
846 indirect way. I don't let the others feel that there is difference or gap between  
847 them. A group of students of course I do not select them randomly but I divide  
848 them according to their level so a group for intermediate students and a group  
849 for intermediate students and a group for weak students and advanced students  
850 or clever students or highly motivated students. Then I give them a subject or  
851 task that suits their level.

852 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
853 experience in teaching?

854 T5: what I do I try to discuss what they wrote some paragraphs from their  
855 writing? Then students write it on the board and try to discuss the topic  
856 sentences, supporting sentences and what rules of grammar and what mistakes  
857 or spelling mistakes. All these are going to be discussed in front of students and  
858 sometimes I try to create an argument between students to make use of it and  
859 to modify their writing.

860 R: what causes this change?

861 T5: this is let's say a recent procedure that I used with my students. In the  
862 previous time let's say I only give them a topic to write about. Then after  
863 writing about these topics I receive their papers and try to score to put marks  
864 and try to collect their mistakes spelling or grammar and give them some new  
865 ideas about the topic but I saw that they did not make use of that so I decided to  
866 present something for them so I decided to present a topic for them on the  
867 board or a headline all right just to write about it a paragraph or two about it  
868 but in front of me by motivating all the students to participate to take part in  
869 writing about it by giving them tips about writing. Guidelines or tips I saw this in  
870 a lesson presented in the internet in this way so I divide the board in to two lines  
871 or into two divisions so one division is for tips and the other is for writing the  
872 paragraphs. The one devoted for tips that one should be thought of with tips  
873 concerning with the paragraphs that we will write for example I gave them to  
874 write about the advantages of using the Internet. Tips were searching, browsing  
875 ok and writing very simple sentences about that sorry about these points,  
876 chatting, things like that key words that we have to start with. Then we are  
877 going to make sentences. Searching I tell the students ok who has a sentence  
878 about searching how to look at something in the internet ok try to look at  
879 something in the internet so we try to produce sentences and I try to give marks  
880 to those who participate then after

881 R: what prompts this change?

882 T5: I started to use these as long as our students shouldn't be in isolated from  
883 the recent development or recent technology available for each person so we  
884 should make use of this facility to raise their standard and to show lets say them  
885 how to deal with these lets say with this technology and how to be able to take  
886 materials that are useful for them or subjects from the internet and to be to put  
887 it in application in their subjects which are being studied. So the first thing I  
888 started to show them these websites but of course we do not have the internet  
889 in the university so I try to store a complete store these websites and show them  
890 sometimes without data show so I show it to each group how to deal with this  
891 site then they go to this site from their sites and bring so many new things. So  
892 that is just to raise the standard and motivating them. I think motivation is an  
893 important factor to drive students to be very active.

894 R: In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in  
895 teaching writing?

896 T5: to create or lets say to find students who are at least able to express  
897 themselves on paper and may be in the future we find some of them are good  
898 writers or they can write in scientific way in a way that can let others pay

899 attention to them so I can say writing is sometimes important to modify or  
 900 improve the life and writing is sometimes the only way to improve our thought  
 901 so I can say that kind of students in the future.

902 R: What sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or  
 903 course book?

904 T5: as I told you I depend on different materials. Sometimes I have topics from  
 905 my own. Sometimes it is according to the situation. I select a strategy to be  
 906 presented for students sometimes I leave writing go back to grammar and discuss  
 907 some of grammar to develop their method of writing or let's say to develop  
 908 students to write about certain topic to make use of certain topics.

909 R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?  
 910 Why do you select this material in particular?

911 T5: I think I should answer the second part of your question.

912 R: why do you select this material in particular?

913 T5: yes. I select the material according to students' interest and sometimes  
 914 according to the situation. The situation imposes certain material.

915 R: what do you mean by the situation?

916 T5: the situation the students are interested about something so I try to  
 917 motivate them. So find my self obliged to give them something that makes them  
 918 interested.

919 R: like what?

920 T5: for example, in paragraph writing ok I might create or play a game with  
 921 them like giving two groups the same topic then giving them tips about the topic  
 922 and pushing them to write then after writing I am going to compare the ideas to  
 923 evaluate which group was better that the other and then students will gain  
 924 marks for that and sometimes giving them very small gifts like pencils.

925 R: do you consider students' needs?

926 T5: I sometimes try to present different topics and ask them to speak about  
 927 them. First to make a discussion about them before writing and to think which  
 928 topics has gain their interest. So the one that I see that they are interested  
 929 about I select it.

930 R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing?

931 T5: I focus on grammar, spelling mistakes and discussing the ideas and  
 932 vocabulary being discussed in that subject in that concept.

933 R: in what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing? Can  
934 you give examples??

935 T5: first of all in the early steps we have to focus on, as I think, I am not sure  
936 about, according to my experience we should focus on vocabulary. Then after  
937 increasing the storage of vocabulary we should focus on grammar to put those  
938 vocabularies into patterns.

939 R: to form sentences?

940 T5: yes to form sentences. So I find my self really interested in teaching students  
941 and provide them with the vocabulary concerned with the topic to write about it  
942 then sometimes obliged guiding students to write two sentences.

943 R: do you think that will be helpful?

944 T5: yes after finishing writing I try to correct what they wrote and show them  
945 where exactly they commit their mistakes, so they mainly commit mistakes in  
946 grammar. Mainly their mistakes are grammatical mistakes.

947 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
948 teaching writing for students?

949 T5: the shared information, writing about topics that have common interest  
950 among students, making games on board, asking them questions about topics,  
951 discussing with them topics orally then writing about these topics using some  
952 writing some sentences with mistakes in punctuation marks and asking them to  
953 correct them or to provide them with punctuation marks, writing sentences with  
954 grammatical mistakes and to be corrected.

955 R: what are they useful for?

956 T5: to develop their writing and to raise their standard in grammar and  
957 vocabulary. As I see those are the only ways that we have to develop their  
958 writing.

959 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Can  
960 you give examples?

961 T5: I am really following the eclectic method. Sometimes but not all the time I  
962 change these are from the beginning I try to choose sentences which are acuntic  
963 with our culture, traditions, and values and sometimes if I could not find such  
964 sentences, I try to take certain method. I try to follow certain method by writing  
965 sentences in my own.

966 R: can you give me examples?

967 T5: sentences which contain for example drinks or we think according to our  
968 culture that are bad habits opposed to our religion as Muslims so to change them

969 in a way that for example one of the sentences is about drinking whisky so I  
970 changed that to Pepsi (laugh) you can find that it ends with the same rhyme.

971 R: how do you present a writing activity? Can you describe the stages?

972 T5: first of all, do you mean from entering the class?

973 R: from starting new lesson?

974 T5: first any topic to write about. First I ask students to discuss that topic orally  
975 then through discussion I write new vocabulary which come up through  
976 discussion. I write these vocabularies on the board and try to focus on these  
977 vocabularies because as key words to be involved them in writing. After finishing  
978 discussion they are going to write a paragraph as I told you at the beginning to  
979 give them some tips and topic sentence and to finish that paragraph it will be  
980 students' responsibility to finish or write that paragraph.

981 R: what roles do you play in the class?

982 T5: I really do not find my self sometimes able to change. I stick to one role as  
983 controller.

984 R: why?

985 T5: may be I forget to mention that I direct them at the beginning to make group  
986 and try to see what they wrote and try to present new ideas except when these  
987 groups when there is a competition between these groups. I find my self not able  
988 to interfere to be away from them and to just answer some general questions  
989 just for improvement or to correct some general mistakes. I expect from the  
990 beginning that they are going to commit a mistake in that area so I advise them  
991 from the beginning if you want to write about this thing you should do that you  
992 should not do that. That is right and that is wrong.

993 R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

994 T5: not all of them if I got 70% of their interest I will be highly grateful....(Laugh)

995 R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

996 T5: the first thing, the best way to teach all subjects is to acquire the interest of  
997 students because they want be able to understand the teacher or the subject. If  
998 they are not interested or sometimes when I find that their achievement not to  
999 the level I want. I try to encourage them by saying ok good, thank you are dong  
1000 well. So I try to encourage them by even by words to raise the standard of their  
1001 interest for them and to motivate them and according to my experience no one  
1002 can reach the level of interest without being motivated. So it is very important  
1003 to motivate the students up to the extent to reach that interest. So by interest  
1004 you can reach so many things.

- 1005 R: at what stage do students write?
- 1006 T5: after discussing the topic they will write about is very important in the early  
1007 beginning that gives them vocabulary and many information.
- 1008 R: what kind of writing is assigned?
- 1009 T5: descriptive and narrative sometimes
- 1010 R: why do you focus on those genres in particular?
- 1011 T5: as I think that so many adjectives so many words are going to be arise to  
1012 write about. Because in descriptive, I find students are able to go or discuss  
1013 things in details so many adjectives and many vocabularies will be there so in  
1014 that matter and for that reason I prefer descriptive.
- 1015 R: is it timed writing?
- 1016 T5: of course the time of the lecture is 2 hours mainly one hour and a half. The  
1017 first twenty minutes is devoted for discussion then we have 15 minutes to write  
1018 a paragraph on board just to show them how to write and lets say to motivate  
1019 them after that I divide them into groups and they start writing ok. But of course  
1020 when I divide them into groups this does not mean that I want some of them to  
1021 write personally or individually but this is only a primary step for writing about  
1022 the topics then after finishing the lecture they are required to bring me  
1023 something that they wrote about that topic
- 1024 R: individually?
- 1025 T5: yes.
- 1026 R: do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version?
- 1027 T5: what will be written inside the lecture will be a draft and is going to be  
1028 revised then after revision they are going to write about that topic
- 1029 R: how do you evaluate students' writing?
- 1030 T5: according to the ideas first, grammatical mistakes. Then spelling mistakes  
1031 this is the criteria.
- 1032 R: how do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?
- 1033 T5: when I feel that the standard of student started to increase and they are  
1034 feel interested so I follow the same procedures when I feel that it is decreased  
1035 so I try to change ok to bring something else to refresh the class.
- 1036 R: what do you mean by standard?

1037 T5: the level and ability both.

1038 R: what about the course in general?

1039 T5: according to the achievement when it is ok. I find my self when I compare  
1040 my group with other group and I find the achievement of the other groups that I  
1041 do not teach not like my students at that time that is the only way for  
1042 assessment or evaluation.

1043 R: are you talking about marks?

1044 T5: no, it is not a matter of marks it is the way they write the ideas they  
1045 present. According to these things not marks or how many students passed or  
1046 failed.

1047 R: if you have the chance to attend any workshops in the future, what skills  
1048 would you like to improve as a writing teacher?

1049 T5: I think speaking (laugh) through speaking we can communicate.

1050 T6:

Teacher: T6	Degree: MA/ Pakistan	Teaching Experience: 27 years
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1051

1052 R: do you have any questions before we start?

1053 T6: it is all right everything is clear.

1054 R: what preparations or training have you received to enable you being a writing  
1055 teacher?

1056 T6: I did my master in language teaching in language and literature in 1984 from  
1057 Pakistan. Since then I have been teaching applied linguistics, specially  
1058 literature, writing, and reading. I have been teaching writing in the last 27  
1059 years.

1060 R: have you received any courses in teaching writing?

1061 T6: yes in language and literature classes we were taught how to teach writing  
1062 and after two years I did my post graduate diploma there in teaching methods  
1063 and I have been teaching in the last 27 years as I told you.

1064 R: As a professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching  
1065 writing?



1066 T6: well now the time has changed. Writing for the last ten years. I am also  
 1067 consulting internet using internet. That is very useful information that I got  
 1068 otherwise regular sources. We have books in libraries and personal experience in  
 1069 teaching writing.

1070 R: you have mentioned using internet, do you have any specific websites that  
 1071 you use?

1072 T6: there are many about teaching writing directly I can mention them later. Yes  
 1073 [www.teachwriting.com](http://www.teachwriting.com) is a good one.

1074 R: what difficulties do you face in teaching writing?

1075 T6: it takes long time to count them (laugh).

1076 R: can you mention the main difficulties briefly?

1077 T6: yes, in brief ok. The basic thing in the class they are supposed to write to do  
 1078 certain amount of work in certain level. But when we enter the class, the real  
 1079 situation is different. The students' level is very low so we have to pick them  
 1080 from a low level and bring them to certain level. And of course we can not  
 1081 blame them any more. Some students are good others are really very bad, but  
 1082 the thing is that the average is reducing and either there are some good students  
 1083 five or six in a class of fifty or sixty or very poor students. It is quite a challenge  
 1084 to teach them writing. Of course the same situation with other subjects. But in  
 1085 writing it is a huge task.

1086 R: how do you deal with these problems?

1087 T6: yes, what I do. I separate the class into groups. Smaller groups according to  
 1088 their ability and I just focus on that in certain day sometimes I give those  
 1089 students groups and if I say that some students might miss classes and good  
 1090 students never miss classes. So I always separate them so you can say that I have  
 1091 two kinds of activities in a single day and I focus on those students so they  
 1092 continue to progress and of course I do some encouraging work to those weak so  
 1093 they try to come up and I can at least, reach out with them and they can get on  
 1094 with class activities.

1095 R: can you give me examples of those activities?

1096 T6: yes. For one group I ask them to make an outline for an essay. Suppose that I  
 1097 am teaching them essay. So I just tell them to focus on writing an outline but for  
 1098 the other group I tell them along with the outline write essay as well and then  
 1099 with the other group discuss the outline with them I do mainly allow to do. I just  
 1100 speak about the whole essay so they get the whole general idea about the  
 1101 concepts of the essay and they are able to write something. This it goes on like  
 1102 this. It is a challenge for writing teacher.

- 1103 R: what comes into my mind is the test. Ok in the class you can use different  
1104 activities. What about the test you have only one test for all.
- 1105 T6: yes. When the exam comes every one has to be there to all.
- 1106 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
1107 experience in teaching?
- 1108 T6: well as I told you it is hybrid approach. I do not think that it fits in any  
1109 approach. I undertake three kinds of activities simultaneously in the class. I do it  
1110 like here. I mean I figured out here when I find myself in the situation (laugh) it  
1111 was only a solution t a challenge that I have in my class.
- 1112 R: what causes these changes?
- 1113 T6: yes. I think the class as I told you earlier is a very embarrassed class. Some  
1114 students are good some very poor and very few are average. That is part of the  
1115 situation.
- 1116 R: In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?
- 1117 T6: actually to build upon students potential objectives to write an essay. Goals  
1118 are different for different classes. For fourth year we want to be able it is for  
1119 students to write an essay. Three paragraphs, four paragraphs like that they can  
1120 make essay. In the course for of doing that, we built upon students' potential on  
1121 write good sentences and form their writing parrallism and teach then how to  
1122 edit their work and after going beyond that usually they have no concept of  
1123 second or third we teach them here in the class so they come to know that what  
1124 ever they write can not be 100% correct so they build upon that or correct that  
1125 later of course that work.
- 1126 R: what sort of teaching materials do you use, for example authentic material or  
1127 course book?
- 1128 T6: we do not have text books here. Teachers use authentic material they  
1129 gather materials from different resources mostly books. They photo copy them  
1130 and use them in classes. Sometimes they write notes for themselves and it goes  
1131 on like this.
- 1132 R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?  
1133 And since you have three levels in groups how do you select the material?
- 1134 T6: the material is the same only the activities different so that means at the  
1135 end of the year they have one question paper. So at the same group we have  
1136 two or three activities in one topic. Later they have to come up with full  
1137 answer. And they will write themselves essay and outline essay as well.
- 1138 R: are they able to do that?

1139 T6: well, normally a few students come up with good results but anyway they  
1140 have chance to try. Any way who does not try will be kept in the same class next  
1141 year.

1142 R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example,  
1143 grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary?

1144 T6: you know that everything is included in writing so in a particular day I pick  
1145 up one skill I mean one task and focus on that. I tell students for example that  
1146 'ok today we are focusing on parallelism in your writing so they write something  
1147 and I focus on that if there is any grammatical error. I just identify them. I  
1148 don't. There is no objective in picking all the errors and confusing them. In a  
1149 single day if the grammar structure is my focus, then I just focus on grammar  
1150 aspect then other areas become secondary. Use of words I just ignore that I tell  
1151 them simply that there are mistakes and underline them.

1152 R: In what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing? Can  
1153 you give examples?

1154 T6: oh, here the problem here is that we have most of the time to focus most of  
1155 the time on accuracy in their writing. Once they are accurate they then will  
1156 improve upon that and will be able to write. We teach them how to edit their  
1157 writing and improve it. Better choice and how to use parallelism and better  
1158 structure. So first focus here is on grammatical aspects. We teach them how to  
1159 write in free writing basically of main focus and some students go beyond that so  
1160 we do this for them and of course this is for the benefit of the whole class. But I  
1161 have figured out that some students are more interested in improving their  
1162 writing style. They are just interested in writing in English.

1163 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
1164 teaching writing for students?

1165 T6: I do not think that focusing on grammar all the time will help students to  
1166 improve their writing. Yes on a single day I pick up one only aspect of writing  
1167 one mistake. This will help students to improve their writing. I just encourage  
1168 them to write something and often I pick up certain mistakes and I focus on and  
1169 tell them how to avoid it so this goes well. Some students do well. Some just  
1170 sleep on their work.

1171 R: what are they useful for?

1172 T6: well, I think there in the class. I mean writing itself is a great activity. I  
1173 think students can be involved in giving ideas to the student. They work  
1174 themselves in a situation. Real life situations are, you can say, very forthcoming  
1175 and encouraging students to get involved in their work. What I do in fact myself  
1176 because of the limitations students have they do not come up with new ideas. I  
1177 simply provide them with the situation and do aloud thinking for them as if they  
1178 are writing and they try after to ask them to write and they come up with  
1179 certain pieces so I am able to look at it and identify errors and they up how they  
1180 can avoid that.

- 1181 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Can  
1182 you give examples?
- 1183 T6: here, context is very important in writing as you know I just bring stories to  
1184 them supposedly elements with the surroundings. Some situations I discuss with  
1185 them they find themselves usually in. I bring common place for example from  
1186 outside life into the classroom they can benefit from it because it is far more  
1187 interesting to them than something happening in England or America context. In  
1188 the Libyan context but here if I bring a story about Hajj or old person or family  
1189 here with reference to the places that they already visited it is much more  
1190 interesting to them to relate them to the context.
- 1191 R: so you adapt those materials to the Libyan culture?
- 1192 T6: oh yes materials we got from books and from the internet. Yes we adapt  
1193 them to the situation here.
- 1194 R: can you give examples?
- 1195 T6: yes. Some business success stories. So instead of famous business man such  
1196 as Microsoft owner I will mention other business man in Libya and instead of  
1197 Microsoft activities I should mention agricultural activities like this related to  
1198 the context.
- 1199 R: if we talk about your role in the class, how do you present a writing activity?
- 1200 T6: the writing activity here you see it various in different classes at junior level  
1201 we have guided writing at senior levels we do not do that we have just to ask  
1202 students to come up with new ideas. Suppose that I am discussing essay writing  
1203 here with fourth year stage here of course first of all I will start with writing.  
1204 First thing to choose a topic, reduce the topics to become clear, elaborate. Yes  
1205 we start from simple activities to a difficult one. Basically first we start from as  
1206 small paragraph writing to be increased to three paragraphs, five paragraphs  
1207 then we change the topic. First, we choose with topics that are familiar to them  
1208 then we do more descriptive essays, cause and effect, argumentative essays etc.  
1209 For example, we start with small paragraphs about the university.
- 1210 R: if you will ask your students to write a paragraph, how you will do that?
- 1211 T6: paragraph writing starts at junior levels here at first year. Naturally, we  
1212 have to give them ideas tell them paragraph structure. First and then give them  
1213 topic sentence to develop upon that, get on point and expand it into details on  
1214 that and it goes to five paragraph essay.
- 1215 R: to what extent do you change your role at those stages?
- 1216 T6: here, unfortunately teacher's role is very dominant one in the class activity,  
1217 in writing class. teacher has prepare everything give notes to the class because  
1218 of the level of the class and very few things are left to students only to write

1219 and then teacher again has to sometimes what I do I just allow other students to  
1220 look at the work of their friend to point the mistakes just to interact in each  
1221 others and explain it. Even one point that they can pick and explain of their  
1222 friend I think it is an activity which is useful.

1223 R: what prompts this change?

1224 T6: well as in a more English method, teacher is in class activity but here the  
1225 situation is different. When we allow students just to comfort and to give them  
1226 activity to regulate themselves and the teacher is just there as an observer,  
1227 things does not take place. I mean there are a few students that are proactive in  
1228 the class. So teacher has to create an activity, regulate them, and present them  
1229 to the class, just to promote students to get involved as much as they can. So  
1230 my role of course my attempt all the time to encourage students just to be  
1231 involved in the class activity but once I did not find any input in that activity I  
1232 just change to my regular role.

1233 R: to what extent do you think your students engage actively in the lesson?

1234 T6: well, it depends on how many students have come in a single day and what  
1235 composition I have in that day and if the good students have come to the class I  
1236 find the class full of activity. If some other students below average come to the  
1237 class. Here at senior level we do not force them we of course prompt them to  
1238 come, encourage them to come and there are rules and regulations to force  
1239 them to come but normally I do not find a lot of attendance in a class of sixty I  
1240 found mostly forty or so and in that way I mean the other twenty students keep  
1241 changing so in each lecture we have new composition of class. First, I have to  
1242 look at the class to see how many students have come so I have to adjust my  
1243 activity.

1244 R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

1245 T6: I told you I bring situations which are quite relevant a context which is quite  
1246 familiar to them so they find that interesting sometimes I bring some  
1247 information to them supposly there are success stories in the west and students  
1248 want to know about them. I just do that. So that means along with the  
1249 information they will be getting they find it interesting and try to get involved in  
1250 that if I ask later some question on that or create an activity in that.

1251 R: At what stage do students write?

1252 T6: It starts I think after I explain my points and all that and the writing activity  
1253 starts I do not have to do a lot of talking in the class so that means a lot of  
1254 writing that are expecting to do. So you see the problem is sometimes I give  
1255 topic to write. Some students are able to write five to ten lines in this area and  
1256 others are not able to write a couple of sentences. Others they chat or involve in  
1257 other activity and things go on. The thing is that if I have a good composition on  
1258 Saturday then I feel myself as well as students happy they have done good and in  
1259 most cases good students never miss classes and the other twenty students who

1260 keep switching. I mean waste working time they really embarrass the class in  
1261 this way.

1262 R: What kind of writing is assigned?

1263 T6: I mean different for different classes. A paragraph writing there all types of  
1264 paragraphs but here at senior level we discuss essays, composition, and  
1265 structure. Then we have types of essays from descriptive to academic writing,  
1266 cause and effect essays, and definitions.

1267 R: Is it timed?

1268 T6: yes we initially have to do that 15-20 minutes. It depends on the activity if  
1269 the essay is very long, they take one hour in the class and take work home. I  
1270 check there. What I say some students are forthcoming to does such an activity.  
1271 Other students simply feel bored about the work and once I give them some  
1272 assignment. Ok I do not have time so I gave them some guidelines in details and  
1273 ask them to write at home and next lecture bring the work to me. Two or three  
1274 of the work has returned. It was highly discouraging in such a thing and I found  
1275 that those who were engaged in such an activity they are always succession.  
1276 They are always progressing. They are gaining from such a class activity.

1277 R: do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version? I

1278 T6: in most cases there is only, because we keep changing activities we keep  
1279 changing topics so they just write. I check and bring out their mistakes to avoid  
1280 them mostly this activity goes on but some work on there when I ask them to  
1281 write final essay on the main to finished product to write final draft to finish  
1282 there work. So what they do they sometimes return the work giving some  
1283 suggestions and finally if it is an assignment then practice just the first draft  
1284 they will do and finish the job of the day and that's it. Things go like this.

1285 R: how do you evaluate their writing?

1286 T6: students' writing?

1287 R: yes

1288 T6: well it depends on the level of the class and the context and my objective. If  
1289 all are met then students score high mark. Of course correction is the first  
1290 element. I check spelling and grammatical structure and parallism and if I have  
1291 not taught them parrallism I would not go for that naturally. I only go for things  
1292 that I have done in the class and check for them.

1293 R: how do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

1294 T6: I feel encouraged only when students come forth with a certain activity and  
1295 done some their job. Even if there are mistakes, we do not discuss. At least  
1296 students have tried and written something. I feel really at home with such work.

1297 Mistakes do not discourage me if the students come forth with some activity and  
1298 if I am able to point out certain mistakes and student realise that and ok next  
1299 time I will try to remove them. I feel I have done my job and it goes on like this.

1300 R: what about the course in general?

1301 T6: well, I am not greatly encouraged. Believe me I mean I feel that the  
1302 majority of the class in fact is average. They even some have the good students  
1303 tried very well. The average students in fact they were struggling they were  
1304 trying but I do not think that they have tried enough. They could be better than  
1305 what they have done so far may be because of this problem of attendance  
1306 students do not attend regularly. Most of the time in my class but they are just  
1307 ordinary students. Some are good, some are average, others are bad and it goes  
1308 like this. But the good thing is that they are quite confident now of the class  
1309 than a year ago at the beginning of the year. That is quite encouraged me.

1310 R: have you conducted needs analysis at the beginning of the course?

1311 T6: naturally we must do that otherwise we can not start working. I just made  
1312 this in the first day. I just gave them one small paragraph writing and from that  
1313 and from that write discussion with students. I figured out. That is why I was  
1314 able to group them into groups.

1315 R: have you taken samples of their work?

1316 T6: yes. Otherwise it will be really difficult or impossible. In the first day, I was  
1317 able to do that. Sometimes I ask them sit together. Sometimes I just keep them  
1318 in mind because I knew where are they sitting and just discretely I do not tell  
1319 them in fact that you are really weak. Just I give them discretely different  
1320 activities and tell them to do that and every body is happy in doing the activity  
1321 that is suitable for him. So I told you activities differ. Some are writing outlines  
1322 other are writing essays.

1323 R: if you have the chance to attend any workshops about teaching writing in the  
1324 future, what skills would like to improve as writing teacher?

1325 T6: well, I would like to attend any workshop in writing. What I would gain is  
1326 may be there is new theory in writing. So what I found from my 27 years there is  
1327 no limit in learning.

1328 T7:

Teacher: T 7	Degree: MA/ Libya	Teaching Experience:5 years
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1329

1330 R: thanks for accepting to answer this interview questions

- 1331 T7: you're welcome.
- 1332 R: what preparation or training have you received to enable you being a writing  
1333 teacher?
- 1334 T 7: well, I have not taking courses, specific courses in writing but I have  
1335 attended some workshops, academic writing workshops, writing in general  
1336 workshops so from workshops I benefit a lot in using techniques because not all  
1337 students are the same in levels some are good others are very bad so these  
1338 techniques are really helpful in how to teach writing. For me, I think writing is  
1339 very important skill for all students not only for the university students but even  
1340 in the future if they want to finish their studies. When they like to do Master  
1341 degree or PhD. it is one of the important skills. Although we do have a problem  
1342 that students face in writing in that students are not capable in writing because  
1343 they do not know which word should be used and in which context. Although  
1344 that is one of the problems that we try to figure out here in Libya.
- 1345 R: as professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching  
1346 writing?
- 1347 T 7: I use books I use internet resources. I like to go online all the time. You  
1348 know to keep up to date with any new writing techniques or books in writing.
- 1349 R: do you have any specific websites that you use?
- 1350 T 7: yes I use a website which is called [www.forenglish.net](http://www.forenglish.net) it is really very  
1351 useful and this website is not only for teachers but for students as well.
- 1352 R: what about books which ones do you use?
- 1353 T 7: I really like to use MacMillan publishing books. They are very simple and  
1354 easy for students to tackle and other books I do not know but I feel that those  
1355 books are very simple for students and for teachers and specially the level of  
1356 students that we have here in Libya.
- 1357 R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?
- 1358 T 7: I face a lot of difficulties as I said earlier some students face a difficulty in  
1359 which words to be used in which sentence. Are they supposed to use formal  
1360 English or informal English? So the use of the word is really difficult. So like what  
1361 I said earlier one of the difficulties is which word to use and in which context.  
1362 Other problem is that because we do not write a lot in Arabic so they find it  
1363 difficult to write in English. They are not used in writing in general.
- 1364 R: how do you deal with these difficulties?
- 1365 T 7: well, I try as much as possible before giving them any writing assignment I  
1366 like to brainstorm in them. You know everyone will come up with one word or  
1367 two or three so I write them in the board and we use them together. Then I ask



1368 them to write their paragraphs or essay or whatever they write. In that way they  
1369 can write a very good piece of writing.

1370 R: could you please give me an example of such an activity?

1371 T 7: ok, the problem is that students' lack of vocabulary. They do not which  
1372 word to use and in which paragraph. Even if I will give them a very simple topic  
1373 for example describe your home they won't know am I going to use adjectives  
1374 and which tense to use so what I do in a situation like this I brainstorm. I try to  
1375 brainstorm as much as possible before they start writing. After brainstorming we  
1376 put these words, these ideas together. Put them in the board and then students  
1377 say ok we have a lot of words. So let's describe our homes. They have other  
1378 difficulty as I said earlier they do not write in Arabic. Teachers usually do not  
1379 ask them to write in Arabic. Their hands are not automatically used to writing.  
1380 So when we ask them to write a paragraph in English they find it a little bit  
1381 difficult to gather ideas and put them in words.

1382 R: what about students' level in writing?

1383 T 7: well as I said earlier some are very good that is due to their practice at  
1384 home. Some have lived abroad and some have taken extra courses in summer  
1385 time but the majority of students the level is a little bit not that good and that  
1386 average not only in writing but in all other topics in general.

1387 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
1388 experience in teaching?

1389 T 7: like what I said there are some techniques that are the teacher not aware  
1390 of like brainstorming. Although it is a very old technique, but we started using it  
1391 in the last five or six years. Because it started to be something very big and they  
1392 use it in listening and speaking not only in writing. So I think the methods, the  
1393 techniques which we use now are much more interesting, much more beneficial  
1394 not only for the students but for the teacher as well.

1395 R: what prompts this change?

1396 T 7: like what I said before the traditional way of teaching writing was not really  
1397 helpful. We notice that all students' levels were the same and would not  
1398 improve at all. And has not developed at all but when we started using  
1399 brainstorming and techniques like pair work or group work and the internet etc.  
1400 We notice that they have improved a lot.

1401 R: what do you mean by traditional way of teaching?

1402 T 7: traditional way. Well, the teacher gives them a topic, a title of the topic  
1403 and write about it on the board lets say a beautiful garden in Libya and she asks  
1404 them to write about it without brainstorming or telling them that they should  
1405 use adjectives or adverbs, present simple or past simple or in general give then  
1406 an idea. Talk about the garden that you have seen here in Libya. Then ask  
1407 students to write a paragraph about the garden. I think that was very

1408 traditional. I think, in my opinion, that the teacher would not give so much  
1409 effort in the lesson itself. It was all depending on student himself whether he is  
1410 good student or weak student. I do not know. I do not think that is a very good  
1411 way of teaching writing but using brainstorming and pair work and group work  
1412 and lots of these modern techniques that teachers started to use now. I think a  
1413 lot of students have developed their skills not only in writing but in general.

1414 R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in  
1415 teaching writing?

1416 T 7: you mean the course that I am using now. I am using a book which is called  
1417 'College writing'. A book that has all the four skills integrated together. Some  
1418 lessons about listening as well as speaking as well as reading integrated into the  
1419 writing itself. So actually as I said using all these skills integrated. The goal is as  
1420 the writer mentioned that at the beginning of the book is to try to benefit from  
1421 all these skills and the writing skill to each and every student and that is my goal  
1422 as well as to try to help students to write.

1423 R: what do you mean by much better?

1424 T 7: much better means to make it more interesting more exciting for them  
1425 because usually writing is boring subject. This book I really like this book. It  
1426 makes writing fun it makes writing. It has many things to do. As I said there are  
1427 listening, reading skills integrated together into the writing exercise that we do  
1428 and I think that is really beneficial.

1429 R: you've mentioned college writing, do you use other materials?

1430 T 7: no. I use other supplementary materials. I download or take them from the  
1431 internet. I really like those also from [www.forenglish.com](http://www.forenglish.com) I also use a lot of  
1432 websites that the British Council has provided most teachers and students with  
1433 and I also use other text books especially to take ideas about essays that  
1434 students write about.

1435 R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

1436 T 7: first of all, I have to look at the level of students. That is the first thing.  
1437 The second thing is these students motivated in writing a piece of writing that I  
1438 have chosen from different books and internet websites or not. Another thing is I  
1439 have to meet with other teachers to check what their levels of grammar are and  
1440 what are their levels in reading comprehension are because all of these are  
1441 integrated to writing. You know all of these are integrated together.

1442 R: how do you know about their level?

1443 T 7: yes. At the beginning in each and every course especially in writing course I  
1444 would give them it is like a test where you can obviously you can guess their  
1445 level but you can know from a piece of writing that they have written. After I  
1446 ask them to write something very easy for example describe your mother  
1447 describe your father something like that. I would take it at home. I would

1448 analyse it I would of course the next day give them the papers back and I would  
1449 go to each and every student and tell them about their level. Are they for  
1450 example good or they excellent or they are really bad and where they need help  
1451 in. As you know it is like a test. I wanted just to see how their levels are.

1452 R: do you use one activity for all?

1453 T 7: well I tried that before but it does not really work because some students in  
1454 the class are really weak and sometimes when I give the high students exercise  
1455 the weak students are just looking at each other, chatting with each other or  
1456 playing with their phones. So I do not think that it is a good idea to give students  
1457 a higher level exercise to a good student and leave the others alone not doing  
1458 any thing so what I try to do is during classes I try to put them in groups I would  
1459 choose one of the higher level and him with a weaker student and put them with  
1460 a real weak student. This group technique really works with the weak students  
1461 and try to help them as much as possible. I am teaching you know I put the time  
1462 and effort in group work and it is really beneficial. Students who are good in  
1463 English are trying to help other students to improve their skills in writing or in  
1464 any other subject.

1465 R: What tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example,  
1466 grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabularies?

1467 T 7: for me, I always tell my students I am not grammar teacher but before I  
1468 give them a lesson of course I prepare it at home and if there is for example  
1469 things that need to be revised in grammar or vocabulary etc. I give them I do not  
1470 want to say a pre lesson but I give them some additional supplementary material  
1471 before I give them the lesson. For example, if I will be talking about causal  
1472 adverbs I would photo copy some thing from a grammar book and I would give it  
1473 to them and we would study it together before asking them to write an essay or  
1474 an opinion. What else, I always give them a sample on the board and after I give  
1475 them a sample on the board I would ask them not to copy. I would ask them to  
1476 keep it as sample for them to write.

1477 R: do you focus more on accuracy or fluency?

1478 T 7: Actually both I tell my students that I am your writing teacher but that does  
1479 not mean I am not going to correct your grammar and your spelling mistakes so I  
1480 try as much as possible to focus on both because as you know both of them are  
1481 important in writing.

1482 R: in what way

1483 T 7: I think if the students are accurate while their writing this would help them  
1484 in their reading, this will help them in their speaking if they want to speak to  
1485 some one to a foreigner for example. If they are fluent in writing, I think that is  
1486 also related to speaking. If you are fluent in writing it will be much easier for  
1487 you to speak with foreigners than if you are not fluent.

1488 R: from your experience; what are the activities that you think are useful in  
1489 teaching writing for students?

1490 T 7: as I said earlier I would like to give them pair work or group work activities.  
1491 I think it is real fun and at the same time you feel that those higher level  
1492 students are in control and I feel that they are developing themselves through  
1493 weak students. So activities and exercises I like to give them activity or exercise  
1494 where they have to brainstorm ideas, look for different kinds of words,  
1495 equivalent to words for example I give them words in the board and ask them to  
1496 find an equivalent to that word so they can use it in their piece of writing. And I  
1497 like using pictures because I am an oral examiner one of Cambridge oral  
1498 examiners. So I like to use pictures that I use for the PET exam or for the KET  
1499 exams. So I like to describe a place or a person. I found that also fun because  
1500 they are coloured pictures people in them and activities are going on.

1501 R: what are they useful for?

1502 T 7: I think they are useful for the whole skills. In writing for example let's take  
1503 the pictures activity that I told you it. They can collect as much words as  
1504 possible in their writing. The collection of these words is not only for in writing.  
1505 It is also useful in speaking and in reading comprehension. This also benefits  
1506 them in listening especially and you know for students who are interested in  
1507 learning English world wide.

1508 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

1509 T 7: well, for the book that I am using I try as much as possible to use these  
1510 techniques as much as possible to develop all skills not only writing.

1511 R: I mean do you change these activities or do you use them as they are in the  
1512 book.

1513 T 7: well sometimes I try to change them because some of the material that I  
1514 collect or take from the internet is not suitable for us I mean culture and  
1515 religion. So I try to if I will take a piece of material that has to do with beach  
1516 and there is a picture of people in the beach swimming and doing different  
1517 activities in our country we are not used to women are not covering their bodies  
1518 so I try as much as possible to collect if there is a piece of writing or a picture in  
1519 the book I tell them ok I have another option lets say use the other picture in  
1520 page 47 from your grammar book. So I try to use their other books instead of the  
1521 material that is given in the book of course if it is not suitable. But most of the  
1522 material in the book is suitable to all different cultures and religions.

1523 R: how do you present a writing activity?

1524 T 7: how I do present it. It depends on what kind of writing it is I teach process  
1525 writing I teach how to write opinion paragraphs, problematic paragraphs so it  
1526 depends. If it is problematic paragraphs I like to bring stories that I saw in the  
1527 news before for example if we are talking about the tragedy that happened in  
1528 Haiti. I can bring pictures that I downloaded from the internet itself because I

1529 can watch the news in the internet or information from the internet or whatever  
1530 TV it self and then. Next day, before they write about problem or a problem  
1531 related to them. They will take the Haiti problem that had happened and they  
1532 will try to analyse it and from that happened and they will write their  
1533 problematic paragraph or the piece of writing that I asked them to do and if it is  
1534 an opinion paragraph. I will write down a group of opinions on the board for  
1535 example smoking is bad for your health. Write an opinion paragraph before that I  
1536 will brainstorm lots of advantages and disadvantages of smoking after that we  
1537 will be focusing on why it is bad for your health on the disadvantages more than  
1538 the advantages. Or if there is a smoker in the class if there is a boy and he is  
1539 smoker we try to you know tease him and have fun and ask him why he is  
1540 smoking and for how long he has been smoking and the different kinds of things  
1541 that he can do instead of smoking so he would not hurt him self.

1542 R: to what extent do you change your role at those stages?

1543 T 7: yeah, I like to change my role a lot. It is not always of the same teacher  
1544 student. It is mostly student- student. I sometimes like to go to their level just  
1545 to get them occupy with what I'm doing because if will be in control all the time  
1546 students wont be relaxed so I give them the chance and say ok now you will be  
1547 the teacher and I am going to be the student then I will write a paragraph in the  
1548 board and I am gonna write as many sentences as I can and I will ask one of the  
1549 students or all of them to correct my writing on a piece of paper and then each  
1550 and every will stand up and tell me that you have a problem in grammar in  
1551 vocabulary in this, this and this. So I like to change my role first of all they are  
1552 going to be teachers after they graduate so I would like to give them a task of  
1553 teaching before they graduate second of all I think when students have control it  
1554 helps them a little bit to improve their skills rather than the teacher takes  
1555 control all the time.

1556 R: in what way that will help them?

1557 T 7: I think they can pin point their own mistakes which writing when they point  
1558 my mistakes on the board. I have noticed that a lot.

1559 R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

1560 T 7: yes they are really interested in writing. I am not going to say that I'm a  
1561 good teacher but the book really helps me. The book is real fun book really  
1562 exiting book that keeps them occupied all through the lesson. And I have a lot of  
1563 talk to students. You know there are student who do not like to write or search  
1564 the web or stuff like that. So everyday if I have a lesson after we finish the  
1565 lesson, I tell them to look for a word formation on television or on through the  
1566 internet so the next day I notice lots of students bring the material words,  
1567 vocabulary, different verbs, scenes that are used in TV channels or on the  
1568 internet and then from that we develop different types of ideas and choose from  
1569 these ideas to write a paragraph of course we do not use all the ideas because  
1570 that seems a lot but that means that my students are motivated to write. They  
1571 really like writing.

1572 R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

1573 T 7: for me like I said. My students most of the time are really good. So I do not  
1574 need to push them a lot. In order for them to do what I asked them to do but  
1575 mostly they have their own ideas, their own opinions so I give them free writing  
1576 so they can write as much as possible and what ever they like. I am gonna say  
1577 though. I am not the teacher but I am going to say how to organise their writing  
1578 but I am not going to say write this opinion or that opinion. They are free in  
1579 what they like to do.

1580 R: At what stage do students write?

1581 T 7: yeah like as I said mostly discussion from the beginning in the beginning of  
1582 the lesson we discuss a lot so we spent at least thirty minutes discussing and ten  
1583 minutes writing to tell you the truth because if we do not discuss. I tried both  
1584 ways I told them to write first and we will discuss what they wrote so I noticed  
1585 lots of students did not tried much. Then I tried another way which is  
1586 brainstorming first then writing in the last ten minutes fifteen minutes. I noticed  
1587 that most students write very well because they took the ideas that we spoke  
1588 about that we have spoken about and integrated that in their piece of writing.

1589 R: What kind of writing is assigned?

1590 T 7: it is mostly paragraphs now I'm giving them essay writing. So now I am we  
1591 are going in more details in how to write essays that are at least 700 words.  
1592 They are finding it difficult because they are as I said earlier they are not used  
1593 to writing essays in Arabic. So they find it hard writing it in English. So they are  
1594 facing problems but I'm trying to do it step by step. So I am telling them it's a  
1595 paragraph. An essay is a group of paragraphs. The first paragraph is the  
1596 introduction, the middle paragraph is the body and the last is the conclusion.  
1597 Step by step I noticed that some students have developed others just need more  
1598 time.

1599 R: Is it timed?

1600 T 7: timed? Yes. For example I say ok now we have brainstormed so you have  
1601 seven minutes to write and I time with my stop watch or what ever I am using.  
1602 When it is seven minutes say stop. When I say stop I am trying to teach them to  
1603 write as much as possible but in a limited period of time. Some students are  
1604 interested in Cambridge exams and Cambridge exams so I try teach them that  
1605 they are second year students but they should learn it from now.

1606 R: Do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version?

1607 T 7: in class, we have two hours we usually give an hour and a half. The last hour  
1608 is just discussion of what they written etc. So usually it is one to two drafts in a  
1609 lesson. It depends on the time we have.

1610 R: how do you evaluate students' writing?

1611 T 7: like I said, I do evaluate their grammar I am not their grammar teacher but I  
1612 do need grammar because if you are not gonna use correct grammar then your

1613 piece of writing is useless sometimes. So I evaluate the message they give. Is the  
1614 message clear enough for me to understand or not. So it is not mostly on  
1615 grammar but I focus more on vocabulary they use and the message that they are  
1616 trying to send me. When I ask them to write about globalization and they do not  
1617 mention any example about globalization then the message is not clear that  
1618 means they misunderstood what I asked them to do.

1619 R: How do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

1620 T 7: first of all, I try to look at the feedback. Did the students understand the  
1621 question well? Did they write or very well or not. Then I try to look at their  
1622 grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes etc. That comes at the end. The outcome  
1623 which is the feedback that I will be taking from all the pieces of writing that  
1624 students submitted to me. I try mostly to look at the message. Did they  
1625 understand what I asked them to do or not if it is a process writing. If it is  
1626 process paragraph and they have not used words for example causal adverbs like  
1627 I said earlier or words such as 'first', 'second', 'after that'. That means they are  
1628 not familiar with what I taught them. In the lesson itself so that means I have to  
1629 go back teach them or revise what we have done earlier in the lesson. Or the  
1630 lesson before. And then I try to give them another process of writing and correct  
1631 it again. And I always ask students to keep the pieces of writing that I correct so  
1632 they can compare so the first piece of writing let's the first draft. I give them  
1633 comments about it and they correct it again. There are still some mistakes in it  
1634 so I ask them to keep the second draft and then the third draft. Then they can  
1635 compare it. Then when they came up with one piece of writing which I asked  
1636 them to do and sometimes it is perfect.

1637 R: in general are you satisfied about the course?

1638 T 7: I'm satisfied. I almost finished the book which is 10 units. We are in unit 9  
1639 now. The students think it is too much but I think that is not too much because  
1640 in third year curriculum mostly will be based on essay writing. So if they do not  
1641 know how to write a paragraph then how they will be able to write an essay in  
1642 third year at the university. I am satisfied with the book. I am satisfied with the  
1643 time. I am satisfied with students' development as well.

1644 R: about the book, have you selected unites or you have decided to teach them  
1645 all?

1646 T 7: no actually the units are not really long I intended to finish each and every  
1647 unit so I do not select anything from that. I give them the whole unit and I give  
1648 them supplementary material. That is in situation where I find the weak  
1649 students have not understood the information all mentioned in the book so I give  
1650 them supplementary material from other books or from the internet as I said  
1651 earlier and everything goes well.

1652 R: if you have the chance to attend any workshop in the future, what skills  
1653 would you like to improve as writing teacher?

1654 T 7: for me I like to attend workshops in writing just to know new techniques,  
 1655 new procedures that the teachers use. I attended one just a week ago. It was on  
 1656 writing on academic writing. I asked the speaker, the person who gives the  
 1657 presentation, I asked him so many questions about how do they deal with  
 1658 students and the problems that we face and he gave me some advice but in the  
 1659 future I would like to attend more workshops to develop my skills in teaching.

1660 T8:

Teacher: T8	Degree: PHD/ UK	Teaching practice: 8 years
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1661

1662 R: thanks for accepting to answer my interview questions which are as you read  
 1663 in the plain language statement related to my Ph. D research and do you have  
 1664 any questions before we start?

1665 T8: no. carry on.

1666 R: what preparations or training have you received to help you in teaching  
 1667 English writing?

1668 T8: actually in Libya I did not receive any training. I studied English as a school  
 1669 subject during preparatory and secondary school till I graduated from the  
 1670 university where I took some English courses specifically in writing. I did my  
 1671 Master degree where I received one course in writing and still remember when I  
 1672 was ESL student to join master programme, I took some courses in writing.

1673 R: where? Is it here in Libya?

1674 T8: In Canada and also during my PhD study I joined some courses in teaching  
 1675 English skills including writing and I did some research in writing and how to  
 1676 teach writing.

1677 R: so can we say that those are your main sources of ideas about writing?

1678 T8: I depend on text books for my knowledge about writing. I believe that  
 1679 writing is process more than product. So as you know learning depends on  
 1680 process more than product.

1681 R: can you give me examples of books that you depend on?

1682 T8: yes I read about how to teach writing but to be honest. It is difficult to focus  
 1683 on one method. If you just ask me what method did you follow I can not answer  
 1684 because I use different methods on the task, students level and number. For  
 1685 writing I attended some work shops about teaching writing.



- 1686 R: what about teaching experience?
- 1687 T8: yes, experience plays a major role in teaching. I used to teach writing more  
1688 than 8 years. I did realise some skills in teaching writing.
- 1689 R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?
- 1690 T8: writing is the most difficult skill for learners.
- 1691 R: and for teachers?
- 1692 T8: well. Actually one of the difficulties is student level. Some of them are very  
1693 low. They do not know even the vocabulary when they write so they usually  
1694 commit mistakes in terms of vocabulary. They do not convey the message or the  
1695 message that they intend to write. The other things are in organization. They  
1696 think may be in Arabic and write in English. In many times they fail to convey  
1697 the meaning as well. Even in the grammatical level. They still make many  
1698 mistakes, using the right tense. The class size is another problem. If you want to  
1699 apply any activity in the class, sometimes we are hampered by the number. So  
1700 we can not divide them into groups. The class will be noisy.
- 1701 R: how do you deal with these difficulties?
- 1702 T8: usually I ask them to write. At the end it is product not process because  
1703 what we see the product. I try to teach writing as process so what I do I ask  
1704 them to write and when I go home and find chance to read their writing I try to  
1705 focus on the mistakes they commit and I select some examples from students  
1706 writing and try to negotiate with them about their mistakes in the class and also  
1707 I sometimes go back and try to take into consideration their levels for example  
1708 we focus on organization. I try to how to organize an essay or paragraph. And  
1709 when I find students they still struggle to find the right vocabulary or to write a  
1710 compound or complex sentence. So I go back to sentence level so I try to give  
1711 them simple sentence and some words and to use these words in sentences.
- 1712 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
1713 experience in teaching?
- 1714 T8: first of all, I used to lay on product as I mentioned the class size is one of the  
1715 problems. I used to ask students to write homework and they bring it I have a  
1716 look at it at home and correct it and give it back. Now I prefer to give more  
1717 practice in the class, ask students to help each other in pairs or groups.
- 1718 R: what prompted this change?
- 1719 T8: actually, because I studied this. When I went for a PhD, I took some courses  
1720 on how to teach writing. Although, it is easier to use product approach and ask  
1721 students to write, but process is more beneficial.
- 1722 R: In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

1723 T8: for me I just want students to write well. Most of them if not all do not know  
1724 how. They are suffering. They want to know how to write because they did not  
1725 study they are just focusing on sentence level and most practice was on  
1726 sentence level and how to write correct grammatical sentences. They can not  
1727 make an idea or argue.

1728 R: what do you mean by write well?

1729 T8: writing well I mean they have to care for accuracy and write right spelling  
1730 and also they have to care for grammatical structure because it is not like a  
1731 conversation when you talk to someone you can correct yourself but writing  
1732 usually the writer is absent. You write to someone else. So you have to be  
1733 responsible for grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes and how to convey the  
1734 message.

1735 R: is it personal goal or it is the policy?

1736 T8: well, both we are required to cover some text points and to teach writing.  
1737 We have sequence from first year to third year. I used to teach not test. Some  
1738 students are here just to pass from the first lecture they ask how the exam will  
1739 be. I used to say I am teaching not examining.

1740 R: what about students' expectations? Do you take them into consideration?

1741 T8: believe me they do not know. This is my first question ask them when I enter  
1742 a class what do you want from the course? What are your expectations? And they  
1743 write down. Some of them say we want to know how to write. I said this is a big  
1744 thing what do you want exactly?

1745 R: they will ask about exams?

1746 T8: yes, they always ask about exams and the most frequent answer is to pass.

1747 R: What sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or  
1748 course book?

1749 T8: it is more using course books. We tried to give some outlines and encourage  
1750 students to write but we could not. The library is poor so they do not have other  
1751 resources. They have to use text books other wise they get lost.

1752 R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

1753 T8: students' level and class size as well. These are the most important things I  
1754 think. We have to ask students whether they can write or not so I try to modify.  
1755 I go in between. As I said, some are good and others can not write a sentence.

1756 R: how do you conduct needs analysis?

1757 T8: well, actually for students, our students are unfortunately receptive. I  
1758 always tell them to ask me and tell me what they do expect and what they need  
1759 from the course. They usually say this is your responsibility you are the teacher.  
1760 When I think they participate well, and they like the activity. I keep using it and  
1761 when I find that they are just sitting, listening to me I try to change it because  
1762 they are receptive. I will tell you the teacher is just like an actor just to justify  
1763 my way of teaching because I am talking most of the time. I usually tell them  
1764 this is your responsibility. It is sharing. Learners should participate, talk. So I try  
1765 to engage them even by asking to read the paragraph or the instructions for us  
1766 just to engage them to read.

1767 R: what about the material how do you select a material for a mixed level?

1768 T8: well, actually I try to be just in the middle I can not go to those who are  
1769 actually very weak because I to encourage them because you have to support  
1770 yourself. Learning you have be responsible for learning for example I can not  
1771 just teach them what is the meaning of this word and that word they have to  
1772 improve themselves by themselves.

1773 R: so you focus on the middle.

1774 T8: yes in the middle and I try to go forward and backward. I try to satisfy the  
1775 different levels. As I told you sometimes I focus on the genre the organization  
1776 may be culture how English people think and we think, L1 interference. Other  
1777 times I just go back to the sentence level and vocabulary level to satisfy those  
1778 who struggle to write one sentence.

1779 R: what areas do you focus on in your teaching, for example, grammatical  
1780 structure, the use of range of vocabulary, writing extended paragraphs?

1781 T8: well, first I focus on a sentence level. How to write correct grammatical  
1782 sentence and I always tell my students that writing starts from the word and  
1783 ends with a paragraph. Students usually commit mistakes. So I always ask them  
1784 to write simple sentences after that they can revise and join them to make  
1785 complex sentences.

1786 R: can we say that you focus on accuracy more than fluency?

1787 T8: accuracy is required in writing if it is speaking, we can correct ourselves. It  
1788 is writing I always tell them that there is reader writer responsibility. So as a  
1789 writer you need to be clear for the reader. Ask your self first before being  
1790 asked. Whenever you write a sentence ask yourself whether it is clear enough. If  
1791 it is not clear, try to write it again or give examples.

1792 R: and do you use the same activity for the whole class?

1793 T8: no. I ask them one topic to write about and sometimes two to choose one.

1794 R: what tasks do you focus on in your way of teaching writing?

1795 T8: actually I am following textbook so we have different activities for example I  
1796 teach first year students so they have paragraph writing. In paragraph there are  
1797 different activities from the sentences level. How to write a paragraph? How to  
1798 write topic sentence? What does a topic sentence consist of?

1799 R: so the main focus is on the structure?

1800 T8: well, actually in terms of accuracy they know what a paragraph consist of. I  
1801 mean theoretically they are all right. When I ask my students what is a topic  
1802 sentence, they can say that it is the sentence that carry the main idea. What  
1803 sentence comes after the topic sentence? They will say supporting sentence and  
1804 the concluding sentences.

1805 R: they know the definitions

1806 T8: they know theoretically but the problem is in terms of application when they  
1807 try to apply they always commit mistakes in grammar level and word level.

1808 R: so with your focus on structure you would like to help them apply what they  
1809 already know?

1810 T8: yes and I give them model I give them a paragraph as model and ask them  
1811 follow this example to write about different topics so they come from the same  
1812 organization. They can also use some vocabulary in the model paragraph.

1813 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
1814 teaching writing for students?

1815 T8: well practice makes perfect. Students need to practice. We give them  
1816 theory. In terms of theory they understood. If you ask first year student what a  
1817 topic sentence? What a paragraph is they can answer. If you give them topic  
1818 sentence they can tell whether it is good or bad but if you ask them to write a  
1819 topic sentence they will fail. So they need more practice.

1820 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
1821 teaching writing for students?

1822 T8: well I would like to say that we can not depend on only on the product  
1823 because some teachers only ask their students to write the collect the papers  
1824 sometimes they do not they just give them the mark which is not because  
1825 students do not know why. Why they get eight out of ten? So I think writing  
1826 should be taught as process and we give them activities and divide them into  
1827 groups and the teacher like a monitor to the class. So they can benefit from I  
1828 can say immediate feedback when they got stuck to a word or grammatical  
1829 structure they can ask me in the class.

1830 R: what is practice useful for?

1831 T8: it is kind of training useful to be trained how to write. I know some students  
1832 who graduate from university and they were not able to write a paragraph. They  
1833 focus on grammar and how to write correct sentence level. But in terms of  
1834 coherence and unity and how to develop a good piece of writing they fail to do  
1835 that. So they need more practice in class and outside class.

1836 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

1837 T8: well, I try to adjust. When I find some paragraphs are ready written about  
1838 learning in UK or Canada. I change them. I try to take some topics from here for  
1839 example, using mobile phones, switching mobile phones in class, some problems  
1840 that we face. It is more realistic related to them.

1841 R: how do you present a writing activity?

1842 T8: well, I have to explain a little bit like teacher centred after that I move to  
1843 learner centred so I work as monitor when I give them activity. I encourage them  
1844 to talk, even in Arabic. I encourage talking in English but I failed. In class I find  
1845 students talking in Arabic.

1846 R: how do you present a writing activity?

1847 T8: well, as I said I have a text book and there are many activities there. I start  
1848 from the easier one to the more difficult one. I ask students to do most of the  
1849 activities. I just help them to engage in the activity. When they stuck with some  
1850 thing I just try to help.

1851 R: I think that is beneficial.

1852 T8: yes I think it is beneficial since they are talking about the topic. And I also  
1853 encourage them to ask me.

1854 R: to what extent you change your role in the class at different stages and what  
1855 causes this change?

1856 T8: experience caused that and also learning. When I graduated from university I  
1857 do not know about learning and writing as a process. Just we have been used for  
1858 writing as a product. Writing means homework. Give me something and I'll write  
1859 it at home and bring it to you but through learning and experience I could adapt  
1860 other activities. We can adapt other roles.

1861 R: what are the factors that might affect you roles in the class?

1862 T8: the context itself, the class room, the subject, the knowledge, students'  
1863 level. It is important factor. It can hinder you from doing what you like to do.  
1864 For example, the course book is from paragraph to essay. This given to second  
1865 year students and sometimes to first year students and you will find students  
1866 who do not know how to write a sentence so how can you use this book?

- 1867 R: what about the culture? Do you think the culture affects the way we teach?
- 1868 T8: yes, I always try to advise students that you are different. Here, in Libya you  
1869 are studying another language. So you have two things to do: to learn the  
1870 language then to learn the subject. So it is different from other subjects.  
1871 Sometimes I encouraged them to lie if you can lie yes for the sake of learning.  
1872 Tell me a story.
- 1873 R: when do students write?
- 1874 T8: mostly in the class actually. As homework I sometimes I give them a quiz just  
1875 to encourage them to write and actually time pressure always controls us so we  
1876 do not have time to do all activities. So it's about 60% in class and 40% outside  
1877 class.
- 1878 R: What kind of writing is assigned?
- 1879 T8: I ask them to write paragraph essays mainly academic writing.
- 1880 R: is it timed writing?
- 1881 T8: yes, it is timed writing.
- 1882 R: is it because of the time?
- 1883 T8: because of the time and also to teach them time is important. When you  
1884 write you need to follow strategies like drafting and you have to save time.
- 1885 R: and how many drafts are collected?
- 1886 T8: no. more than one draft. I ask them to do like free writing at the beginning  
1887 and I do not take the free writing. I ask them to revise it. I usually take the  
1888 second draft and also after having a look at it I return it to them asking for  
1889 another draft.
- 1890 R: in what ways students' involvement is encouraged in the lesson?
- 1891 T8: well, sometimes I ask students to write. I encourage them to give me their  
1892 writing inside the class. I take one as sample. If it looks not fine actually but just  
1893 acceptable, I tell them this is a good piece of writing.
- 1894 R: is it one of your goals?
- 1895 T8: yes, I need them to be involved.
- 1896 R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

1897 T8: not all of them some students just rely on others and they always feel  
 1898 afraid. I try to encourage them and tell them that writing is the most difficult  
 1899 skill so you need to try. If you do not try and fail you will never succeed. But  
 1900 still you will find students who can not. If you ask them to do it at home, they  
 1901 will do. But in the class they will never write. If you ask them they will say we  
 1902 do not know how to write. It is difficult. They try to make lame excuses to skip  
 1903 the task.

1904 R: and what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

1905 T8: As I told you, I try to encourage them. I can not do more than that. I always  
 1906 take for example bad examples. I do not only depend on good students.  
 1907 Sometimes when I find a student who is not good, I try to take what she/he has  
 1908 written. I read it without mentioning the name and even if I have something  
 1909 given at home, when I come to the class I try to select some written pieces and I  
 1910 write down some sentences and ask students to correct it or to say whether it is  
 1911 correct or false.

1912 R: it is good practice for them

1913 T8: yes even for the student himself when he sees his writing on the board he  
 1914 will learn that he committed mistakes and he will never do it again.

1915 R: how do you evaluate students' writing?

1916 T8: there are usually criteria for evaluating. I do care for accuracy in writing, in  
 1917 grammar and the coverage of the topic. Did they cover everything because I  
 1918 usually give them a topic sentence so they should develop this topic sentence  
 1919 whether they covered what is to be covered or not so accuracy and fluency. Yes  
 1920 I do care for vocabulary. Sometimes they do not convey the meaning or in terms  
 1921 of spelling. This is because of L1 interference. I always tell them that Arabic and  
 1922 English are different.

1923 R: how do you evaluate the out come of the activity?

1924 T8: it depends on the task if it is easy for them to analyze a paragraph to find  
 1925 the topic sentence. It is easy for them. Other activities like how to develop a  
 1926 topic sentence. I spend some time on that.

1927 R: would you like to attend any workshop about writing?

1928 T8: yes, why not; I am interested in writing. I like the subject?

1929 R: if you have the chance to attend any workshops in the future what skills  
 1930 would you like to improve as writing teacher?

1931 T8: as writing teacher I like to make myself as I always think that I still  
 1932 communicate with my students as professional I can not go to their level. So this  
 1933 is one of the criticisms. Students usually ask me please Arabic. Sometimes I am

1934 forced but I always tell them this is the last time. And the other thing is I focus  
1935 on the theory I need to be more practical. Also there are some reasons like the  
1936 class size and the time.

1937 T9:

Teacher: T9	Degree: MA/UK	Teaching Experience: 5 years
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1938

1939 R: thanks for accepting to answer my interview questions which are related to  
1940 my PhD topic

1941 T9: you re' welcome. I think teaching writing as I am going to say is a creative  
1942 subject you need let's say to encourage students to write for example to start  
1943 with that is called free writing. This is to encourage students to write something  
1944 that they like or they enjoyed. Sometimes we just ask students to write one or  
1945 two sentences to describe something they like this will make writing lets say  
1946 regularly in their life. I think using variety of activities is really good in teaching  
1947 writing but generally writing some people here in Libya they think that it is not a  
1948 normal thing in their life. They think it is a boring subject. I think the teacher  
1949 has to do more to make it interesting and exciting.

1950 R: first of all I would like to ask you about the preparations that you have  
1951 received as writing teachers so

1952 R. What preparations or training you have received to help you in teaching  
1953 English writing?

1954 T9: Yes, actually this comes from My Master Degree Study in UK. Because I have  
1955 a course about teaching general skills a little bit focusing on writing that is from  
1956 where my experience comes from. Generally, do not forget books. I usually read  
1957 some books new series of books about teaching writing and developing your skills  
1958 in teaching writing. I believe reading is the most important for teachers to  
1959 improve them. I was twice or three times in workshops in UK. One of them was  
1960 about writing actually. From my experience, working as a bilingual teacher in  
1961 UK with British Council, sometimes I attended some lessons about teaching  
1962 writing for young learners years 6-7.

1963 R: as professional, what are the sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

1964 T9: yes, actually that comes from my MA background studying. While I am  
1965 studying for my master degree in English teaching from Manchester University.  
1966 And we had many workshops about writing and I did a poster about writing. It  
1967 was part of my subject... (thinking) syllabus design. Yes it was course design. And  
1968 I still remember my teacher's name Richard West and it was may be luck. I did it  
1969 by myself. No partner. Other people did other subjects but I did writing. I  
1970 benefit a lot from my teachers in Manchester University I need to thank them.



- 1971 R: so your previous learning plays role in your teaching?
- 1972 T9: yes. Good sometimes when the teacher asks us to do an activity I feel it is  
1973 sometimes of him it really strange. So I ask my students very easy question what  
1974 can be done. To tell me the procedure, the stages and I start to do it. Explain it  
1975 to me to when I admire things I found them very easy. They did explain  
1976 something for me. They told me something to follow which is a kind of  
1977 instruction more stages and I think that I am going to compare writing with  
1978 cooking. Because we have procedures to follow which are really important to do  
1979 it and in the process of cooking for example if the smell is nice should be the  
1980 taste should be nice. So writing is a complete process. I am going to say it is a  
1981 cooking essay how to do cooking essay is how to do writing.
- 1982 R. Are these your main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?
- 1983 T9: Of course not enough. I think. Even remember that I have to thank my  
1984 teachers who taught me subject writing while I was doing Bachelor which should  
1985 be basic thing. I like them. Sometimes I used to ask my colleague who has very  
1986 good experience in teaching writing. The way and his style of teaching writing.  
1987 So this is the way that is helping me in developing me in my skills in teaching  
1988 writing.
- 1989 R. Do you observe your colleague?
- 1990 T9: Not really observing, I used to asking. I think I am going to describe myself as  
1991 I'm a very good learner through listening. I used to ask and I believe that I got  
1992 complete benefits from their answers.
- 1993 R: what about the books?
- 1994 T9: unfortunately, I can not remember an old book called writing but I can not  
1995 remember the names. It is quite small book in size but a lot of pages inside it  
1996 and the word writing is written in italics in red. I can not remember the names.  
1997 It was twenty years ago. And there is some Cambridge books Effective Writing  
1998 and the last one from MacMillan I really like it and I learned from for example  
1999 Head way, Cutting Edge, Straight Forward. They have pieces of writing which are  
2000 really I find them very for me. So this is the kind of books that I've read. Of  
2001 course I have read Jemmy Harmer 'How to Teach English' I really like this book.  
2002 I really like this person also I've read some articles about English language  
2003 teaching 'how to teach writing, how writing is process, and what kind of  
2004 language do we need when we write about some thing like lets say politics. So I  
2005 think we need to divide ourselves about books. So I've read about terminology.  
2006 What we really need about, for example, economics because I did my first  
2007 degree diploma in interpreting, so I think it helped me to do some writing.
- 2008 R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?
- 2009 T9: I think as I told you before the class size is one of the difficulties. We have  
2010 more than thirty students in one class. This is really limiting. May be it is the  
2011 way of sitting. They are not sitting in groups, they are sitting in rows which is

2012 really very traditional thing and also the level of students we have a variety of  
2013 levels. Very weak students and very good students which is really not easy to  
2014 manage and sometimes we do not have curricula it is changeable and sometimes  
2015 it depends on the teacher. And one more thing I think about the secondary  
2016 schools. Sorry to say that I think the way of teaching writing is really completely  
2017 different from the way we have here. So at the university we start from a  
2018 scratch which does not work in students' situation. And I think the main problem  
2019 here in Libya is the culture. We are not used to write to each other even  
2020 messages which is really a bad thing. And I'm gonna say something about the  
2021 system of writing here in Libya. We are not focusing on how to write. For  
2022 example I remember in my study when I was in primary school the focus was on  
2023 dictation, spelling just really bad. So I think this a problem that most students  
2024 who study abroad face is how to write. So I think these are the general  
2025 difficulties.

2026 R: how do you deal with these difficulties?

2027 T9: Generally I used to prepare myself to three or four activities if it is possible.  
2028 For example for first year may be I can start with them by pictures. This is for  
2029 one group for other group I might ask them to write a paragraph. Then I decide  
2030 how to deal with these groups which is fine. Sometimes I ask students to write  
2031 three or four lines about anything they like. From any checking to these works I  
2032 get some feedback which is what I need for these groups. It is not easy to  
2033 manage but I have no way. So I think variety of activities, the way we teach  
2034 them, the instructions you give straight the way. Let's say according to their  
2035 level if it is possible. It is not easy but I did some of it.

2036 R: do you use the same activity for all? Or you have different activities for  
2037 different levels?

2038 T9: not really, that means in the first half of the year I used varieties I divide  
2039 them into three groups, four groups maximum and then after the mid year exam  
2040 I started to teach them the same because we have some improvement, they are  
2041 not the same but near the level is similar. So we can manage to give the same  
2042 activity. But still use the same activity but instructions are different. I spend  
2043 more time with the weak students to give them.

2044 R: and how do you divide them?

2045 T9: according to their work. In the first two classes I asked them to do some  
2046 writing only two lines or three lines. From my checking to their writing I divide  
2047 them into groups for example I have this group I divide them into three groups  
2048 we have excellent, we have good and we have really bad, we have not got very  
2049 good. So this is not easy and about exams we used to do some quizzes or quick  
2050 test which I like it really. At once I tried them to put in order but it was difficult  
2051 for the weak students. Even when I told them just cut these sentences to put  
2052 them in order they still find it difficult but pictures they did well.

2053 R: do they know that they are divided according to their level

2054 T9: yes and they do not mind because most of them are happy to learn. This is  
 2055 helping me it is not the whole classes I divide them it is I am going to say one  
 2056 class a month. In four or five classes one class a month. I divide them when we  
 2057 do writing but when I explain something in general no.

2058 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching as you gained  
 2059 experience in teaching writing?

2060 T9: That I used to do it from let's say as a real action. I teach my students. May  
 2061 be I use different way. I can sometimes start with a very basic when I give them  
 2062 pictures and ask them to put them in order or to write one or two sentences  
 2063 about them. If I find it for example easy for them I move to.... I change my way  
 2064 according to the feedback I got from my students.

2065 R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

2066 T9: generally, my focus is to encourage students to like writing to enjoy doing  
 2067 some writing. This is the first thing and the second thing is to hopefully I can  
 2068 prepare my students to the next stage as they will move to the next year. That  
 2069 means the teacher will find them ready to give their curriculum. Which is I think  
 2070 the main target to every teacher that means to improve that skills of your  
 2071 students, pass the exam, be happy with you, be ready for the next stage.

2072 R: Is it your personal goal or it is the policy?

2073 T9: No it is the policy of course. We have by the end of the year to prepare our  
 2074 students to write a text in 2<sup>nd</sup> year and in third year to write an essay or report.

2075 R: What about students' expectations? What do they expect from the course?

2076 T9: about my self I think my students are happy. Because every class lets say my  
 2077 aim is we start doing something at the end I am going to check and ask students  
 2078 if they got some benefit and moved from zero point and go further. I think they  
 2079 are happy I do not know may be I am positive.

2080 R: what sort of teaching material do you teach?

2081 T9: here in our department we decided some books which came from Cambridge  
 2082 'Successful Writing' 1 and 2 and activities that mean the teacher should work  
 2083 hard to get activities in different books. That is what I follow.

2084 R: and do you teach the whole book or you are selective?

2085 T9: no selective. Actually it is not easy to teach the whole book. I think it is a  
 2086 little bit boring to teach the whole book and no time.

2087 R: What do you take into your consideration in selecting the material that you  
 2088 teach? For example you have mentioned 'Successful writing' why you thought of  
 2089 this book?

- 2090 T9: yes, I think, I do not know if I am right or not, I believe that when I read a  
2091 book I think if students can get some benefit by themselves from it or not. For  
2092 myself I am avoiding any books that depend on the teacher. So that is why I'm  
2093 choosing this book.
- 2094 R: what about students' needs? Do you take them in your consideration?
- 2095 T9: yes you are right but it is not easy to answer this one. I am talking about  
2096 here especially in Libya. As teachers we decide what we need for our students  
2097 may be from our experience, from checking them in the first or second classes. I  
2098 think we missed this main part called learners needs. I am not happy with this  
2099 system actually.
- 2100 R: what aspects of language do you focus on in your teaching writing? For  
2101 example do you focus on grammar, using range of vocabulary or writing  
2102 extended paragraphs?
- 2103 T9: not really grammar but how I am going to give my students grammar. Before  
2104 I give them the topic I ask them to decide the tense. This is my main focus. Yes  
2105 if they need something to ask about it. Yes. I give them examples. Generally, I  
2106 used to ask them what tense do we need for this topic or activity? This is my  
2107 main focus on grammar then I move other things to micro skills like  
2108 punctuations. We divide the mark according to a source not comes from us. The  
2109 source comes from Oxford or Cambridge. How do we for example, divide the  
2110 mark which is important thing? It is not our responsibility. We have to follow the  
2111 system that means experts use. About myself, I never do any thing from my  
2112 mind. Yes, I may be change my way according to some feed back positive or  
2113 negative. But the way we give mark we need to follow the system we have  
2114 learned.
- 2115 R: generally speaking do you focus on accuracy or fluency?
- 2116 T9: accuracy because of the level of students only. We are not native speakers.
- 2117 R: to what extent you focus on grammar will help students to develop their  
2118 writing?
- 2119 T9: very good yes. Sometimes I teach them some grammar and test them as  
2120 some sentences on the board. I write some sentences and ask them what is the  
2121 tense for example what the mistake is so I did questions like correcting the  
2122 mistakes and I focus on structure. It helped them remember. Once that I gave  
2123 them twenty sentences to correct mistakes that I am going to say tiny mistakes  
2124 in definite articles or possessive or we can say the verb or the word order. I  
2125 think they like this one and then at once I did, I remember now, yes we  
2126 discussed grammar about how to write a sentence and a question and it was  
2127 everything in the board and I asked them to write something very similar. I got  
2128 good results from it.
- 2129 R: From your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
2130 teaching writing for students?

2131 T9: that depends on the level. If zero beginner or just beginner like the students  
2132 I am teaching in first year. They are happy with variety of topics especially  
2133 related to their interests, hobbies or social life. Sometimes we encourage our  
2134 students by a text missing some words. I ask them sometimes just to fill the  
2135 gaps, to summarise to make it shorter, or rewrite it again. The level of  
2136 students... I do not know what to say controlling everything even if we are not  
2137 happy with it.

2138 R: what are they useful for?

2139 T9: of course, encouraging the students and make the class active not boring.  
2140 They are not happy to use the same activity with the same class so I change it to  
2141 make the class active. Students feel fresh, happy to do something different. May  
2142 be they find the first one difficult. This is the way I'm using variety of activities.

2143 R: to motivate them?

2144 T9: yes, to motivate them. By the way, I am observing their happiness. If they  
2145 are happy or relaxed, I keep going with this kind of activity.

2146 R: To what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Why? I  
2147 mean do you use those activities as they are from Oxford or Cambridge books or  
2148 you change them to suit the Libyan context?

2149 T9: As a start it works then we have to move. I believe that my students not  
2150 always staying in this context. May be they will move abroad or take some  
2151 courses in the British Council which is completely different the way they do it. I  
2152 believe that I have to move from the context. I use it at the beginning then I  
2153 move to a general topic which can be used every where.

2154 R: how do you present a writing activity?

2155 T9: yes of course. I think the main role of the teacher is to tell students what is  
2156 going on so I used to introduce my topic and what we are going to do and what I  
2157 am going to explain and what the students are going to do in the first stage and  
2158 after that stage what are they going to do. Finally, if it is homework or not or if  
2159 it is only a class activity. I think every thing should be clear in the first stage.  
2160 That is my way.

2161 R: to what extend do you change your role at those stages?

2162 T9: first I explain some adjectives may be the degree of adjectives comparative  
2163 and superlative and then I am going to divide the adjectives according to for  
2164 example face, hair, personality and then I ask them to do different kinds of  
2165 activities to write lists of the activities that they need to describe the face, the  
2166 hair, the build or the body or the personality. This is the first thing and then I  
2167 am going to ask them to write a paragraph.

2168 R: When do students write?

- 2169 T9: I believe writing in the class is more effective. If you ask them to go back  
 2170 home I think half of them will copy it or ask some body to help them. So I  
 2171 believe writing in the class is much better. May be I ask them to do free writing  
 2172 about anything they like. They can give it to me or just read it for us in the  
 2173 class. I give them this chance.
- 2174 R: what kind of writing is assigned?
- 2175 T9: Firstly, I have to encourage them to write an action that they like.  
 2176 Sometimes I ask them just to write three sentences or a paragraph about  
 2177 something interesting happened to you last weekend or during the way or if we  
 2178 have special occasion here in Libya or at the university we can ask them to write  
 2179 about it. If you like music write about it, if you like shopping write about it.  
 2180 Anything you like write about it and this is I give it as individual activity.
- 2181 R: Is it timed writing? How many drafts are collected?
- 2182 T9: yes, it is kind of time limit even according to the activity we do. Sometimes I  
 2183 give them 10-15 maximum.
- 2184 R: How many drafts are collected? Is it one draft or they write more than one?
- 2185 T9: Not actually in these lectures because we have two hours roughly. I think we  
 2186 have to do short activities.
- 2187 R: In what way students' involvement is encouraged in the lesson?
- 2188 T9: they like writing. I am talking about my class. Sometimes if I feel the  
 2189 feedback I got is negative or bad. I move to something interesting and other  
 2190 material. Sometimes I give them pictures and ask them to write about it. Once I  
 2191 asked them to write a card for one student that we imagined that is leaving as  
 2192 Farwell card. What kind of phrases expressed. Sometimes we have babies for  
 2193 students, wedding, passing exams; her father comes from Hajj. They like it.  
 2194 They enjoy it.
- 2195 R: What steps do you take to achieve this goal: to make them more motivated to  
 2196 write?
- 2197 T9: I believe changing the way of teaching writing during the class, using variety  
 2198 of activities; you have to find out from your experience, from observing  
 2199 students, from their feedback their interests that help.
- 2200 R: Also from selecting useful material
- 2201 T9: yes from selecting useful material.
- 2202 R: so you think more about process writing that product?
- 2203 T9: definitely, writing is a process.

- 2204 R: You have mentioned that the culture does not affect your teaching?
- 2205 T9: I don't believe other sides affect my teaching. I hope to stop it and explain  
2206 it to my students. Always I used to say English is global language so I think  
2207 culture should help me. It is not negative side.
- 2208 R: in general, are you happy about the course?
- 2209 T9: I am happy with what I did but the results are not yet. Here, unfortunately I  
2210 am going to tell. Really sad to say that we focus on the results by the end so it is  
2211 really bad. But generally I am happy because I have students who are really  
2212 happy with me and that is the most interesting thing about teaching. I think if  
2213 your students are happy, then you are happy.
- 2214 R: how do you know that they are happy?
- 2215 T9: sometimes I ask students how the questions are, asking then I never ask  
2216 them to write it I ask them orally. Do you like the questions? They say yes and  
2217 sometimes if I mention that the time is 15 minutes or 20 minutes and some  
2218 students finish let's say before that so I check their work and if it is ok. I think  
2219 that is the most important theme. That is the teacher is waiting the time that  
2220 students finish before the time you expect them to do so and I think I am happy  
2221 when I ask them do you like the questions? And most of them say yes.
- 2222 R: how do you evaluate students writing?
- 2223 T9: of course according feedback when I receive their feedback I imagine first  
2224 did they thinking right or for example answer the whole questions. Let's say for  
2225 example what if we asked them to write two or three paragraphs. First, I am  
2226 going to count is it the paragraph there or not and secondly, I am going to have  
2227 some criteria like punctuation, grammar, and structures. Let's see the border of  
2228 students in their language if they are in high level will focus on the linking words  
2229 and discourse markers which is really important. For example, if we have an  
2230 argument, the first paragraph should be against. How they started for example  
2231 writing an email how they ended. So we have different criteria we have to  
2232 follow. Generally, the language, how many paragraphs we asked them to answer  
2233 the question and how many paragraphs we asked for. Then we focus on the  
2234 language as I told you punctuation or grammar, may be the layout.
- 2235 R: how do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?
- 2236 T9: yes. For example let's imagine that I asked them to write three paragraphs  
2237 and the mark is 15. Five marks for each paragraph and then. This five including  
2238 punctuation, grammar, spelling for example, if my students write the three  
2239 paragraphs lets imagine I will give half the mark. Secondly, I am going to focus  
2240 on grammar if it is ok. Then the mark is going up.
- 2241 R: in the future if you have the chance to attend workshop about writing what  
2242 skills would you like to improve as writing teacher?

2243 T9: by the way I have been in workshop last year about writing TOEFL. It was in  
 2244 the Academy and it was organised by USA embassy and I attended another one  
 2245 about writing business. But generally, I think what we need is how to apply these  
 2246 kinds of workshops in the class. It is not easy. About my self I like to say that a  
 2247 teacher of writing is like a solidier to follow the instructions that he/she has  
 2248 learned because there is no way to create more stages on how to teach writing.  
 2249 We can make it simple we can make it easy we can make it nice. But we have to  
 2250 follow the same stages. I think the teacher of writing should be I do not know if I  
 2251 say the safe stage because writing is a process. Some kinds that you have to  
 2252 follow as a teacher. So if you follow them, I think you will get a very good  
 2253 feedback.

2254 R: thank you

2255 T9: thank you very much. I wish you good luck to finish your study and I really  
 2256 like your topic. I hope that I gave you something useful. Thank you.

2257 T10:

Teacher:T10	Degree: MA/ Sudan	Teaching experience: 6 years
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2258

2259 R: thanks for accepting to answer the interview questions

2260 T10: you are welcome

2261 R: what preparations or training have you received to enable you being a writing  
 2262 teacher?

2263 T10: you mean my own qualifications, well I have Master degree, Master degree  
 2264 in English Language teaching.

2265 R: what about training courses.

2266 T10: training courses not in this department but in another institute which is like  
 2267 I received practical training. I mean in the course you will teach and this going  
 2268 to be supervised.

2269 R: as part of the Master Degree.

2270 T10: no not as part of it after getting Master degree.

2271 R: as professional, what are the sources of your ideas about teaching?

2272 T10: main source of ideas for teaching writing. The first one is the creativity of  
 2273 students oh! You are talking about me as a teacher. My own sources first of all. I



2274 have this guided sources that I have. A guided by what the syllabus say So the  
2275 sources that I rely on just depends on the syllabus. For example if the syllabus  
2276 says you are gonna teach letter writing so the sources will be focusing on letter  
2277 writing. If it is writing letters and essays, may be I am going to apply that. I do  
2278 use the internet a lot. As a teacher you have to fish out or you have to come  
2279 through, you have to look through the book to see whether it is relevant to the  
2280 syllabus.

2281 R: what about internet websites do you have any one in specific.

2282 T10: internet websites sure I like Cambridge websites. They have a couple of  
2283 teaching resources.

2284 R: like what?

2285 T10: like Cambridge ELT. They call it resources for teachers also BBC and British  
2286 Council. Those three are helpful.

2287 R: what difficulties do you face in teaching writing for students?

2288 T10: it is not an easy skill first so sure there are difficulties. What happens is you  
2289 have to know how to take care of a difficulty. Don't let a difficulty mediate your  
2290 teaching. Try to make it as interesting as possible. Basically, the difficulty is a  
2291 very simple. It is a practical thing so you must ask students to write. That is the  
2292 most difficult part of it. Once you get over the difficulty that they are able to  
2293 write and once you get them convinced that it is important so we have to do it  
2294 and get them start writing then that is half of the job. So the rest is just to push  
2295 them to continue but to get them start is really tough because most of them  
2296 they don't even write in their own language. So how will they write in English  
2297 which is a foreign language?

2298 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
2299 experience in teaching?

2300 T10: yes. Changes are basically are about it becomes a little bit smoother,  
2301 softer, faster for you. You've learned over time that you expect than to pose a  
2302 kind of difficulty at certain level so you can proactively take care with that.  
2303 That is the most thing is the fact that you can proactively determine or have a  
2304 thought even before you go in that they may face this difficultly so if you know  
2305 that. You take care of it that is the basic change now I know the students  
2306 difficult areas so taking care of that before the problem comes in. But basically  
2307 about the curricula let's say for example writing an essay some procedures that  
2308 they follow 20 years ago did not change. The presentation method has changed  
2309 definitely. Because the teacher is always like someone who is going to handle  
2310 something if he try one method and it does not work so he has to try another  
2311 method. So the methodology also goes with the class. Sometimes you have very  
2312 intelligent students and sometimes you have group that are not as interested as  
2313 intelligent students. So you need to have a quick look at what they call it  
2314 placement.

2315 R: what cause this change?

2316 T10: yes for example at the end of the academic year, we have exams. If the  
2317 performance of the students lets say we have two methods of teaching. One  
2318 method of teaching writing is to write a letter in the board. Each student will  
2319 come up with a sentence to come up a letter as if it is written by one student.  
2320 This is one method, the other method could be each student should write in a  
2321 note book and you have to look at it correct it as a teacher. If you take one way  
2322 like writing in the board and you find students performance or the interest level  
2323 is better for the class so you apply it. So what informed really as I said what  
2324 informs the changes is the level of reception and acceptability and performance  
2325 in exams and tests. They have texts to do. If you find the level is much better in  
2326 that way so you by experience sure. What I mean by experience is based on my  
2327 experience my method of teaching depends a lot in students needs, knowing the  
2328 aims and objective of learning will help me to match my experience and give  
2329 them what they need.

2330 R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

2331 T10: in teaching writing my goals is the ends. Let's say the ends justify the  
2332 means. At the end of most students in the class will go and sit for exams.

2333 R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example do you use authentic  
2334 material or course book?

2335 T10: as I told you before because the course books sometimes does not really  
2336 help you a lot. I depend on so many other things, most of it photocopying  
2337 materials from other books, other writing books or my own idea. So you go  
2338 through many books and you may come up with an idea that you may not find it  
2339 exactly in a book.

2340 R: what do you take into consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

2341 T10: before selecting a material as I told you have to know what level are they  
2342 and what topics are you teaching.

2343 R: so in general you take students needs into consideration. What do they really  
2344 need from the course?

2345 T10: exactly that is the idea, talking students into consideration and their needs  
2346 and also their level.

2347 R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing for example, grammatical  
2348 structure, the use of range of vocabulary?

2349 T10: writing is a kind skill that needs all the things that you have mentioned.  
2350 You have to be grammatically correct and you have to have the right sentence  
2351 structure and also have to what I can say it is like a table if you like. A table can  
2352 not stand in one leg. So basically if students don't have grammar or vocabulary

2353 they can't write. So you have to look at the grammar, you have to look at  
2354 vocabulary, you have to look at the sentence structure and at the same time it is  
2355 we call grammatical structure or sentence structure and you have to look at  
2356 what they produce, is it creative, is it interesting. That is part of it.

2357 R: in what way that will help students to develop their writing?

2358 T10: definitely, if the student is correct grammatically and the vocabulary is  
2359 right and grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and creativity are correct in  
2360 this case it will help them in all aspects because I remember I have to give them  
2361 examples. If you have excellent or the best student who is the best at grammar  
2362 and you have another who is an average grammar student and if they write  
2363 books for example one of them will have better creativity. A creative student  
2364 who is a little bit weak in grammar, still his book is better than the one that he  
2365 is the best in grammar but he has got no creativity. Comes in this way. It helps  
2366 them in this way because at the moment you write a book, a story, a letter, an  
2367 essay and there is no creativity there.

2368 R: what do you mean by creativity?

2369 T10: creativity lets take a writer who is writing books, story books. What how  
2370 could grammar is if the book is not interesting. I mean he didn't think very well  
2371 and come up with interesting story. He is gonna sell. People won't buy the book.  
2372 So that is the mission in writing to be grammatically correct. Use the right  
2373 vocabulary and sentences should be punctuated and write the correct linking  
2374 words and you have to be creative because as I told but best grammar students  
2375 may write a book and no body likes it so it depends.

2376 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
2377 teaching writing for students?

2378 T10: activities that are useful for teaching writing are one: you have to let your  
2379 students write. Practice makes perfect. No matter how well he speaks or listens  
2380 it be. That is one of the most important things.

2381 R: do you use any other activities?

2382 T10: another activity of course if I think about creativity that means ok first of  
2383 all. You need to brainstorm a topic and to plan you have to write and before  
2384 that you need to discover who you are. If you write best after have a cup of  
2385 coffee for instance and in the exam you won't have a cup of coffee because it  
2386 will have a great influence on your performance. You have to be at the peak of  
2387 your performance that is what you have to teach them but while learning you  
2388 have to take care of those things even you have to show them the procedures of  
2389 how to do it and you have possibly to do it for them one more time then let  
2390 them do it.

2391 R: what are they useful for?

2392 T10: brainstorming a topic means if you can assimilate it you can assimilate it to  
2393 some one who is writing thesis for example before that he needs to write  
2394 literature review. For a literature review you need to read about the topic. You  
2395 need to know it first so if you have a topic. For example write about  
2396 transportation system. You can't just write about transportation system. You  
2397 need to do research first and make sure that you have some facts and  
2398 brainstorming and thinking about it and possibly make an outline.

2399 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context??

2400 T10: most of them you need to make them up yourself.

2401 R: could you please give examples?

2402 T10: if you ask students to write a memo may be you can give him a scenario and  
2403 he has taken a position, a role play. Let's say a manger in a company and a staff  
2404 member. The activity is so important because the students will stop being a  
2405 student and he is now a member in a company.

2406 R: what is meant by my question is do you change them according to the  
2407 context?

2408 T10: I got what you mean. Definitely you can not look at drinking alcohol for  
2409 example or something is not allowed. You have to look at the culture and the  
2410 religion also. You have to think of the community and the learner. I mean if you  
2411 teach him some thing that he never heard and he might never use it is not  
2412 important for him. So you need to think about that.

2413 R: how do you present a writing activity?

2414 T10: one and the most important thing is that they have to know what is the  
2415 topic of the day. Possibly, now we are teaching report. Stage two, before I give  
2416 anything to students most important to me to know where are they today before  
2417 the lesson and where I am expecting them to be after the lesson. Do you have an  
2418 idea about report and different questions that they can ask you. So let them  
2419 know and you also know before you start and then introduce it, just by giving  
2420 the definition of report. Then go a head by telling them where do you need it  
2421 and how do you do it and to whom do you write it and then you go to the  
2422 content what do you exactly. In this way you will take the way possibly by you  
2423 understand procedures if they understood the procedures then let them write  
2424 themselves.

2425 R: To what extent do you change your role at those stages?

2426 T10: sometimes I really change the role especially sometimes you become lucky  
2427 and you have good class and you do not have to start from scratch. That is why it  
2428 is important to find out what people knows about the topic because most of  
2429 them will just keep quite. So your role while teaching will change from a scratch  
2430 beginner or someone in the middle when they have pre knowledge.

2431 R: To what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

2432 T10: this really depends because they always hesitate but the responsibility rely  
2433 on you to convince them. That is important in most cases. I find them asking for  
2434 more extra sheets to write which means they are making progress.

2435 R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

2436 T10: really it is simple step and the easiest step to that is know them first. Do  
2437 you understand if I know then first if you put it to them in their context that is  
2438 the way but if you just say report what is report. so the practicality of the real  
2439 pro of the that is related to their jobs gives sort of motivation. If they can not  
2440 see what are they learning to fit to their jobs then why they are learning.

2441 R: at what stage do students write?

2442 T10: writing is the last thing first thing you do explain so they understand the  
2443 procedures. So when it comes to writing they need first of all to know the topic,  
2444 brainstorm about it, plan it, and writing comes at the end. It is not in the last.  
2445 Because after they write you have to correct. After correction you have to bring  
2446 it back to them.

2447 R: what kind of writing is assigned?

2448 T10: in most cases, writing topics depend on the syllabus for example if you are  
2449 writing essay, story which is composition, the essay could be argumentative, and  
2450 they may write formal, informal letters, complaint. It depends on what the  
2451 syllabus exactly says that is exactly what they will write.

2452 R: is it timed

2453 T10: yes the time is part of it.

2454 R: Do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version?

2455 T10: no. I just train them to write straight away.

2456 R: how do you evaluate their writing?

2457 T10: ok, it is basically based on tasks, their own creativity. It is divided into two  
2458 but basically they are six. You can have the mechanics of writing and you can  
2459 have the creativity. What I mean by mechanics is accuracy. You can see that of  
2460 course I am talking about spelling, punctuation, use of words, register and that  
2461 is what mean and when I say mechanical accuracy the other one I mean task. If  
2462 it is writing a letter see if he followed the instructions then grammar, the range  
2463 of vocabulary, did you punctuate and use the right linking word.

2464 R: How do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

2465 T10: once they understood your presentation, your teaching as a teacher you  
2466 will ask them whether they understand and they will say yes. And also as a  
2467 teacher you have exams so the procedure will be right or wrong that I use will be  
2468 based on the outcome, the body language, the tests, the feedback and the  
2469 writing.

2470 R: if you have the chance to attend any workshop about writing what skills  
2471 would you like to improve as writing teacher?

2472 T10: as a writing teacher. This difficulty I can say. To improve myself as writing  
2473 teacher it could be register choice talking about formality of writing. Because  
2474 especially you know if you write formal letter so it is formal and if you write  
2475 informal letters so it is informal. The neutral register it is debatable do you  
2476 know what I mean. To write an article or for publication the choice of register is  
2477 all yours so maybe I'd like to expand my information there.

2478 R: thanks

2479 T10: thank you

2480 T11:

<b>Teachers:</b> T11	<b>Degree:</b> MA/Libya	<b>Teaching Experience:</b> 8 years
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2481

2482 R: what preparations or training have you received to enable you being a writing  
2483 teacher?

2484 T11: for me for myself no training courses at all. Just by myself I have the  
2485 language and about writing so I try to build myself by looking for the material  
2486 and using the internet and using different books.

2487 R: As professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching  
2488 writing?

2489 T11: the mains sources are the internet and books.

2490 R: could you please give me some examples

2491 T11: any book which you find on the cover writing. If you have a book and there  
2492 is writing on the cover. This what I am trusting and bring the book and try to  
2493 look at the content and try to look at what is useful to my students and use it.

2494 R: what about internet resources

2495 T11: I usually use the BBC websites.

- 2496 R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching?
- 2497 T11: this is a big problem. The difficulty that we face students usually translate  
2498 word for word going to their mother tongue where we have a lot of differences  
2499 between the target language and the mother tongue and we face this and we try  
2500 to make students avoid translating word for word and using English expressions.
- 2501 R: what about their level?
- 2502 T11: do you mean the levels that I teach.
- 2503 R: I mean the students' level in writing.
- 2504 T11: it depends. It depends on the student himself or herself. You may find 14 or  
2505 15 are interested in the language and the rest are not they who only are forced  
2506 to come and study. And sometimes you find only two or three are interested and  
2507 others are not. Interesting in the language and in the material that you teach  
2508 depends on what on the students you are teaching and why are they here,  
2509 because sometimes they are forced. Just his/ her father wants him/her to learn  
2510 English so they are coming here and they are not interested in the language so if  
2511 we want to be successful in we have to look for who are interested in the  
2512 language. If somebody is interested in something then it will be better to deal  
2513 with him.
- 2514 R: how do you deal with these problems?
- 2515 T11: the Arabic interference yes I told you that I usually if I find some expression  
2516 because usually we try to find the common mistakes which students use in  
2517 writing for example grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes. Then we pick them  
2518 and try to concentrate on them. Do not use this one because it is not English it is  
2519 Arabic. This one is used and so and so. So you try to collect these mistakes that  
2520 are common they usually make them and we try to explain and try to give more  
2521 examples about them just to avoid them again. Because as you know the  
2522 difference between the mother language and the target language. Sometimes is  
2523 very huge and this is the problem sometimes it is not because for example if you  
2524 teach if you are teaching English to French guy. It is different to an Arabic lady  
2525 or gentleman. You know the European languages are of the root but English and  
2526 Arabic are different roots so you will face or you will find more examples when  
2527 you teach Arabic students and you will find more mistakes when you teach  
2528 Arabic students and you will find less when you teach the European different  
2529 languages.
- 2530 R: can you mention examples of those common mistakes
- 2531 T11: like when we say for example in our mother tongue we have the adjectives  
2532 followed by the noun so we say for example student good or student clever in  
2533 Arabic which should be a clever student. this is one of the mistakes sometimes  
2534 we use expressions we never use I went to shopping or I went to visit we never  
2535 use it in English but I Arabic it is used and it is commonly used so if we say in  
2536 Arabic ( ) which means if you translate it word for word I went to visit my friend

2537 and which is not used in English you just say I visited my friend. So this is one of  
2538 the common mistakes which are committed or made by students.

2539 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching as you gained  
2540 experience?

2541 T11: it depends on the level of students and the area you are teaching on some  
2542 times you have students who know the language or at least know how to speak it  
2543 so here if they know the language know how to use the language in spoken  
2544 English or spoken context. It is different from the written context. So it is easier  
2545 for the teacher to build on that so do not use this one because it is written. Or  
2546 sometimes we have different ways to say something or we ignore some  
2547 grammatical items in spoken English for example English people usually say how  
2548 is things? Which is 'is' and plural. Is is singular and things is plural but if you say  
2549 it, it is acceptable to say that by people he will say everything is all right but if  
2550 you write it 'how is things' it should be wrong because you are writing 'is' which  
2551 is singular with 'things' which is plural. So this the way. If you are teaching  
2552 somebody who knows how to use the language in spoken English. It is very easy  
2553 for you to make him write it as sometimes you teach students who do not write  
2554 or speak it. So you have to follow different method or different situation. For  
2555 example so first you give them sentences. For example you write subject verb  
2556 complement and you give him example. So you have to give them the structure  
2557 then to follow them step by step. Then you may teach them how to put for  
2558 example adjectives in order. So this the way we teach it sometimes when we  
2559 know that our students a lot of or different ways to teach them how to write.  
2560 For example, first we start with free composition and just ask the students to  
2561 talk about himself give me some sentences. Then ask him to write whatever he  
2562 wants. This is we call at least I call it free composition, express yourself. Then  
2563 we finish that and start which what I call it picture composition. I give them  
2564 some pictures for example some people who are having lunch and I want them to  
2565 describe what are they doing or someone who is writing something or some boys  
2566 who are playing football. I will ask him to look at the pictures and try to give me  
2567 one two, three sentences of each picture then from these pictures I will have a  
2568 topic this is one way. The other way is sometimes we use oral composition when  
2569 I say ok today we will talk about shopping and I want you today to prepare some  
2570 services and I start asking students when did you go shopping. Who did you go  
2571 with? What did you buy? What did you eat? And so and so. This is oral and after  
2572 we have different ideas. One says I went yesterday, one says I went with my  
2573 mother. One says I went with a friend then we collect those ideas and start  
2574 writing. This is one of the ways.

2575 R: why you have changed your way? Why you have started using free composition  
2576 or picture composition.

2577 T11: when I ask students to write free composition they will express themselves.  
2578 They will express what they have in mind so here I will know what are the  
2579 common mistakes that they are usually doing because I said write about  
2580 yourself. So for example he will write I am writing a postcard yesterday. So I will  
2581 say no it is not like this you should write so and so. So to give the students a  
2582 chance to express himself so he will naturally speak about what he wants, what  
2583 he knows. So here you may find the mistakes that students may make and you



2584 start correcting students' mistakes. Why? Because they spoke naturally.  
2585 Sometimes they do not know, for example, how to use 'going to' as if it is future  
2586 'I am going to start', 'I am going to play'. So when you say, 'ok write', he will  
2587 write something which is not English which is completely wrong in grammar. So  
2588 when you give him a chance to write free composition, he will speak about  
2589 himself. He will write whatever he thinks it is right. Sometimes he will use  
2590 different structure, sometimes he translates word for word. Here free  
2591 composition gives the teacher an idea about how the students think.

2592 R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

2593 T11: it depends on the subject. Ideas are not always the same. Something if we  
2594 want to talk about a visit to a factory so the goal is different. Let's say in brief  
2595 the goal is different from one situation to another. So it is not always the same.  
2596 The goal is writing some good sentences, correct them in a good way.

2597 R: what sort of teaching materials do you use, for example authentic material or  
2598 course book?

2599 T11: I usually I use course book. I use a photo copies from different books  
2600 whenever I find a book which about writing and I'm interested of this topic or  
2601 that so I use photocopies of material that I want to teach and give them to my  
2602 students discuss it with them if there are some words which are different for  
2603 them. They do not know how to pronounce them, how to spell them or they do  
2604 not know the meaning of those words. I explain first the meaning of those  
2605 words, how to pronounce them then we start doing our sheets together.

2606 R: What do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

2607 T11: the selection is depends on the level of students, this is the first one, the  
2608 main points. What is the level I am going to give this material to. This is one the  
2609 second one is to find the material that serves the aim I want to reach to. So this  
2610 is the selection of material depends on students themselves what is the level I  
2611 am teaching and the goal too.

2612 R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example,  
2613 grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary?

2614 T11: that depends on the common mistakes they are using sometimes as I told  
2615 you before when I have composition I know that my students are very poor in  
2616 grammar for example then I focus on grammar or grammatical terms. For  
2617 example I teach them how to use present simple or present continuous or how to  
2618 use present perfect. Sometimes students do not know how to use this one  
2619 perfectly. So according to the mistakes that arise while writing, I focus on  
2620 whatever. Sometimes they do not know how to spell even simple words so I give  
2621 them dictation.

2622 R: in what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing?

2623 T11: when I explain the rule more or when I give spelling dictation. I think that  
2624 next time, if you for example taught students how to use 'going to' or how to  
2625 use 'present simple' instead of present continuous or present perfect instead of  
2626 past simple. When you teach him how to use it perfectly, you give him more  
2627 examples you will expect as a teacher that they are not going to make mistakes  
2628 why because you have trained them to.

2629 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
2630 teaching writing for students?

2631 T11: in teaching writing usually the main thing that makes students good in  
2632 writing is to give them examples or exercises, as the more practice the better  
2633 you will be. So more practice about one idea so they will develop it themselves.  
2634 You give them three sentences so they can write 4, 5, 6 sentences so it depends  
2635 on the way you are presenting the material. Sometimes I give them the material  
2636 and I give them practice how to write a sentence 1,2,3,4 then according to this  
2637 situation they themselves will improve themselves and try to do better.

2638 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

2639 T11: now to talk about culture of course you know that the Libyan culture or the  
2640 Arab culture is different from the other cultures which is for example something  
2641 which is allowed in European culture is not allowed in our culture so we have to  
2642 avoid these things.

2643 R: examples

2644 T11: one of them is using some expressions for example as a Libyan society if  
2645 you say to a lady who you do not have a strong relationship with if you say  
2646 darling then she wont accept it. But if you are in European society and you say  
2647 darling so I think it is more acceptable than in Libya.

2648 R: how do you present a writing activity?

2649 T11: the stages, as I said, what is the sort of writing I want to sometimes we  
2650 present for example outlines on the board for example. You want to visit  
2651 somebody, or you want to go to the sea. Then, I put some questions on the  
2652 board when, how, and these things three or four questions, not a complete  
2653 questions. For example who go with? How go? And they start according to my  
2654 questions. They start answering them putting them or connecting them using  
2655 connecting words if possible, using relative clauses if possible as I told it  
2656 depends on the level you are teaching so we may put something on the board or  
2657 we may just give it orally. Sometimes if I am starting a free composition then I  
2658 just say talk about yourself or imagine that you are to meeting a friend or  
2659 imagine that you are writing a postcard to open friend then they start writing so  
2660 this one is free I give no questions. Sometimes I give them picture composition  
2661 where I should put some words and make the students know what they mean and  
2662 start writing.

2663 R: to what extent do you change your roles at those stages?

2664 T11: changing depends on the level I am teaching if I am teaching a higher level.  
2665 Sometimes I go with the same stage or the same rate with students. Sometimes  
2666 if I am teaching and it depends more on the level of students, the knowledge of  
2667 students, the background of students. Sometimes you find students who do not  
2668 know anything about English or how to use grammar correctly. Then you have to  
2669 repeat and repeat so it depends on the class you are teaching.

2670 R: To what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

2671 T11: of course yes especially if you give them something which interesting from  
2672 the daily life they living in. If it is summer and you are talking about the beach.  
2673 Then they will enjoy. They will engage to the situation why because you are  
2674 talking about something which is real which is real which you are doing everyday  
2675 or at least every weak.

2676 R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

2677 T11: just they write something they give me their papers. I go and try to correct  
2678 them and sometimes I go around trying to correct mistakes on this point and ask  
2679 students what is this? Oh! This is wrong. This one is grammatical mistakes. This  
2680 one is spelling mistake and sometimes there is no time because they are writing  
2681 a very long piece of composition then I leave that to going home, correcting  
2682 them and I usually put the worst writing on the board and start asking the  
2683 students to correct without mentioning whose paper is this. Without mentioning  
2684 the name I just write that one and try to find the mistakes and themselves.

2685 R: at what stage do students write and what kind of writing is?

2686 T11: they only write some sentences at the beginning.

2687 R: is it timed?

2688 T11: it depends on the topic we are discussing. Sometimes they write it in ten  
2689 minutes or fifteen minutes. If I asked them to write three sentences then ten are  
2690 more if I asked them to write eighty words so it depends on the task.

2691 R: and do they write more than one draft?

2692 T11: no. It is one draft and then we correct it we correct the mistakes then I  
2693 give them back then they rewrite it again avoiding the mistakes that they have  
2694 done.

2695 R: How do you evaluate your students' writing?

2696 T11: usually I put mark out of ten, out of fifteen then I give them the papers  
2697 back.

2698 R: depending on what?

2699 T11: depending on grammar, spelling and meaning everything

2700 T12:

Teacher:T12	Degree: PHD/ India	Teaching Experience: 22 years
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2701

2702 R: thank you for allowing me to observe your class and to accept to answer my  
2703 interview questions.

2704 T12: you are welcome.

2705 R: what preparations (training) have you received to help you in teaching English  
2706 writing?

2707 T12: as a student, I was not giving any training in teaching. Only after  
2708 completing my post graduate, my university gave me a special course about  
2709 writing and there is another department inside the college which provided me  
2710 with the opportunity for getting many courses in writing helping me to learn  
2711 writing in particular.

2712 R: was it compulsory course?

2713 T12: the university course was compulsory but the others were purely optional.

2714 R: what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

2715 T12: it was all books mainly books because during the eighties and nineties there  
2716 were not many material course books available. Still the British council was a  
2717 major area to find some books or materials.

2718 R: as professional what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching  
2719 writing?

2720 T12: the main sources are mainly the books available in the British Council  
2721 library such as MacMillan and Oxford publications after that some materials that  
2722 our teachers gave us which may be useful but a little.

2723 R: you mean from the university?

2724 T12: from where we graduate and get our masters. Some of the activities, they  
2725 are few very few but useful ones

2726 R: can you give me examples of those?

2727 T12: my teachers' particularly one of my teachers helped more to develop my  
2728 vocabulary. Used to give us in every class used to give us ten difficult words  
2729 which are completely new most of them and used to check in the next class the  
2730 meanings and to try to use them in sentences. Sometimes in the beginning in the  
2731 initial stages of writing I give students they will do use it. They try to refer to a  
2732 dictionary, they will know the meaning, they will use it. It is kind of ice breaking  
2733 at the beginning

2734 R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

2735 T12: the major difficulty is the lack of exposure to the writing skill. Some of  
2736 them have very good ideas but they do not know how to frame good sentences  
2737 and how to put ideas in their writing. Most important difficulty is the less  
2738 exposure to writing skill. That is a major difficulty. Structure in particular. Many  
2739 of them know theoretically but when it comes to practice they can identify but  
2740 they can not write a simple or complex sentence. As I mentioned earlier, the  
2741 students are not motivated in writing in the secondary level or in the primary  
2742 level. They are not be given writing. Listening they are ok, speaking they are ok  
2743 but when it comes to writing they are not motivated and that is one problem  
2744 and they are not trained in any way whether in grammatical structure or in  
2745 vocabulary so in any way they are not. So this is a major area of difficulty when  
2746 it comes to teach writing.

2747 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
2748 experience in teaching?

2749 T12: it is really I will give them some exercises like what I said earlier like  
2750 vocabulary building and giving them some grammatical structure so that they  
2751 will be able to write sentences properly. Once they will be able to write  
2752 sentences naturally then we will start to teach them how to use transitions and  
2753 linkers everything.

2754 R: what prompted this change?

2755 T12: it is the need based teaching whenever I go to class then I will take the first  
2756 two or three lectures just to know them. Then, I will check up my plan that  
2757 varies from one class to another and varies from one topic to another topic also.

2758 R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

2759 T12: goals will be different from one class to another class, depending on the  
2760 necessity and capacity after giving them some tests to know the level of the  
2761 class the average.

2762 R: is it written test?

2763 T12: I begin with spoken one. I speak with them and ask them some questions.  
2764 Later, I give them some sentence like changing the structure or some simple  
2765 exercises. Just to know the level and after that I will take a standard and first  
2766 thing I will go to their level and then try to help them correct their different

2767 kinds of mistakes and finally at the end of two months or three months it takes  
 2768 time so by then source of them will like to learn and some of them will be  
 2769 better. It depends on individual efforts.

2770 R: is it your personal goal or it is the policy?

2771 T12: I do not think that it is personal because the university is helping students  
 2772 to achieve something in their life.

2773 R: what about students' expectations? What do they expect from the course?

2774 T12: certainly because every student comes to the class with little expectations.  
 2775 Some of them have high expectations but I will take them in consideration.  
 2776 Without getting to their expectations, we will not generate any enthusiastic or  
 2777 interest about the topic.

2778 R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or  
 2779 course book?

2780 T12: I am using authentic material only like as I mentioned earlier and Barbra  
 2781 book or like 'College Writing' the book that we are using for second year  
 2782 students.

2783 R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?  
 2784 Why do you select this material in particular?

2785 T12: I always consider the need of students, the level of students, the standards  
 2786 and the knowledge of English. I always take those three things into consideration  
 2787 then select the material depending on their needs.

2788 R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example grammatical  
 2789 structure, the use of range of vocabularies?

2790 T12: in the beginning I give them only sentences. Like try to get topic sentences.  
 2791 Try to get thesis statement so gradually I will develop that to paragraph and  
 2792 basically I give paragraph writing. Because I focus mainly in paragraph writing  
 2793 because mainly my course aims at paragraph writing. I begin with one paragraph  
 2794 and two paragraphs like problem solution paragraphs and cause and effect  
 2795 paragraphs. Then slowly I will come to that essay writing part.

2796 R: in what way that will help students to develop their writing?

2797 T12: basically, the paragraph is a group of sentences related about a topic so  
 2798 that will give them an idea to write about any thing, it will give them the basic  
 2799 structure of writing like the introduction, concluding sentence, supporting  
 2800 details. So they can apply that to real life situations and they can write on  
 2801 anything and that will give them confidence that they can write. Initially I give  
 2802 them topics that are closely related to the culture or society.

2803 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think as useful in  
2804 teaching writing for students?

2805 T12: first activity to make them write in the class simple sentences, paragraph  
2806 in the class. For example, writing topic sentences or how to write concluding  
2807 sentences. So I feel the more practice that I give is more useful for students.

2808 R: what are they useful for?

2809 T12: those activities are useful to frame: they have the ideas but not how to  
2810 express them. My aim is to help them to express them in proper English if not  
2811 very good English.

2812 R: can you give examples of topics?

2813 T12: it is paragraph writing in the Libyan context. I will ask them to write about  
2814 the department, the college, the beach, or the place that they really like or  
2815 something like the Roman sites in Subratha or Leptis Magna. About the traffic  
2816 also, they have some problems like the traffic jam. Very familiar things or noise  
2817 pollution is the worst thing that I found in Libya in the classroom, the use of  
2818 mobiles. I will give them topics that are relevant and very close to their life so  
2819 they don't need to read a lot about it or to collect material. So they begin and  
2820 some of them are really interested so they come out wonderful essays. And I  
2821 don't correct. I ask them to write drafts.

2822 R: when you say write about what does that imply?

2823 T12: I will specify that activity for example when I say the department. I will  
2824 make it description or I will give them some issues like all that is not gold so I  
2825 will ask them to explain the statement or I will ask them to narrate a story their  
2826 own experience. And I will give example so I will categories it into description,  
2827 narration, example. I will specify the types of material that I expect and before  
2828 that I will give them all the necessary ingredients to explain or ho how to  
2829 explain.

2830 R: to what extent you adapt those activities according to the context? Why?

2831 T12: most of the time I will see the classroom situation more than the learning  
2832 material more than the course book. For me the classroom situation, the  
2833 classroom environment becomes more important and I take culture into  
2834 consideration. Culture with me whenever I teach. And Libyan culture I take  
2835 because they will be aware of cultural aspects. So I will adapt one or two and so  
2836 they will be able to produce some sentences better.

2837 R: how do you present a writing activity?

2838 T12: to begin with I'm only a facilitator in the class. I will give them the basics  
2839 of writing. If I want them to write a paragraph. I will just talk about topic  
2840 sentence, supporting details and the concluding sentence. I will refresh their

2841 memories and I will give them to write. When they write, I go to each and every  
2842 student whenever it is possible and I will try to help them to improvise, correct  
2843 and change making it look better looking, giving the final shape.

2844 R: can you describe the stages?

2845 T12: first writing that I do I ask them to do is when I ask them to write a  
2846 paragraph I ask them to underline the topic sentence and the concluding  
2847 sentence and I will ask them to focus on the other supporting sentences based  
2848 on the topic and the main idea that express. So I will ask them to brainstorm  
2849 further ideas. You think about the topic. You just think of relevant ideas that  
2850 are related to the topic, important to the topic or interesting to the topic and  
2851 then I ask them to organise, write, edit, and rewrite. I will give them stages and  
2852 ask them to follow.

2853 R: So you give them instructions and they start writing?

2854 T12: writing and they start practicing after that I go to some students if not all  
2855 depending on the number and I try to help each and every student to better  
2856 their writing.

2857 R: do you think the culture affect your choice of role here in Libya?

2858 T12: I do not think so. So far in Libya, I did not find any difference. Students are  
2859 students basically. I do not think the culture has affected me in my writing class.

2860 R: when do students write?

2861 T12: My intention in this course is to teach them how to write a paragraph and I  
2862 have been taken concepts from the society, culture and for example I ask them  
2863 to write a paragraph about Eid holiday on which is again a cultural point. And  
2864 something like the role of students, the role of college, university, and the  
2865 person they admire many cultural specific things that I take and make them  
2866 more. They enjoy when it is cultural specific.

2867 R: what kind of writing is assigned?

2868 T12: most of the time it is academic writing only though I give them homework  
2869 make them work also some of them do write and bring it back for correction and  
2870 they will follow the instructions. They do it.

2871 R: is it timed? How many drafts are collected?

2872 T12: it is always timed writing because of the time limit that we have and it is  
2873 one draft and usually, I give instructions for suggest changes and ask them to  
2874 rewrite. Some of them rewrite. Also they practice.

2875 R: in what ways students' involvement is encouraged in the lesson?



2876 T12: In a very positive way because I feel that without the involvement of  
 2877 students, I can not achieve any thing in my course rather I will like to encourage  
 2878 them and make them participate in every activity in the class. So it is interactive  
 2879 learning process in writing.

2880 R: What steps do you take to achieve this goal?

2881 T12: first of all, I will select a topic in such a way that is general, common to all,  
 2882 interesting to all so they will have certain amount of the knowledge on the topic  
 2883 to create an interest. So they feel really happy so that they can write better.

2884 R: how do you evaluate their writing?

2885 T12: basically, I will ask them not to give the first draft. I will insist that they  
 2886 should work on more than one draft. At least, two drafts. I will ask them to work  
 2887 on the first draft and then edit and then submit it to me. So after giving also  
 2888 there will be only the minor mistakes. The major mistake for students is  
 2889 spelling. They just do not care about spelling so I insist that spelling must be  
 2890 corrected. Sometimes structure, sometimes the presentation of the topic  
 2891 sentence so I will ask them to revise it once again and I will help to modify here  
 2892 and there. Definitely the total

2893 R: are you satisfied about the course?

2894 T12: I'm satisfied and very happy that at the end of the course some of them  
 2895 have begin writing very well. And those who never wrote any thing started at  
 2896 least to work on some drafts at least and I feel that it is better. I am happy.

2897 R: whenever you give a task to the class is it one for all.

2898 T12: the tasks will be the same. I do not change the tasks but the answers that I  
 2899 expect are different. There are some good students who can write about any  
 2900 thing. There are other students who can never write about anything. So such  
 2901 students now I try to help them so I try to give some personal attention to such  
 2902 students motivating them. My intention is to motivate them. Even if they write  
 2903 wrong sentence first I will say your attempt is good then I will try to correct it so  
 2904 that encouraging they will definitely start writing.

2905 R: are you satisfied about the book?

2906 T12: yes. I feel it is more than enough for our students at present, second year  
 2907 students. It is a good book and I wish to include another book from MacKay. It  
 2908 will also deals with writing and I will take some examples from it also and some  
 2909 other books of writing by MacMillan or Oxford. I will make use of those books  
 2910 some of them.

2911 R: one more question: would you like to attend any workshops about teaching  
 2912 writing?

2913 T12: it will be my pleasure to attend any course in writing so that I can learn  
2914 something.

2915 R: if you have the chance to attend any work shops what skills would you like to  
2916 improve?

2917 T12: I would like to improve paragraph writing and essay writing and any  
2918 academic writing which may be useful in the class.

2919 T13:

Teacher: T13	Degree: PHD/ India	Teaching Experience: 20 years
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2920

2921 R: thanks for accepting to answer my interview questions and do you have any  
2922 questions before we start.

2923 T13: thank you. Let's start.

2924 R: what preparations or training have you received to help you in teaching  
2925 English writing?

2926 T13: I started my teaching of English almost two decades back when I was to  
2927 teach students they did not know even single word of English. As a fresh  
2928 graduate from my university, I have master of the language. I have a lot of good  
2929 and new ideas about English language teaching. I think formal training will never  
2930 help non native speakers. Your own experience, your interaction with students is  
2931 the great source of teaching or training.

2932 R: can we say that experience is your source of ideas about teaching?

2933 T13: yes, learning is a reward. You take experiment in the class.

2934 R: can we call it self development?

2935 T13: yes, teacher is learning something in his class. The students are also his  
2936 teachers.

2937 R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

2938 T13: to be very frank, to be a teacher teaching speakers of non native speakers  
2939 of English. Students for whom English is a foreign language frankly speaking I  
2940 found some cultural differences which sometimes act as a barrier to English  
2941 writing for example if I will take up a topic related to certain social or cultural  
2942 activities which are lacking in this country. The students will find it difficult to  
2943 write about your ambition, career, what are their plans for the future.

2944 Sometimes they are hesitant. Because of what I believe is because of central  
2945 background they lacking some background information. As a teacher I have to  
2946 deal with these problems and that requires a lot of time and what I do is I do  
2947 them one by one, step by step. I create interest in the students to write, to  
2948 develop their writing, to do more reading so that they can get more exposure  
2949 they can get better exposure to increase the background information. The  
2950 internet is great resource for them. So that helped me a lot in developing their  
2951 background information and some kind of transforming their thoughts which can  
2952 help them in developing their writing skill.

2953 R: you have mentioned internet resources, can you give me examples?

2954 T13: yes. When we talk about the different subjects in which they should  
2955 develop their reading and develop their thoughts. I suggest to them to go to  
2956 Google and through Google they can talk about their society, literature,  
2957 geography, history, climate and many similar subjects like recently we had some  
2958 examples of positive attitudes in life or how to bring happiness in your life so  
2959 there are some abstract subjects also and I am really happy to say that students  
2960 have developed a lot of information, have collected a lot of information, on  
2961 these subjects. Besides there are different topics such as in transport, in  
2962 communication and information technology. They have collected a lot of  
2963 information on these subjects as well. So this has helped students and also it  
2964 depends on the internet that students show. One of the problems that I found is  
2965 that most of them lack interest. There has to be a little bit of understanding to  
2966 them that whatever they learn will be helpful in their career.

2967 R: do you think using the internet will motivate them to collect information  
2968 about different topics?

2969 T13: yes it is. Because as students they should explore all the possibilities of  
2970 getting knowledge, all these resources around them they should explore it. This  
2971 will help them to develop their writing skills.

2972 R: what about students' level in writing?

2973 T13: students' level... (pause) I did need analysis in my first lecture. I did need  
2974 analysis in that I tried to find out what are the different things that they need.  
2975 Areas of learning that is required. And I draw certain parameters like spelling,  
2976 grammar, punctuation, even expression, knowledge of the subject. Sometimes if  
2977 I will ask them to write about information technology they did not know  
2978 anything. If I will ask about the nature, most of them do not know anything  
2979 about nature. So that is a problem that is I sometimes face. So what I  
2980 recommend is that I asked them to do reading if they do reading they can  
2981 develop their writing.

2982 R: What changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
2983 experience in teaching?

2984 T13: as I have ....myself in teaching writing to students in Libya. I found that  
2985 they are slow in learning and I have to modify my speed in teaching them

2986 writing. Of teaching them writing so first of all I made some changes in my pace.  
2987 Second change that I made in the content of my teaching instead of taking essay  
2988 writing as an example in details. I give them some the structure of essay writing.  
2989 I told them that it might not be very long. The teaching of essay writing might  
2990 not be very long. But even if it is three to four pages you should be able to  
2991 understand it in a proper way. Quantity is not important. Quality is important.  
2992 So this is second change I made. Thirdly, I decided to introduce some need based  
2993 content also. For example, I'm teaching third year writing. Students need to go  
2994 for their jobs after graduation. So it includes CV writing, application writing,  
2995 different types of letter writing, job application writing, business letters,  
2996 business communication writing. from that the needs of third year students I  
2997 made those changes in the content.

2998 R: in this context what are the goals that you try to achieve?

2999 T13: as I said I need to develop writing skill in them and that is will be possible  
3000 only when they collect a lot of information on it. They might be good in  
3001 language, good in grammar, in vocabulary because that is kind of class activity.  
3002 We can develop grammar and vocabulary knowledge but where will the ideas  
3003 come from where the thoughts come from. One of my goals in writing teaching  
3004 writing subject is to develop their thoughts to help them collect more ideas  
3005 about the subject. So when they start writing, they should not have the lack of  
3006 information. They should not lack the information and another goal of course  
3007 which come by practice that when they finish this year with me they should be  
3008 able to at least their expressions will be free of mistakes all kind of grammatical  
3009 mistakes, vocabulary mistakes and what ever they write should be perfect piece  
3010 of writing.

3011 R: is it personal goal?

3012 T13: you can not say personal because when you are in the class. The teacher  
3013 and students have a common goal. Both have common goal. The teacher and the  
3014 student I personally believe it is the same. Students come to the university to  
3015 learn and teacher come to the university to teach something. So they have  
3016 common goal.

3017 R: what about students' expectations?

3018 T13: see I find that students are really interested in learning especially those  
3019 specialized in English. I teach two groups. They expect that what ever they learn  
3020 should be relevant. There should not be irrelevant teaching which we introduce  
3021 in the class. So that is one expectation from students. Second expectation, when  
3022 we teach we are prompted to use difficult words and then students expect the  
3023 teacher should explain the difficult words. So that is one thing which I  
3024 understood. I realized from the beginning. So I make use of both simple as well  
3025 as difficult words. But I feel that the teacher should get down to students' level  
3026 to certain extent to help students come up to the level of the teacher. It is  
3027 possible only when the teacher comes down to the level of students and then  
3028 help students go to his level.

- 3029 R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or  
3030 course book?
- 3031 T13: I use course book material. We have different materials available. I will  
3032 give you one copy of them. It is need base kind of curriculum. Then some  
3033 material is available in the internet and as I said so the teacher is free to include  
3034 that material may be at the mid of the term or mid session. He realizes students  
3035 need some material or need some teaching or some subject. He can introduce as  
3036 supplement to what he prescribed at the beginning of a session.
- 3037 R: what do you take into consideration in selecting the material that you teach?
- 3038 T13: students' needs. Students' needs are my first priority. What students need  
3039 because students in third year have different needs from those in first year. So  
3040 students' needs are very important in terms of selecting the material. Secondly,  
3041 the quality of that material. The quality of the exercises available in that  
3042 material. If there are no exercises, then I develop my exercises. They are  
3043 developed according to student's comprehension level. If the students do not  
3044 understand something then there is no point in taking exercises which are  
3045 available by the publisher and that from book exercises are very difficult. Very  
3046 difficult for students to understand them.
- 3047 R: Have you conducted needs analysis?
- 3048 T13: I did the needs analysis by asking them to write on particular subject and I  
3049 collected those writings and went through each one of them and I could find  
3050 that there are students who are good at grammar but others who are not. There  
3051 are some students who are good in vocabulary but others who are not. I find a  
3052 lot of students not dinng about grammatical structure and syntax so what I  
3053 decided that I should have a syllabus I should have a textbook which is related to  
3054 all the types of needs of students and unfortunately I did not find all these ideas  
3055 in a single book so I have to consult 4 or 5 resources and then comprehend all  
3056 these into one which is have suggested to. The students have behaved in a  
3057 manner which I wanted them to do. So my experiment has succeeded.
- 3058 R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing?
- 3059 T13: I basically target the vocabulary because I teach third year which is a final  
3060 year of this privation and most students accept that they have acquired the  
3061 grammatical knowledge and most of them have a good command on grammar.  
3062 What I find lacking is the vocabulary. They are always lacking the right word or  
3063 the right expression, so my focus is to improve their vocabulary.
- 3064 R: in what way that will be helpful?
- 3065 T13: when I focus on vocabulary as I said that words are just clothes to your  
3066 thoughts. The thoughts are given shape by the words. If you do not have the  
3067 right word you are not able to express your thought in the right way. So I have  
3068 designed a lot of techniques to develop their vocabulary. For example we have  
3069 roots of the word, the entomology of words. That will help them to understand

3070 how the words are born, how new words are created. What is the role of suffixes  
3071 and prefixes to frame new words and along with that whenever they come across  
3072 some difficult words I always simplify them. And what I have felt that each of  
3073 my students has got personal kind of dictionary with him/her, that contain some  
3074 of the useful words that are commonly used in every day writing.

3075 R: can you give me examples of the exercises that you use to develop their  
3076 vocabulary?

3077 T13: yes. There are exercises which are based on finding the right word which  
3078 may be a quiz. We give them a quiz and in the quiz there are certain hints to  
3079 them to find the exact word. Sometimes I give them a long word and ask  
3080 them to find the root. Then it becomes easy for them to do the exercise with  
3081 other words. For example, when I give them a word like abbreviate or  
3082 abbreviation, they know that the root is breviate. This word has got prefixes and  
3083 suffixes also. Similarly, brevity is a word from brief. So a lot of exercises I have  
3084 given them. Lots of exercises in which they have to construct verbs out of nouns  
3085 and adjectives out of verbs and like that and there is another exercise in which I  
3086 give them the root for example, psychiatry, sociology. These words are based on  
3087 single root like psyche which is mind or soul. So this is method which can  
3088 increase their vocabulary in just one month they could have 1000 words.

3089 R: from your experience what are the activities that you think are useful in  
3090 teaching writing for students?

3091 T13: see when we talk about activities especially in writing the best activity is to  
3092 write.

3093 R: to practice writing?

3094 T13: to practice writing after they have finished writing. I start with what we  
3095 call it peer evaluation. That is we exchange the sheets so I give the sheet of one  
3096 group to another group in this way they are able to identify the mistakes or give  
3097 some suggestions to the writing of their friends and to their colleagues so they  
3098 are very particular when they are writing. And what I have felt is that sometimes  
3099 while evaluating the writing of their peers they are more conscious about their  
3100 mistakes. While they are writing they forget these things and count the same  
3101 mistakes in their writing. So this is a good exercise to help them learn about  
3102 certain grammatical and vocabulary items.

3103 R: how do you present a writing activity? Can you describe the stages?

3104 T13: there are two methods that I have adopted. One is I give them a subject or  
3105 a title and then we do the brainstorming and the other method is that they are  
3106 given an outline, a subject outline which had already been brainstormed. Both  
3107 methods are working. And I found that more comfortable with the second idea  
3108 with the second method. As they already got the brainstormed idea it is easier  
3109 for them to expand that outline.

3110 R: so the first stage to brainstorm or give them an outline then?

3111 T13: the second stage is that they start to expanding the outline or they start to  
3112 expand the points that have been brainstormed. The third stage is that they  
3113 organize those ideas into paragraphs which is known to them how they should  
3114 introduce ideas into paragraph and how they should control the whole essay and  
3115 the final stage is to give finishing touches to that essay by looking at their  
3116 mistakes, punctuation mistakes, vocabulary mistakes and like that.

3117 R: at what stage do students write?

3118 T13: they write from the first stage. Like what they are brainstorming they are  
3119 also writing. But what I insist on them that they do not write complete  
3120 sentences so just phrases. But when the brainstorming stage is over then I ask  
3121 them to focus more on grammar, sentence structure and when they start  
3122 writing. I insist that when the first draft is complete then in the second draft you  
3123 have to improve the quality of writing.

3124 R: does that mean that they write more than one draft?

3125 T13: yes it is always advisable to write more than one draft and rewriting has got  
3126 a lot advantages. We all know that when they rewrite they come to know about  
3127 their mistakes when they rewrite they are more objective they are looking at it  
3128 with a reader point of view rather than a writer point of view, so that is  
3129 advantage they are getting.

3130 R: what areas do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example,  
3131 grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary, writing extended  
3132 paragraphs...etc? Why?

3133 T13: as I said at the beginning vocabulary. Vocabulary is my first priority,  
3134 vocabulary and particularly the content words verbs, nouns, and adjectives.  
3135 They help to formulate his/her ideas. If the ideas are formulated properly in the  
3136 mind of the students it is easier to students to translate those ideas into English.  
3137 So my focus is vocabulary and through vocabulary students are able to write  
3138 sentences then paragraphs then essay writing. I also do some brainstorming  
3139 exercises. In brainstorming exercises the vocabulary which we use is important. I  
3140 ask students to prepare only points in a piece of paper not to write long  
3141 sentences. Only the points for this ....then need some content words. They need  
3142 to write verbs, nouns and adjectives on a piece of paper and those words can  
3143 order to full sentences.

3144 R: From your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
3145 teaching writing for students?

3146 T13: as I said brainstorming is one very good exercise. It will be in different ways  
3147 as I said on a piece of paper or you can have big charts/ sheets. Put those charts  
3148 on the wall and ask students to give them different pencil colours and ask  
3149 students to write on those charts. It will be kind of picture gallery. Students will  
3150 enjoy and learn some thing. These are the activities that I should recommend for  
3151 the class.

- 3152 R: what are they useful for? What do they give the students chance to improve?
- 3153 T13: because students have to open up. Brainstorming helps them to open up to  
3154 write.
- 3155 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?
- 3156 T13: yes I do. I have to adapt. I have to modify myself up to the level of students  
3157 for example when I teach and give examples like information technology. I find  
3158 that those topics are difficult for students so I modify it so then I started to give  
3159 them topics for their interest. Like the culture, food habits and the history of  
3160 Libya. Things like this, some topics which are very close to them, their best  
3161 friend, my best teacher so these are the topics that I give them. So I think that I  
3162 modified my teaching in terms of subjects that I teach writing and exercises  
3163 which I give to students.
- 3164 R: how do you present a writing activity?
- 3165 T13: I never feel when I go to the class that I am a teacher. I feel that an  
3166 activity is to start where the teachers as well as students both are companions.  
3167 They are partners so I facilitate writing activity. If I want to write on the board I  
3168 ask student to give me idea before start writing. For example, if I find difficult  
3169 word in my book or in students book or if a student raises any question about a  
3170 difficult word or phrase, I help the students first to get a simpler word from  
3171 their own understanding then I modify it. So I do with writing more with a  
3172 facilitator rather than a teacher.
- 3173 R: to what extent you change your role in the class at different stages, for  
3174 example, from controller to facilitator?
- 3175 T13: as I told you that a teacher in a traditional way is considered to be more of  
3176 controller of the class. But I totally do not believe in that. I would be very happy  
3177 even if students are making noise or talking in the class for a constructive  
3178 purpose. In a brain storming session, I find my class the noisiest but if you listen  
3179 carefully, that noise was a discussion about the topic. Four or five in each group  
3180 they are talking and debating.
- 3181 R: trying to convince each other?
- 3182 T13: yes, trying to convince each other. And they one of the group member has  
3183 to write. So before he/she write the complete analysis has to be done of that  
3184 subject. So I never think the teacher needs to play the role of controller always  
3185 and be kind of master of the class. He has to facilitate the learning. Basically,  
3186 his role is to facilitate. As I told you at the beginning that he is gardener. His  
3187 role is a gardener. He has to be very patient.
- 3188 R: to wait for the results?



3189 T13: to wait for the results for one month or two or six months or may be at the  
3190 of the session when students pass out you find out the change has start  
3191 sometimes it comes all of a sudden and sometimes it comes late.

3192 R: what factors that might affect your role?

3193 T13: students behaviour, students knowledge, students cooperative, nature  
3194 whether they cooperate with each other or not and also their impetus. If all  
3195 these things are there in the students and also in the teacher, the willingness to  
3196 adapt himself, willingness to change his role. These are the factors that I think  
3197 very necessary for a class of writing.

3198 R: when do students write? What kind of writing is assigned?

3199 T13: see one thing which I feel that students' are mentally prepared only when  
3200 the writing lecture is there. Suppose if I conduct an extra lecture, extra period  
3201 in writing when students are not prepared. They will find it very difficult. One  
3202 thing which is very important for students. He/she should be ....to write. They  
3203 need to be mentally prepared to write. So most of students follow the schedule  
3204 follow the timetable. If there is writing class in the time table, they come  
3205 mentally prepared. And they want to study only writing. If I want to teach  
3206 conversation or reading comprehension so students will write on the assigned  
3207 section or assigned spot and they come mentally from their homes.

3208 R: What kind of writing is assigned?

3209 T13: as I said, they need to improve their writing step by step. So initially, I ask  
3210 them to write sentences, paragraphs and how to format those paragraphs into  
3211 essay. This is the gradual process. I can not expect students to write an essay in  
3212 the first day. I need to tell them how to write. First of all, how to brainstorm so  
3213 then they will have the ordered ideas together.

3214 R: as a process?

3215 T13: this is the process of writing. I do not give too much of experimental  
3216 writing or descriptive writing or argumentative writing. I only simply see what  
3217 the students are good at. I avoid technical writing because students might not  
3218 function on in them or process writing where a lot of process is there. On hour  
3219 and half because students are also thinking about the next lecture or may be an  
3220 exam is there so he is thinking about that. So it is not possible to do it in the  
3221 class but as homework, I give usually them essays related to argumentative  
3222 writing and I give them sufficient time to do it and collect ideas.

3223 R: is it timed?

3224 T13: I give them ten to fifteen minutes for brain storming and after that, five  
3225 minutes to write. In brainstorming they did what ever ideas are collected. So  
3226 basically twenty minutes paragraph. 20 minutes activity to write a paragraph.

3227 R: and how many drafts?

3228 T13: three drafts. Mainly three drafts are there. First draft the second and the  
3229 final. I ask students to do at least three drafts. Rewriting and rewriting involve  
3230 them practicing. If they practice well they learn some thing. They get new  
3231 ideas. They have time to add or to delete if it is not important. Also when they  
3232 rewrite they find something which is irrelevant so they can delete this part. So I  
3233 always insist that there should be three drafts.

3234 R: in what ways students' involvement is encouraged in the lesson?

3235 T13: this is a very difficult question because students these days are not  
3236 interested about writing. But I find in my specialization group that they are very  
3237 much involved in the learning the writing activity. So I relate the writing activity  
3238 with some other activities like reading or may be report writing. Some of them  
3239 are doing their projects so I relate any activity of writing that I do in the class. I  
3240 relate it with something else. It might be a project or it might be a reading so  
3241 students are encouraged to understand the importance/significance of writing.

3242 R: is it one of your goals?

3243 T13: yes because if any thing is done without any interest it will not have any  
3244 value. So I need to direct some value in their activity and that help to let  
3245 students feel the importance of it.

3246 R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

3247 T13: as I said, first of all my own involvement. If the teacher is distracted or  
3248 disassociated from the activity students will never learn. The first step that I  
3249 take is my involvement in the students' activity whether it is brainstorming or it  
3250 is reading or any such an activity. The teacher is involved also. That is first step.  
3251 Second step that I usually take is giving them homework what ever they have  
3252 learned in a particular class they have to bring it in the next lecture and I found  
3253 that if they understood what and gain interest in the lecture, all students will  
3254 bring their homework the next lecture otherwise if you are not good at  
3255 developing interest of students, half of the students wont bring the homework.  
3256 So this is the step that I take to make the class very interesting.

3257 R: how do you evaluate their writing?

3258 T13: there are two methods in how do I look at it. One is the traditional  
3259 evaluation one we distribute the activity into expression, language, subject,  
3260 style and other things and we divide the marks into each activity. And the other  
3261 method which I thought is more realistic is to see how much effort students has  
3262 put in putting his effort into writing. And this evaluation is after the peer  
3263 evaluation is complete and you are looking at a particular piece of writing. You  
3264 know how the peers has looked at it before the teacher himself looked at it. And  
3265 this is the method which I usually adopt that after the writing has been  
3266 evaluated by their peers and they correct it, then it comes to me.

3267 R: are you satisfied about the course?

3268 T13: I am very satisfied with the outcome because if the students have shown  
3269 some improvement which is feasible in their writing. Because when I evaluate I  
3270 compare their present performance with their previous performance. I always  
3271 keep a record of their writing almost every month so this means after the end of  
3272 semester after 5 or 6 months. I have their record of their previous evaluation  
3273 and their present evaluation. So I find that there is a lot of changes that is  
3274 coming in their results of writing. So this is the way that I can really satisfied  
3275 with the outcome. They really have shown improvement in their writing.

3276 R: in what way?

3277 T13: there are few grammatical mistakes. They started to using better  
3278 vocabulary. They are using the right word instead and also what I found is that  
3279 they are using stronger ideas. For example, if I will give you an example if I ask  
3280 them to write about the benefits of sun or water in our human life. I remember  
3281 in the beginning they started to use weak ideas like water is used to wash our  
3282 clothes. Now what I feel they are talking about Oxygen in the air, about the  
3283 usefulness of water to the existence of human life. This is the change that I can  
3284 see in their vision. In their thought that they are not talking about weak ideas.  
3285 They are talking about very strong ideas.

3286 R: thank you so much and one more question: would you like to attend any  
3287 workshops about teaching writing?

3288 T13: yes, why not. Learning is a reward. I find that my learning about writing  
3289 will never end. I will keep learning and learning because there is no particular  
3290 age for learning.

3291 R: if you have the chance to attend any workshop which skills would you like to  
3292 improve as writing teacher?

3293 T13: as a writing teacher I would like to improve more upon the personal aspect  
3294 because I think as a student. As a teacher I need to be a facilitator and as a  
3295 facilitator I need to understand how the other person is thinking and what we  
3296 call neuro linguistic. I'd like to be trained more in the neuro linguistics. Then  
3297 how that affect the language and how the teacher can program himself.

3298 R: do you have anything else to say?

3299 T13: I could say that students from their early days in secondary school should  
3300 develop the habit of reading more. When they come to college they find that  
3301 they are lacking in reading and when they are lacking in reading they do not  
3302 have much information and it becomes very challenging to the teacher because  
3303 students if they lack reading skills they also lack writing skills.

3304 T14

<b>Teacher: T14</b>	<b>Degree: MA India</b>	<b>Teaching Experience: 4 years</b>
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3305

3306 R: Thanks for accepting to answer this interview questions related to my PhD  
3307 study and do you have any questions before we start?

3308 T14: No, let's start.

3309 R: what preparations or training have you received to help you in teaching  
3310 English writing?

3311 T14: we have not received any training to teach English writing because when  
3312 graduate students complete their master, they take teachers jobs and they are  
3313 expected to have these things in their own. It is kind of self development.

3314 R: so what are the sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

3315 T14: yes, sometimes I even go to the internet and try to find out how this  
3316 teaching of writing is actually done.

3317 R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing for students?

3318 T14: basically, we are teaching here for people whom their English language the  
3319 foundation has not been layed. We do not know from where to start. That is the  
3320 difficulty and more about to teach them writing. Some of the basic are been  
3321 necessary and we have not been trained as teachers how to go with this kind of  
3322 enrolment so to learn by our own and it require some time to learn. These are  
3323 the difficulties the initial points of time. The initial stage.

3324 R: what difficulties do you face in teaching writing? And how do you deal with  
3325 them?

3326 T14: basically because it is not their mother tongue and they are not prepared at  
3327 high school properly. It really becomes difficult at the beginning for the teacher.  
3328 Like exactly what to do but gradually we try to think about how to tackle all  
3329 these problems. So I think asking them to write, giving them some kind of  
3330 activities, bring some interest to them that is all what I do.

3331 R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained  
3332 experience in teaching?

3333 T14: since I know for those students it is difficult for them if I dictate and ask  
3334 them to write something. I begin to use more the blackboard. I write on the  
3335 board and then sometimes the basic thing. I help them to understand here or  
3336 there and then go about business.

3337 R: what prompted this change?

3338 T14: after knowing the level of students, I found that I should make some  
3339 changes.

3340 R: is it by experience?

3341 T14: it was just my own experience.

3342 R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

3343 T14: I should at least make them writing small paragraphs without grammatical  
3344 mistakes and also I should make them feel free to write something with  
3345 confidence.

3346 R: is it your personal goal or it the policy?

3347 T14: I am not really ...(pause)

3348 R: aware of?

3349 T14: yes, aware of the policy. It is my personal goal. I think that is what they  
3350 expect.

3351 R: so you take students' expectations into consideration?

3352 T14: I also take students expectations into consideration because it is always  
3353 necessary to have a feedback from students about what they can understand,  
3354 what they can not understand and depending on their level of understanding, I  
3355 prepare my lessons.

3356 R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or  
3357 course book?

3358 T14: I have some authentic material from other teachers and I'm making use of  
3359 those books. I'm founding them very useful. Also I have a book about writing  
3360 which gives introduction about writing, history of writing. In my first class, I was  
3361 trying to give them what writing really means.

3362 R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?  
3363 For example, you have mentioned 'Effective writing books' why you have  
3364 selected this book?

3365 T14: those books are comprehensive enough to give them ideas about what  
3366 writing really means. That is the reason why I chosen this book they have and  
3367 extensive exercises which are really interesting which can keep them attentive  
3368 in the class.

3369 R: what about students' level? Do you think those books are suitable to students'  
3370 level?

3371 T14: I think, they are ok, up to students' level. They are not very difficult.  
3372 Sometimes when they are difficult I just skip them I give them the easier ones  
3373 because I know they won't be able to understand the difficult ones in this stage.

3374 R: what areas do you focus on in you teaching writing, for example, grammatical  
3375 structure, the use of range of vocabulary, writing extended paragraphs?

3376 T14: I mainly focus on fluency and teaching them writing extended paragraphs  
3377 but here and there sometimes we just teach the area of grammar but not too  
3378 much. We do not do grammar for a long time because there is a teacher who  
3379 meant to teach them grammar. So my focus on fluency and how to write and  
3380 how to express ideas.

3381 R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in  
3382 teaching writing for students?

3383 T14: mainly, I think giving them exercises then give them ideas how to do  
3384 exercises and when you give them certain topic for them to write, give them  
3385 some ideas about the topic so they will be motivated to write and when they are  
3386 writing I try to help them if they stuck some where.

3387 R: can you give me examples of those activities?

3388 T14: see initially it is just try to know whether they are able to do something.  
3389 Once I come to know that they are able to write I try to them activities which  
3390 keep them involved and gives them fun also. So they try to. I ask them to write  
3391 about any thing, any thing they like.

3392 R: when you say 'any thing they like' what does that mean?

3393 T14: it is description or narration. To narrate something or to write some  
3394 sentences and make it into paragraphs.

3395 R: how do you know their levels in the pilot study interview you told me that you  
3396 have different levels.

3397 T14: what I do is when I ask them to write. I go to each paper and try and see  
3398 how many students are able to write sentences how many of them have  
3399 problems in writing and then that gives me an idea about what to do in the  
3400 classroom.

3401 R: how do you deal with students' with mixed level?

3402 T14: yeah something like. I take part of like something by not giving something  
3403 too difficult to do and or not too easy to do. In between and that is all I try to  
3404 manage.

- 3405 R: in what way that will help to improve their level?
- 3406 T14: I just want to make sure that students will be able to confidence. So they  
3407 will be able to write something by their own without anybody's assistance and  
3408 later they should be able to write some of the things that are essential in daily  
3409 life like what they call from practical side.
- 3410 R: what are these activities helpful for?
- 3411 T14: basically, they are supposed to develop writing and writing for all purposes  
3412 any where. Even when they finish their education, I think they might need to  
3413 write so many things. If they want to go for higher education they need to know  
3414 what writing really is.
- 3415 R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?
- 3416 T14: yes it depends like sometimes I may have to give them things in details but  
3417 sometimes I just give them activities and allow them do it. And I go around  
3418 watching them and whether they are doing rightly or not. I just try to give them  
3419 tips if they are wrong.
- 3420 R: actually my question is whether you change those activities to suit the Libyan  
3421 context?
- 3422 T14: I try to make it suitable for them depending upon the Libyan context.  
3423 Because we have sometimes to simplify. Sometimes I even change the names  
3424 that are there. I use the names that are more adequate. In some exercises,  
3425 there will be English names but I try to use... (Pause)
- 3426 R: common names in Libya?
- 3427 T14: common names in Libya so they won't find it very different. I do such  
3428 things sometimes.
- 3429 R: how do you present a writing activity?
- 3430 T14: I try to tell them the meaning of writing and I also tell them the difference  
3431 between creative writing and just common writing and writing is mainly you  
3432 know to communicate something and you need to develop your vocabulary. You  
3433 need to have good language and I tell them you need to improve your language.  
3434 This is my main focus.
- 3435 R: for example, if you will ask them to write a paragraph about certain topic  
3436 how do you present it? For example, do you tell them the instructions and then  
3437 ask them to write about it?
- 3438 T14: I just try to talk in brief about the topic then give them some words that  
3439 serve as means for them to develop in a paragraph. Sometimes because they do  
3440 not know the meaning of certain words they ask me. That I just tell them to use

3441 a dictionary of Arabic or sometimes I give them. I tell them if they do not  
 3442 understand they have to go for Arabic dictionary and then try to explain them.  
 3443 They feel ok. They feel comfortable and they are able to write.

3444 R: to what extent you change your role in the class at different stages, for  
 3445 example from controller to facilitator?

3446 T14: yes, sometimes we need to act as controllers to maintain kind of discipline  
 3447 but mostly I try to be friendly and I just try to help them. I believe of the role of  
 3448 facilitator because we should give them independent to learn. Too much  
 3449 dependent on the teacher, I do not think..... (Pause).

3450 R: make them passive?

3451 T14: I do not know. I ask sometimes when I write some thing on the blackboard I  
 3452 ask student to explain to other students. So that will be an encouragement for  
 3453 them.

3454 R: what are the factors that affect your choice of roles?

3455 T14: I think the factors are like when there is a little bit of disturbance in the  
 3456 class. That has an effect on us. Sometimes they are not very keen upon things.  
 3457 They take it very easily.

3458 R: what about students' number and level? Do they affect?

3459 T14: yes, when it is too large it becomes difficult for us to concentrate on every  
 3460 one. Some body will be talking in one corner and some other students are really  
 3461 keen to learn also get disturbed. It depends. They have an effect on the  
 3462 teacher.

3463 R: what about the culture? Do you think the culture affects the role that you  
 3464 play in the class?

3465 T14: that could be in a very small scale because gradually we tend to know and  
 3466 understand the culture. We tend to tailor teaching based on their culture. That  
 3467 could be of big influence.

3468 R: when do students write?

3469 T14: sometimes I ask them to write some things in the class. Sometimes I give  
 3470 them homework it depends.

3471 R: what kind of writing is assigned?

3472 T14: it depends. Sometimes I give them a certain topics on a very small you  
 3473 know a very common thing. For example, I ask them to write about TV. I ask  
 3474 them to write about a mobile. Sometimes it could be on a more serious topic  
 3475 more academic like on education or some thing in science.



- 3476 R: is it timed? How many drafts are collected?
- 3477 T14: yes I give them 20-30 minutes depending upon the topic. Sometimes it  
3478 could be longer time if the topic is more difficult.
- 3479 R: How many drafts are collected?
- 3480 T14: sometimes one paragraph. Sometimes also two paragraphs.
- 3481 R: in what ways student involvement is encouraged in the lesson?
- 3482 T14: I try to tell them about the importance of writing and the habit based of  
3483 their confidence. I just try to motivate them. You know I think.
- 3484 R: is that goal for you?
- 3485 T14: yes it is one of my goals. Because unless there is interaction with students  
3486 and they participate, it can not be meaningful teaching of writing.
- 3487 R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?
- 3488 T14: it is like you know may be some 50% of students are always keen about  
3489 learning and other students. So we need to cope up with other students. To  
3490 motivate them and bring them to, you know, classroom environment. Sometimes  
3491 it is difficult because they are else where. Their minds are else where.
- 3492 R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?
- 3493 T14: yeah... I try to talk about things which are familiar to them and which they  
3494 can understand and easily involved. Because if you talk about things which they  
3495 really do not understand they are further demotivated. They can never expect  
3496 the concepts so I try to talk about things on a very friendly level sometimes so  
3497 once they get involved they can talk more about serious things.
- 3498 R: one more question: would you like to attend a workshop about teaching  
3499 writing?
- 3500 T14: I am very keen to attend workshops in writing.

## **Appendices C: Professional Development Workshop**

### ***C1 The Outline of the Workshops***

Based on the findings of this research, it was thought that organising discussion with the participants who indicated an interest in some professional development activities will help to explore potential directions for practical implications. The following is summary of the proposed professional development session that will be organised with the participants:

Location

7<sup>th</sup> of April University and -Alfatah University

Time

1 hour at each university

Participants

Previous participants of this research (university writing teachers who indicated in the pilot study and field study that they would be interested in a future workshop linked to their professional development needs.

Objectives

- The intended workshop aims to provide the participants with guidelines about teaching writing such as how to deal with the large number of students.
- the discussion will help the participants to share their ideas, activities and experience

Topics to be discussed

Based on the initial findings, the discussion will be about the tasks that the teachers think are useful in teaching writing such as group work and how they adapt them according to their views and students' needs

Activities

- sharing practice: discussing difficulties that the teachers face such as students' mixed level and how they deal with them
- discussing adapting materials to students needs and culture
- sharing knowledge about learners and different techniques to motivate them
- Discussing different methods for teaching writing. An example of planned activity will be:

- Introduction:

Introducing the topic: writing a description of a city

Task 1:

Asking the participants to suggest lesson plans for how to teach the topic.

Task 2:

Discussing and sharing experience about useful plans and activities to use in teaching the given topic such as using brainstorming.

Task 3:

Suggesting tips for teachers to use such as using pictures.

Notes

Field notes will be taken and the discussions won't be recorded as participation in this discussion is entirely voluntary

## C2: Lesson Plan

Describe a city you have visited and explain why you would like to visit the city again in the future.

Complete the letter below. Use suitable words or phrases from this box:

Although    and    by the way    so that    also    because  
however    that    and    but    so    that

Dear Tom,

I am sending you my new address,.....you can write to me of course I hope.....you will come.....stay with us soon.

I like our new houses, .....it is very noisy.....it is near a main road....., my bedroom is at the back of the house, .....i don't hear any noise at night.....my sister's room is at the front..... she says.....she can't sleep!....., she sends you her best wishes.

Write soon. I am looking forward to hearing from you

Yours

Alan

### Location verbs and prepositions

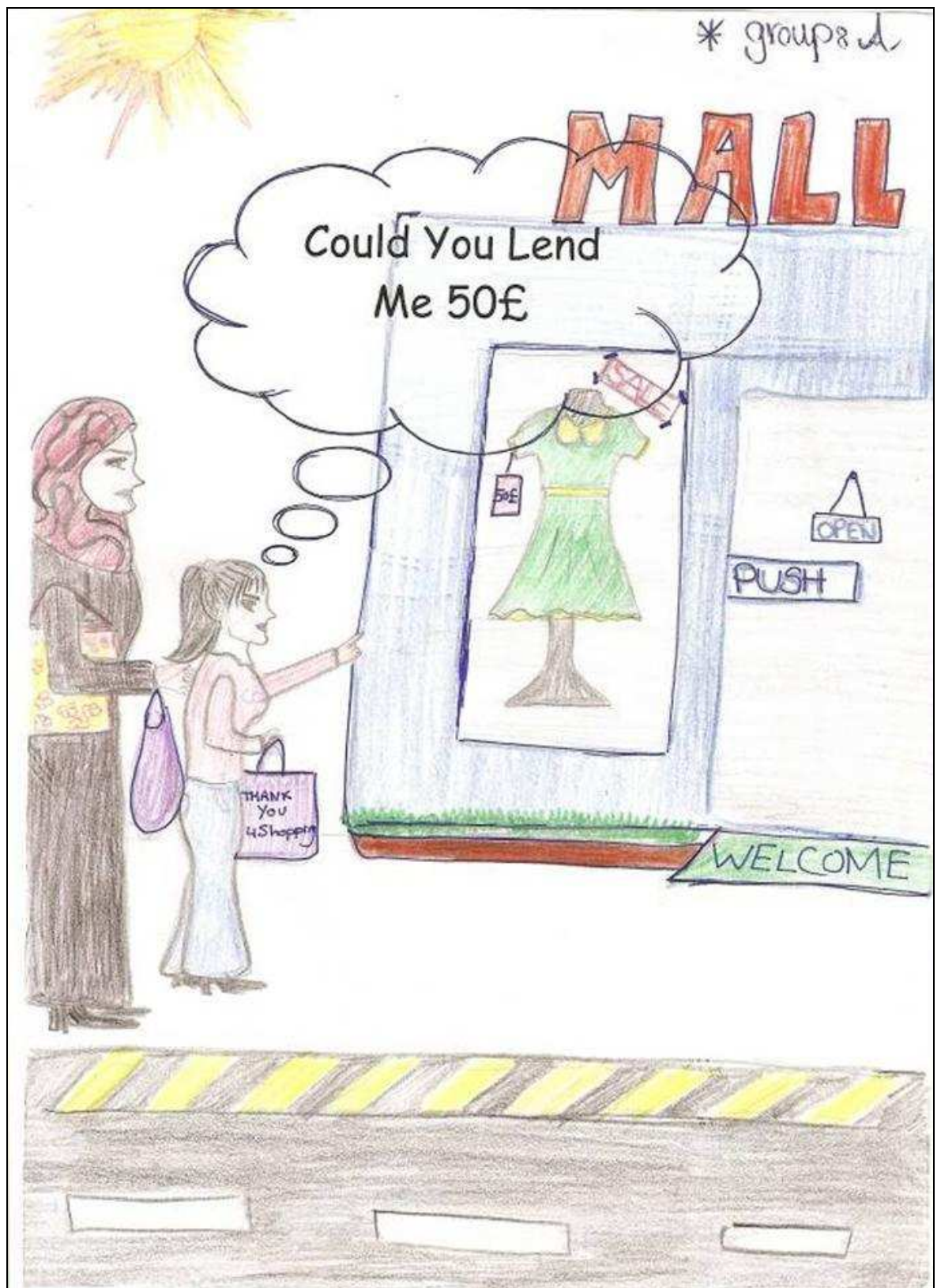
-there are a number of verbs used to describe the location and /or surroundings of a place. These may explain position (e.g the old house is situated next to/is surrounded by....)

-the verbs are naturally used with prepositions and prepositional adverbial phrases (e.g stands at the top of ..etc)

Read the following description. Fill in each of the gaps with a suitable preposition or adverb and circle each of the location verbs.

Standing 1).....the top of the old stone steps, you can see the variety of architectural styles 2).....the house that line the main street. The steps lead 3).....to a small, open area just 4) .....the corner 5).....the main street.

C3: Samples of the Tasks

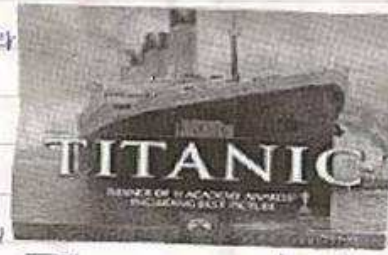






## «Titanic»

The worst maritime disaster  
"Titanic" was directed by  
James-cameron and John  
Land. It stars Leonardo  
Decaprio as Jack Dawson



and Kate Winslet as Rose. Titanic won about  
90 awards and nominated 47 times.

The film is set in Great Britain in 1912.

The film is about a British luxury ship which is included  
2220 persons. In this ship a great love story grew between  
(Leonardo) Jack and (Kate) Rose. Jack won this ticket  
from

Jack was a poor boy, but Kate was  
a daughter of a dead British millionaire. But this love story  
doesn't end happily, because of that horrible accident  
which is happened when Titanic crashed a huge iceberg,  
the motor of the ship was destroyed. Because of this  
damage the Titanic sank at the bottom of the Atlantic  
ocean, about 1513 persons died and Jack was one of them.  
So like this ended this great love story tragically.

I strongly recommend Titanic. It shows us how a  
small mistakes make a horrible disasters, also how  
real love survives even for hundreds of years with  
its trust and faithful, by the way it will make you  
cry a lot.





Skyline of Miami, The Magic City.

Would you like to rent this beautiful two-bedroom apartment, it's in miami the magic city. It's perfectly situated near to the public garden and the main street.

It's magnificent 160 square metre apartment on the 15th floor of a fantastic new building. The flat has two bedrooms, a large living room with very big windows, a kitchen and two bathrooms. Also it has a very big balcony, so during the day you can see a beautiful view of the garden and the street and the movement of the cars and take a natural breath specially in the morning, and at night it's very interesting to see lots of lights and the stars above you in the sky.

The neighbours are very kind and friendly, they are quiet and helpful people. And the distance between the flat and the shops is very short it's five or less minutes walking, and the cafe and the club, the cinema are behind it.

The apartment is perfect and suitable for couples and families, sorry no pets.