

The Effect of Reflection-Supported Process-Based Writing Teaching on Iraqi EFL Students' Writing Performance and Attitude

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Abstract

The study aims at finding out the effect of process-based writing teaching supported by students' reflection on their performance in, and attitude toward writing. It hypothesizes that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group taught writing according to the reflection-supported process-based approach and the control group taught writing according to the process-based approach in the writing performance test and writing attitude scale. To achieve the aims of the study, two second year sections in the Department of English of the College of Education/ Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences are randomly assigned as the experimental and control groups with 43 and 45 students respectively. The experiment in this study lasts for 15 weeks during which both groups are taught writing according to the process approach and given one writing assignment per week. Only the experimental group students are required to reflect on their writing performance in every writing assignment by using a reflection sheet prepared for this purpose. At the end of the experiment, the two instruments of the study, i.e., a writing performance test and attitude toward writing scale are administered on both groups. The statistical manipulation of the results achieved shows that supporting the process orientation to writing teaching with a phase of students reflection on their writing performance is effective in developing their writing performance and helping them formulate positive attitude toward writing. In the light of the results and conclusions achieved, a set of recommendations is put forward.

Keywords: attitude toward writing, reflection on learning, writing as a process, writing performance

Cite as: Abbas, S. H.(2016). The Effect of Reflection-Supported Process-Based Writing Teaching on Iraqi EFL Students' Writing Performance and Attitude. *Arab World English Journal*, 7(4) DOI <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol7no4.4>

Introduction

The Problem

Writing is one of the basic factors of any language. It is a difficult productive process in which thoughts, attitudes, and feelings are supposed to be carefully translated into written communication. Writing is the area in which English as a foreign language (EFL) students can practice and/or reflect their mastery of different language components such as grammar, lexis, cohesion, etc. The importance of having a good mastery over the writing skills by EFL students is not restricted only to the courses of compositions or essay writing, but to all other language related courses which require students to have sufficient writing skills to pass these courses successfully (Muslim, 2014: 105). Accordingly, the multi-dimensional nature of writing should be reflected in the instructional practices of writing throughout its three main phases; prewriting, writing, and post writing (Hodges, 2015:146).

On the other hand, attitudes, in general, are viewed as driving forces that direct students to act and perform in certain ways and levels. The attitude toward writing, in particular, is argued to have a significant effect on students' writing skills as it may promote or debilitate their writing performance. On this basis, writing teachers are induced to continuously update their knowledge of their students' attitudes with special reference to the attitude toward writing (Jabeen & Kazim, 2011: 607).

However, it is stated that EFL students may gain further insight from their writing practices through deeper reflection on these practices and through further consideration of different viewpoints and attitude of other people (teacher and classmates) and theoretical background (Moon, 1999: 99).

Unfortunately, Iraqi EFL students in different educational settings, including under and post graduate levels, are noticed by the researcher and reported by different studies to have poor writing skills and face difficulties in managing writing tasks (Solaman 1999; Hamza 2009; Ali 2012; Reishan 2013; Muslim 2014; Keong & Mussa 2015). The difficulties they face are not restricted to the accuracy of structures they use but also include organization, vocabulary, mechanics, and spelling.

The present study is intended to experiment engaging Iraqi EFL students in practicing reflection on their writing performance throughout the different stages of the writing process as a technique that may help them promote their writing skills and help them develop a more positive attitude toward writing.

Aims

The study aims at finding out;

1. the effect of reflection-supported process –based writing teaching on Iraqi EFL students' writing performance.
2. the effect of reflection-supported process –based writing teaching on Iraqi EFL students' attitude toward writing.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are to be tested:

1. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group taught writing according to the reflection-supported process-based approach and the control group taught writing according to the process-based approach in the writing performance test.
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group taught writing according to the reflection-supported process based approach and the control group taught writing according to the process-based approach in the attitude toward writing scale.

Limits

The study is limited to Iraqi EFL second year students at the departments of English in the University of Baghdad (College of Education/Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences, College of Education for Women, College of Arts, and College of Languages) during the academic year 2015/2016.

Value

Due to the fact that Iraqi EFL students have poor writing skills, finding effective techniques that may help them develop their writing skills is of great significance for both students and writing teachers. The value of the present study stems from the idea that it is intended to experiment a writing teaching technique that may help students develop both their writing performance and attitude toward writing. Moreover, related literature is not conclusive regarding the effect of students reflection on their performance and attitudes. Accordingly, the present study is intended to contribute to the literature in this respect.

Theoretical Background

Process approach to writing

In addition to being a linguistic challenge for EFL students, writing well represents a real cognitive challenge in which students need to employ their memory, feelings, attitudes, and different thinking skills (Cresswell, 2000: 238). The conventional product-orientation to writing teaching focuses on students' final version of a written text regardless of their individual differences. In contrast, the process approach views writing as an individual endeavor in which individual students may employ different strategies and methods to accomplish their writing assignments. Here, students are expected to go through different fluid and overlapping stages and students' individual differences are likely to affect how students deal with , or perform in these stages (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1983: 135).

The process-oriented writing teaching is a holistic approach that stresses the actual process of writing in all its stages of planning, drafting, and revising rather than focusing on the separate conventional components of writing such as grammar, spelling, and vocabulary items (Hillocks, 1987:79). Students are engaged in the writing tasks through a cyclic strategy in which several stages are involved rather than the traditional single-shot one in which they are asked to submit a complete and final written response (Kroll, 2001: 221). Moreover, in the traditional product approach to writing, students are evaluated on the basis of producing neat grammatically accurate written text. While in the process orientation to teaching, students are evaluated according to their performance in the different stages of the writing process (Pennington & Cheung, 1995: 19).

Badger and White (2000: 154) believe that the main difference between the product and process approaches to writing is related to the priority of emphasis. They argue that while the conventional product approach emphasizes students' linguistic knowledge illustrated in the written text produced by students, the priority in the process approach is to focus on the linguistic and writing skills such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

Stages of Writing Process

Tompkins (2004:13) argues that there are five stages in the writing process (see Figure 1). These stages are successive, yet a stage can be skipped but returned to later. The five stages are;

planning : the phase of outlining and data collection.

drafting : writing the first version of the written text. It is an attempt to put what has been planned for on paper regardless of language accuracy.

revising: Students here revise their written drafts. The drafts may be expanded with new ideas or constructed by removing unrelated or unnecessary ideas or parts.

editing: The accuracy of grammar, spelling, vocabulary items, and writing mechanics are checked.

publishing: The last stage in the writing process which involves sharing the written text with the teacher and/or colleagues.



Figure 1: Tompkins Process Writing Model

Attitude toward Writing

Attitudes are affective factors that lead individuals to form their personal views of different concepts, issues, and events. Attitudes have undeniable force in leading individuals to respond or act in a particular way to different aspects of the surroundings (Jabeen & Kazim, 2011: 607).

The term attitude can be defined as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007:598). McLeod (1991: 98) argues that attitudes are "psychological states acquired over a period of time as a result of our experiences" and that these attitudes are likely to affect the way we act in certain situations. However, due to the fact that attitudes may affect individuals on behavioral, affective, and/or cognitive levels, an attitude can be associated with positive or negative emotions, and individuals may behave and think in a certain way as a result of this attitude (McLeod, 1991:99).

Writing attitude is reported to have a significant effect on promoting or debilitating writing performance, yet, only a little attention is given to studying the correlation between attitude and writing in the EFL educational context (Bottomley, 1998: 286). On the other hand, "the increase in writing activities has presented teachers with the challenge of determining their students'

attitudes toward writing"(Graham et al, 2007: 525). In this respect, it is reported that there is a lack in the sufficient and reliable data collection tools available for writing teachers and researchers that are suitable for EFL students in the different educational contexts (Kear et al, 2000: 10).

Factors Affecting Writing Attitude

The way writing teachers manage their classes and teach and conduct writing activities is one of the most influential factors in formulating students' attitude toward writing. The management, teaching and evaluation techniques are considered highly influential in this respect(Wolcott & Buhr, 1987: 3). Furthermore, Several studies find that students' positive or negative attitude toward writing is, to a certain extent, related also to their own performance in writing i.e., students with satisfactory writing performance may develop a more positive attitude toward writing and vice versa, while some other studies report students' linguistic competency in general as a significant influential factor in this respect (Daly & Miller, 1975: 240). Moreover, the related literature indicates that the attitude toward writing may be determined or affected by a variety of variables such as sex, topic of writing, teacher's evaluation and feedback, writing self-efficacy, motivation to write, writing achievement .. etc.(Krawczyk, 2005: 16-17).

The related literature also reports a positive relationship between positive attitude toward writing and satisfactory mastery of writing skills (Krawczyk, 2005: 1), and a correlation between high levels of writing apprehension and negative attitude toward writing and vice versa (Rose, 1980: 398). However, Brown et al (2011: 15) prove that students writing attitudes are not fixed and that they can be changed or modified by teachers' employment of effective teaching procedures in which different aspects of students' life, needs, and interests are involved.

Reflection in Education

It is a well-known fact that teaching, however efficient the teacher is, does not guarantee students' learning. Students' will to learn and to engage in the learning activities is a primary factor that is likely to make the difference (Kakavouli & Metaxas, 2012: 2). In the traditional teacher-centered setting of teaching, students remain passive as they are not supposed to examine their own emotional and attitudinal responses to the material being taught. This is likely to lead to students' inability to apply the newly learned items in authentic everyday life situations (Kohonen, 2002: 13). On the contrary, recent orientations in EFL stress the idea of students contributing to their own language learning through active involvement. This can be promoted by training and encouraging students reflect on their learning experiences (Johnson, 2004: 122).

In spite of the widespread interest in practicing and promoting students reflection on their learning, there is no well agreed upon definition for this term. However, most of the suggested definitions agree on the idea that students reflection involves careful reviewing and evaluation of an experience or learning activity they have gone through(Bolton, 2014:6). Students reflection refers to the opportunity given to students to demonstrate how they gain experience and skills from a learning activity by self-analyzing their performance throughout the activity. In this sense, reflection is likely to help students be aware of their personal development (Williams et al, 2012: 87). Unfortunately, although reflection plays a significant role in learning, little research has been done on the effect of reflection type or amount on the outcomes achieved by students (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999:181).

The work of John Dewey provides the underlying philosophical background of the potentials of employing reflection in the learning process as it is supposed to link theory and practice. It is placed by different learning objectives taxonomies in the highest level of educational objectives as part of evaluation and criticism. Such taxonomies, as those of Bloom (1956), and Biggs and Collis (1982), refer to students reflection as an indication of the highest level of learning (Greenwood, 1998: 1049). Thus, reflection is viewed as an activity in which higher thinking metacognitive skills are used as a conscious response to certain situations and experiences including, but not restricted to, the teaching /learning situations. In the field of education, it can be practiced anytime and anywhere by both teachers and students in which they express their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and practices related to different factors and elements in a variety of educational contexts. In this respect, it may involve students and/or teachers' conscious evaluation of the processes of teaching and learning to find out why, and how well, certain steps, techniques, activities, and practices are employed or done (Boud, 1985: 19).

Reflection on writing involves students' ability of self-assessment and being aware of their individual differences and affective factors related to writing. This means that students, when reflecting on their writing, are supposed to identify their needs and points of strength and weakness. Reflection enables students also to set personal goals for themselves to be achieved (Capar, 2014: 473) and to scaffold, i.e., to connect a current experience or activity with previously learned ones. Here, students should be aware that this ability involves employing what they have learned in previous situations to new settings beyond those situations of their previous learning (Costa & Kallick, 2008: 222). Moreover, reflection may not be limited to what students have done, rather, it also covers how they will continue to develop. However, reflection on practice in different settings of education is reported to be beneficial in promoting students' learning. For Gibbs (1988:41), it is not enough for students to be engaged in an experience to learn. He sees that "without reflecting upon this experience it may quickly be forgotten, or its learning potential lost".

A variety of outcomes can be expected from practicing reflection by students, the most important of which is that it leads to learning as it helps students transform the different experiences and learning activities into genuine learning (Moon,1999: 99). Reflective practices are also likely to help students think about, analyze, contextualize, make sense of, and ultimately evaluate a certain learning experience or activity so as to make decision about the real value of this experience (Harris, 1997: 18). Finally, reflection practices may guide students and direct their attention to view experiences from different perspectives and provide them with means by which they can evaluate their skills and potentials in addition to the experience itself (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999: 181).

Levels of Reflection

- Kember et al (2008:373) propose the following four-level identification of students reflection:
- Habitual action: In which students perform something or do a task without thinking of what they are doing and why by following a set of instructions in a manual or given by the teacher.
 - Understanding: Students in this level may attempt to understand how and why they do a task, but still without reflection.
 - Reflection: Students here have an accurate understanding and attempt to reflect on the experience or learning activity according to that understanding.

- **Critical Reflection:** It is the highest level in students reflection as it involves a change or transformation of perspective which comes as a result of their understanding and reflection upon the experience.

Gibbs Reflection Model

One of the popular models of reflection is that of Gibbs (1988). It is a cyclic strategy and involves six phases of reflection (see Figure 2). These phases as stated in Gibbs (1988: 47) are:

1. **Description:** It is supposed to be the smallest section of reflection in which reflectors briefly describe the experience they are going through.
2. **Feelings:** In this phase, the reflectors are supposed to explore the thoughts and feelings they are having during the task or experience.
3. **Evaluation:** Here reflectors should specify what was good and what did not go so well during the task or experience.
4. **Analysis:** In this phase, the reflectors break down the experience or task and consider each part separately.
5. **Conclusion:** Here, reflectors' judgment about their performance during the task or experience should be stated. It also covers what areas in the performance needed to be promoted.
6. **Action Plan:** Based on their responses in the previous phases, the reflectors state what they would do differently if they were asked to go through the same experience or task again.



Figure 2: Gibbs Reflective Model

Reflection in EFL Writing Classes

Students' reflection practices are called for on the basis that they help students be really involved in the learning situation and learn from the experiences they go through (Arikan, 2006: 2). There are a variety of teaching strategies that can be used in teaching EFL writing such as the paragraph pattern, free writing, guided writing, grammar, syntax-organization strategies etc, all of which approach the teaching of writing as a product, rather than process (Raimes, 1983: 7). The modern orientation in approaching FL teaching views writing as a process in which students' awareness of the phases and subskills of writing is indispensable. Practicing reflection in writing is in harmony with this view, as it enables students to consider and reflect on the stages of the writing process, how well the written performance is, and what changes and developments need to be done. Engaging students in reflecting on their performance in the different stages of writing repeatedly may be an effective learning and training practice as it enables them to be aware of the nature of, and skills required for each stage of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing.

Moreover, it enables them to consider the relation between the purpose and form of writing, develop their awareness of different types of written texts, and evaluate the accuracy and suitability of the language structures and vocabulary items they use (Yan, 2005: 20).

It is more difficult for students to reflect on their writing than to reflect on any other language skill or activity. That is why most students fail to practice reflection in writing. Accordingly, writing teachers should be a source of help in this respect and gradually teach and train students to reflect on their writing performance. This may effectively enable students to better plan, draft, revise, and organize their written performance in future. (Capar, 2014: 471).

Methodology

The Experimental Design

The non-randomized pretest/posttest control group design is adopted in this study. In this design two or more matched –on-the relevant- variables groups are involved. One of these groups is assigned as a control group and the other(s) is assigned as experimental. Only the experimental group(s) is to be exposed to the independent variable. At the end of the experiment, all groups involved in the study are post-tested and the achieved scores are compared to judge the effect of the independent variable (Brown & Rodgers, 2002: 211) .(See table1).

Population and Sample

The population in this study covers Iraqi EFL second year students at the departments of English in the Iraqi universities. While the sample is restricted to 88 second year students in the Department of English – College of Education/Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences of the University of Baghdad during the academic year 2015-2016. The sample is divided into a control group with 45 participants and an experimental group with 43 participants. (See table 1).

Table1: The experimental design and sample of the study

Groups	No.	Pre-testing	Independent Variable	Post-testing
Control	45	Writing Performance	Process-based writing teaching	Writing Performance
Experimental	43	+ Attitude to Writing + Intelligence	Process-based writing teaching supported by students reflection	+ Attitude to Writing

Equalization

To ensure that the two groups are compared on equal terms except for the independent variable, the equalization of the two groups involved in this study is checked. This equalization checking involves a writing pre-test scores, intelligence, and the attitude toward writing. The data collection instruments in the equalization checking are a writing performance pre-test,

Raven's progressive matrices intelligence test (RPM), and an attitude toward writing scale prepared by the researcher.

The data achieved through the three instruments are statistically manipulated by using t-test for two independent samples. T-test results indicate no statistically significant difference between the two groups as the computed values of the writing pre-test, intelligence test, and attitude scale are found 0.94, 1.037, and 0.62 respectively at 0.05 level of significance and 86 degree of freedom. The computed values are lower than the critical t-value and this indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between the two groups involved in the study in writing performance, intelligence, and attitude toward writing. (See table 2).

Table 2: Checking the equalization of the experimental and control groups in the writing pre-test, intelligence test, and attitude toward writing

Variable	Groups	No.	M	SD	t- value		Sig.				
					computed	critical					
Writing Pre-test	Experimental	43	10.22	1.65	0.94	2.0	No				
	Control	45	9.88	1.78							
Intelligence test	Experimental	43	31.52	3.56			1.037	2.0	No		
	Control	45	30.68	4.22							
Attitude toward Writing	Experimental	43	68.96	6.30					0.62	2.0	No
	Control	45	67.44	2.25							

Instruments of the Study

The Writing Post-test

To evaluate participants' writing performance, a writing test is administered in which participants are asked to write a composition of at least three paragraphs with about 225 words on one of three topics that are selected by participants themselves. Participants' written compositions are scores analytically according to a rubric adopted from O'Malley & Pierce (1996: 145). In which the compositions are assessed on the basis of five components; composing, style, sentence formation, usage, and mechanics with a rating scale 1-4 for each component. According to the rubric, the highest score that can be achieved in the test is 20 and the lowest one is 5. (Appendix A).

The Attitude toward Writing Scale

The scale is prepared by the researcher based on four different scales of attitude toward writing proposed by Wollcot & Buhr 1987, DeMent 2008, Erkan & Saban 2011, and Scott 2012. These four attitude scales are, generally speaking, appropriate to the topic of the present study, yet, they include some items that do not suite either the purpose or the sample of this study. The

scale used in this study is prepared by selecting and/or adjusting the most appropriate items in the four scales mentioned above.

The final version of the scale includes 30 items to be responded to according to a rating of five Likert points (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, disagree, and strongly disagree). These points are given the grades 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. (Appendix B).

Face Validity

The attitude toward writing scale is exposed to a jury of 10 experts in the fields of educational psychology and educational evaluation and measurement. The members of the jury show their agreement on the scale items as being suitable and valid. They also suggest adjusting the statement of three items in the scale and their recommended adjustments are done by the researcher.

The writing scoring rubric is also exposed to a jury of 8 experts in the field of EFL teaching all of whom agree on the suitability of this rubric to the present study aims and the sample involved.

Pilot Administration of the Instruments

To conduct pilot administrations of the attitude scale and the writing performance test, 30 students are randomly selected from the Department of English in the College of Education/Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences. This administration is done to evaluate the clarity of the scale items and compute the reliability of the scale and test scoring rubric. It is also intended to estimate the time to be allotted to participants to take the test. As a result, no ambiguity in the scale items is complained of and the time required for taking the test is 35 minutes.

Construct validity of the attitude scale

Items of the attitude scale are statistically analyzed as a procedure to check the construct validity of the scale. This analysis involves computing the discrimination power and item-total correlations of the scale items which are considered as reliable indicators for ensuring construct validity.

Statistical Analysis

The attitude scale is administered to a statistical analysis sample of 100 individuals selected randomly from the second year students in the Department of English in the College of Arts and the scores of the individuals are calculated.

Discrimination Power

The scores of the individuals in the statistical analysis sample are sequenced from the highest score to the lowest one. According to this sequential arrangement, scores are divided into two groups, an upper group and a lower one, with 50 scores in each. T-test for two independent samples is used to check the difference between the mean scores of each item in the upper and lower groups. The computed t-values are found to range between 2.73 - 8.93. These values are higher than the critical t-value 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance and under the degree of freedom 98. Accordingly, the items of the attitude scale are considered acceptable in this regard. (See table 3).

Table 3: Ranges of t-values of items in attitude toward writing scale

Scale	Range of Computed t-values	Critical t-value	Level of significance	Degree of Freedom
Attitude toward writing scale	2.73 – 8.93	1.98	0.05	98

Item-total correlation

Pearson correlation formula is utilized to find out the correlation between the score of each item and the total score of the scale. As illustrated in table 4, the results show acceptable correlation coefficients for all items except for one item which is, accordingly, excluded from the scale. The correlation coefficients of the items in the final version of the scale range between 0.321- 0.671 , all of which are higher than the tabulated value of Pearson correlation 0.196 at the level of significance 0.05 and degree of freedom 98. All the items, then, are acceptable in this regard.

Table 4: Ranges of Pearson correlation coefficients of items in writing attitude scale

Scale	Range of Computed t-values	Critical t-value	Level of significance	Degree of Freedom
Attitude toward writing scale	0.321-0.671	0.196	0.05	98

Reliability

To check the reliability of the attitude scale and the scoring rubric of the writing performance test, they are re-administered on the pilot sample after three weeks of the first administration.

With respect to the attitude scale, The correlation between the two sets of scores achieved from the two administrations are statistically manipulated by utilizing Pearson correlation and Alpha Chronbach formulas which yield 0.82 and 0.79 correlation coefficients respectively. Both computed coefficients are acceptable according to Best (1981: 153).

Concerning the writing performance test scoring rubric, the reliability is checked by using two methods. The intrascorer method in which the researcher himself score the test papers of the sample in the two administration, and the interscorer method in which another university EFL instructor is asked to score the sample test papers of the second administration. Person correlation coefficient is used in both methods to find out the correlation between the two sets of scores and yields 0.92 and 0.89 coefficients respectively. Both correlations are fortunately acceptable and high.

The Experiment

The experiment is inaugurated in the second semester of the academic year 2015/2016 and lasted for 15 weeks. During the experiment, both groups, the experimental and control, are

assigned two writing lesson periods per week and given the same number and topics of writing assignments.

Tompkins Model (2004) to process writing is used in teaching and training participants in both groups. According to this model, the writing process involves the five stages of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. However, only participants in the experimental group are asked and encouraged to regularly reflect on every written performance they submit by using a reflection sheet prepared by the researcher for this purpose (Appendix C). The reflection sheet is prepared in accordance with Gibbs six-phase reflection model. It includes six phases representing those of Gibbs model. The format along with a summary of Gibbs model are exposed to a jury of experts in the field of TEFL. The 10 jury members mostly agree upon the suitability of the format items to the sample and purpose of the study. They mostly agree also on the correspondence between the format items and Gibbs reflection model.

Employing Gibbs model in the reflection of the experimental group is intended to encourage and help participants systematically consider the phases of the writing process and reflect on how well they perform in each phase and what they should do to improve this performance. At the end of the experiment, the writing performance post-test and attitude toward writing scale are administered on participants in both groups.

The attitude scale and writing performance test are administered to the sample of the study in one session at the end of the experiment.

Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

To achieve the aims of the study, The mean scores of the two groups on the writing test and attitude scale are computed and t-test for independent samples are used to find if the differences between the means are statistically significant or not. The results are discussed below according to the hypotheses of the study.

Results Related to the first hypothesis

As illustrated in table 5, the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the writing performance test are 15.86 and 11.55 with standard deviations 2.76 and 2.98 respectively. Computed t-test value is found 7.065 which is higher than the critical value 2.0.

Table 5: T- value of students' scores in the writing post test

Variable	Groups	No.	M	SD	t- value		Sig.
					computed	critical	
Writing posttest	Experimental	43	15.86	2.76	7.065	2.0	Yes
	Control	45	11.55	2.98			

These results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the writing performance and this difference is in favor of the experimental group as its mean score is higher than that of the control group. The first null hypothesis is, accordingly, rejected and the alternative one is accepted.

To determine the effect size value of the independent variable on students' writing performance, Eta-squared (η^2) is used and yields a value 00.8 which indicates that the effect size of this variable is medium.

Results Related to the hypothesis

The mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the writing attitude scale are 99.33 and 75.43 with standard deviations 5.49 and 6.28 respectively. The t-test computed value 7.065 is higher than the critical value 2.0 as illustrated in table 6.

Table 6: T- value of students' scores in the attitude toward writing scale

Variable	Groups	No.	M	SD	t- value		Sig.
					computed	critical	
Writing Attitude	Experimental	43	99.33	5.49	2.05	2.0	Yes
	Control	45	75.43	6.28			

The results achieved indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the writing attitude and this difference is in favor of the experimental group as its mean score is higher than that of the control group. The second null hypothesis is also rejected and the alternative one is accepted.

To determine the size value of the effect of the independent variable on students' writing attitude, Eta-squared (η^2) is used and results a value 00.2. This indicates that this variable has a weak effect size.

Conclusions

1. Supporting process-based writing teaching with students' reflection practices is effective in helping students improve their writing performance and develop positive attitudes toward writing.
2. Reflection-supported process-based writing teaching has a stronger effect in students improving students' writing performance than in helping them develop positive attitudes toward writing.
3. In writing as a process, students are noticed to use different language structures and a variety of vocabulary items and idioms. This is may be related to the idea that their writing performance is not to be directly evaluated by the teacher, rather, they have the chance to review , edit, and improve their writing texts before being evaluated.
4. Students are mostly accurate in their reflection on their writing and in identifying what improvements need to be done.
5. Students get better and better in their writing performance throughout the course of the experiment in which they continuously practice reflection.
6. Students are willing to engage in reflection on their writing and they show interest and enthusiasm in the practice.
7. A positive change in students' attitude toward writing and self-efficacy as writers is noticed at the end of the experiment.

Recommendations

In the light of the results and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are set foreword:

1. EFL writing teachers are called for using process based teaching supported by reflection practices on the part of students to improve their writing skills and maintain a positive writing attitude.
2. EFL writing teachers should be aware of the significance of writing attitude in students' performance and work hard to investigate their students' attitude toward the different aspects of language learning especially writing.
3. EFL students need to know about their level and competency in writing and to know also about the points of weakness and strength so as to be able to work on.
4. More time should be devoted to practicing process-based writing activities in the EFL classroom.
5. EFL teachers ought to keep a balance in focusing on fluency and accuracy of their students' writing performance.
6. EFL teachers should work hard to help their students develop a positive attitude toward writing.
7. Writing practices should be viewed by EFL teachers and students as opportunities where students can also practice the use of accurate language structures, tenses, and vocabulary items.
8. The culture of reflection should be promoted and encouraged in the different Iraqi educational settings.
9. Regular efficient reflective practices should be scheduled in all EFL courses with particular reference to writing.
10. Planning is noticed to be mostly neglected by students; accordingly the phase of planning in writing should be highlighted to students.
11. Sufficient time should be devoted to students' practice of writing process in the EFL programs, as this practice, which is found to promote students' writing skills, is, to a certain extent, time-consuming.
12. Teachers should be trained on how to help students in different stages of the writing process , with special reference to revising , which is noticed to be more challenging to students than the other stages.

About the Author:

Dr. Salam Hamid Abbas received his PhD in methods of TEFL in Baghdad University 2005. He works as assistant professor at the University of Baghdad, College of Education/Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences and teaches at both under and post graduate levels. Dr. Salam's main research interests are within the scope of EFL teacher training and education, language assessments, variables affecting EFL learning, and developing EFL writing skill.

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APPENDIX A

Analytical Scoring Scheme for Composition Writing

SCORE	Composing	Style	Sentence Formation	Usage	Mechanics
4 marks	Focuses on central ideas with an organized and elaborated text	Purposefully chosen vocabulary , sentence variety , information ,and voice to affect reader	Standard word order ,no enjambment (run – on sentences) Completeness (no sentence fragments and standard modifiers , and coordinators , and effective transitions	Standard inflections(e.g., plurals, possessive ,-ed, - ing with verbs, and – ly with adverbs), subject- verb agreement (we were vs . we was), standard word meaning	Effective use of capitalization , punctuation, spelling ,and formatting (paragraphs noted by indenting)
3 marks	Central idea , but not as evenly elaborated and some digressions	Vocabulary less precise and information chosen less purposeful	Mostly standard word order , some enjambment or sentence fragments	Mostly standard inflections , agreement ,and word meaning	Mostly effective use of mechanics, errors do not detract from meaning
2 marks	Not a focused idea or more than one idea , sketchy elaboration ,and many digressions	Vocabulary basic and not purposefully selected ;tone flat or inconsistent	Some non – standard word order, enjambment , and word omission (e.g.; verbs)	Some errors with inflections, agreement, and word meaning	Some errors with spelling and punctuation that detract from meaning
1 mark	No clear idea , little or no elaboration ,and many digression	Not controlled, tone flat , sentences halted or	Frequent non – standard word order , enjambment, and word omissions	Shifts from one tense to another; errors in conventions (them/those,	Misspell even simple words; little formatting evident.

		choppy		good /well, double negatives, etc.)	
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APPENDIX B
Attitude toward Writing Scale

No	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewh at agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I see writing as an enjoyable task.					
2	I am not very interested in writing.					
3	I work hard to do well on each writing assignment even if I don't like the topic.					
4	I feel confident when I complete written assignments.					
5	I write ideas of my own.					
6	I do not think it is easy to write.					
7	Writing is something that comes naturally to me.					
8	I often feel frustrated writing and don't like doing it.					
9	Most of the time I like writing and think that I am good at it.					
10	I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I write.					
11	Writing is my favorite Language Arts class.					
12	I feel my heart beating fast when I have to write, especially for a graded assignment.					
13	Writing is something that makes me happy.					
14	Writing is not a necessary skill for me to know.					
15	I am very interested in becoming a better writer.					
16	I would never willingly choose to do a writing assignment at college.					

17	Writing is an essential skill that I should master.					
18	I dislike writing, and I am always relieved to finish any writing assignments.					
19	Putting my thoughts down on paper helps me to straighten out my thinking.					
20	I have difficulty organizing my ideas when I write.					
21	Each time that I write, I know clearly what I want to accomplish.					
22	I do not like to have other students read my papers.					
23	I enjoy creative writing.					
24	I avoid the task of writing whenever possible.					
25	I can generate ideas to write about easily.					
26	I cannot think of ideas rapidly when given a topic to write about.					
27	I can easily use structures I have learned in my class accurately.					
28	I cannot use a wide range of vocabulary in my compositions.					
29	I can easily cover all the information that should be dealt with in a given topic.					
30	I cannot manage my time efficiently to meet a deadline on a piece of writing.					

APPENDIX C
The Writing Reflection Sheet

Phase No.1

- What was the topic and type of the writing text I was supposed to write on?

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- What was my personal aim for writing on this topic?

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Phase No.2

- How did I feel during the process of writing?

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- How did I feel about the final version of my writing?

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Phase No.3

- How do I evaluate my writing performance?

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- What was well in my performance and what was not so well?

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Phase No.4

- How did I do in each phase of writing separately?

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- What were the shortcomings of my performance in each phase?

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Phase No.5

- Was my writing overall writing performance satisfactory?

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- What areas in my performance need to be improved?

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Phase No.6

- What would I do differently if I were asked to write on the same topic again?

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