Sensitizing Teachers and Students on Group Work and Cooperative Learning as Techniques for Writing Teaching Quality

Abstract

The present study attempts to promote Cooperative learning (CL) through group work by exploring teachers' and students' attitudes and readiness towards the introduction of theses techniques, as innovating tools for teaching writing. Promoting these techniques seeks to provide potential improvements in the teaching of writing to face unsatisfaction manifested amongst teachers and students. This paper is exploratory and descriptive in orientation, with no experimental purpose, which in our opinion, could happen only when the promotion of the suggested techniques receives a positive echo from the stakeholders. The study has concerned second year students of English, and teachers of writing. To this end, 56 students and 06 teachers of written expression modules took part in the study. If the study should show the worthiness to introduce these writing techniques for potential better teaching through teachers' and students' attitudes; then, it may be proposed as a recommendation for implementation. Some notions and raising approaches for teaching this writing skill have to be presented as well as aspects of some categories of CL activities and their application to language learning. To evaluate this, we conduct a descriptive approach. Students and teachers had been given questionnaires to be answered. The results show that the teachers and the students have reacted positively to the suggestions introduced in the questionnaires of these writing teaching techniques, for their teaching/learning potential advantages. This leads us to believe that classrooms teaching/learning problems when identified might be apprehended collectively by teachers, students and specialists by putting forward remedial techniques for their latent pedagogical efficiency before being even proposed for application. This is one of the canons of action research where teachers and students should be allowed to voice opinions even on materials they have to learn a language with.

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ملخص

يُعتبر التعبير الكتابي من أهم المقاييس التعليمية للدارسين في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية حيث يحاول أساتذة هذا المقياس مختلف التقنيات لتسهيل عملية الكتابة لطلبتهم وبلوغ هدف التحريرالصحيح. من بين هذه التقنيات، نجد ما يسمى بالعمل الجماعي الذي يعد الأقل استعمالا بالرغم من نتائجه الإيجابية في عملية التعلم. من هذا المنطلق أردنا أن نسلط الضوء على العمل الجماعي ودوره في تحسين وتنمية التعبير الكتابي لدى طلبة السنة الثانية قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وانطلاقا من فرضية أن توعية الأساتذة بأن تقنية العمل الجماعي تساعد الطلبة في كيفية التحرير الصحيح والكتابة الصحيحة، طرحنا الإشكالية التالية: إلى أي مدى أساتذة التعبير الكتابي واعون بأهمية استعمال طريقة العمل الجماعي لطلبتهم في الكتابة السليمة والصحيحة ؟

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Introduction

Nobody probably objects if we say that writing is perhaps the subject that should be given a great deal of attention in a curriculum. In the past, there was no special curriculum in the department of English for teaching this subject. At that time, the attitude towards teaching writing depended on the teacher's familiarity with the subject as well as his/her own ingenuity. Sometimes the course was merely limited to reading a passage and asking comprehension questions, and occasionally, assigning a topic to write about, without any prior guidelines. We do not say that the situation has changed radically, but we do believe that teachers are now aware that teaching writing involves much more than the above activities, although many of them still use large chunks of grammar exercises hoping vainly that it would help improve the writing skill. Despite its importance, writing is still viewed as the "bête noire" of many Algerian EFL students, as teachers see the writing skill as the most complex process to deal with. It requires employing a variety of strategies and activities. Hedge (2000:302) states the different activities involved in the writing process: "It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organization information, selecting appropriate language, making draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. It is a complex process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language writers."

It has been recognised after the first term examination in written expression that the poor results in written expression module compared to other modules oral expression and phonetics, actually showed clear evidence and fostered one to conduct a study that would help students to overcome this problem and possibly all students elsewhere at large. Besides the pre-questionnaire administered, it has been noticed that students are facing difficulties related to how to produce a meaningful piece of writing due to the lack of good knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence pattern. Students have been noticed to write in fear of making mistakes, and some of them do not really find what to write. The motivation of this topic came from the hypothesis that the introduction of cooperative learning in small groups as teaching techniques might improve the teaching of writing. Furthermore, it has been proved, in the literature that the use of CL seems to be more interesting, as it attracts learner's attention, offering an incomparable variety of vocabulary and expressions. Moreover, CL technique has proved successful across a wide range of subjects and levels. It also enhances the motivation and psychological adjustment of language learners (Kagan 1994).

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Hypothesis

Teachers and learners' attitudes on teaching writing with the techniques of collaboration through group work should be sounded first and if positively appreciated, they might be recommended for teachers to integrate their writing teaching methodology.

- Aim of the Study

It is vital to try to build an atmosphere where the students will no longer feel shy or reluctant. By letting teachers and students appreciate and voice their opinions on the techniques of CL through group-work, we want to make sure that they positively appreciate their advantages before attempting any implementation in the classroom. Getting all stakeholders committed in the choice of pedagogical concerns represents the main purpose of this research. Are the students and the teachers not the first concerned by classroom problems? In our opinion, they deserve to be listened to before being offered a potential alternative to their problems. Decisions on methods and techniques should not remain the hunting part (chasse gardée) of curriculum and material designers.

- Research Methodology
  - Choice of the Method

The nature of our study is to explore teachers' and students' opinions on new techniques of teaching writing, namely collaborative learning through group-work with English department teachers, a case which actually calls for a descriptive method to diagnose the situation in order to come out with a series of recommendation when needed.

  - Population and Sampling of the Study

The population of the present study consists of teachers of written expression and students. There are six teachers who have been teaching written expression for the semester under study. It has been observed at University level (second-year students of English) that most of them do not write well given the fact that the techniques used does not seem to encourage frequent writing practice, thus it can be said that writing has become a phenomenon that needs description and identification.

  - Data Gathering Tools

Since our subject study touches directly local teachers and students, administering questionnaires to gather data and have access to the respondents' attitudes and opinions comes to be the most useful and effective technique. Two questionnaires have been handed out. The sample is made up of 06 teachers chosen randomly to having only the best or the worst ones.

- Literature Review
  - Writing Skill: Historical Background

Dating back to the inception of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Discipline Movements, it was defined in 1977 as," Originating and creating a unique verbal construct that is graphically recorded" Emig (1977:123). Despite its importance, writing skill is still viewed as the" bête noire" by Algerian EFL student's written products (marks of students) (see appendix I, II). Writing requires employing a variety of strategies and activities. Hedge (2000:124) stated the different

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activities involved in the writing process: "It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas ,organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft , reading and reviewing it , then revising and editing . It involves a complex process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language writers".

- Nature of Writing

Most teachers probably agree that the emphasis of the study of language has tended to concentrate on spoken language rather than the written one due to the negligence of written production in language teaching. Brookes & Grundy (2001:01) report that "The study of language in the twentieth century has tended to concentrate on spoken language, many linguists from de Saussure through to Chomsky, for what seemed like good reasons at the time, neglected the written mode in favor of the spoken. This, however, contributed to the fact that writing was for a long time a neglected area in language teaching".

- Importance of Writing

The purpose of writing is to express ideas and thoughts and to convey messages to the reader in a very correct spelling, punctuation, grammatical structure and selection of vocabulary. Standard language always demands writing more than speech. In this context Ur (2001:163) states:

"[…] much higher standard of language are normally demanded in writing than in speech more carefully constructions, more varied and precise vocabulary, more correctness of expression in general" .Besides knowing speaking, listening and reading, students need to know how to write, how to put written reports together, how to reply to advertisements. Many people think that the ability to write well leads to the ability to speak well also. Writers frequently spend hours of thought just to get exactly the right words onto paper. Kelly (1969:145) said that: "By practicing writing, a person learns proper word usage to persuade the reader to listen to them. The writer does this by using "key words" at proper intervals, the writing process helps to develop the skill of critical speaking".

- Functions of Writing

Writing has traditionally been categorized into exposing, describing, narrating, and arguing; the division of writing is necessary for teaching purposes, but it could be established on different bases. Gannon, for instance (1985) when dealing with teaching writing to native speakers (elementary and secondary levels) divided writing in terms of its functions such as recording, instructional, narrative, descriptive and explanatory. Nevertheless, he *(Ibid)* admitted that other ways of classifying writing activities are possible, such as subject-oriented divisions. Britton (1978) proposes other categories associated with functions of writing which are: expressive, transactional, and poetic .He *(Ibid)* associated function with what the writer intends to do with the piece of writing and how the reader is affected by it. This can be displayed as follows:
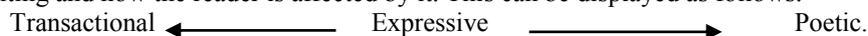
Transactional ⟵——————— Expressive ———————⟶ Poetic.
The expressive stage refers to personal feelings and ideas that the writer wants to express. These may either develop into transactional or poetic. The first category includes writing in order to achieve a particular purpose, the written from being a

means for achieving this function; whereas in the poetic type, the important purpose is the writing itself.

Definition of Cooperative Learning

Slavin (1992) states that: "Cooperative learning refers to instructional methods involving small heterogeneous groups working together, usually toward a common goal". He *(Ibid)* adds that this approach to learning involves changes to both task structure and incentive structure. The task structure refers to the ways in which the teacher or students set up activities designed to result in students' learning where a cooperative structure involves students working together to help one another. The incentive structure moves away from one individual to general; i.e., the success of one student is positively related to the success of others. Johnson & Johnson (1994) highlighted the importance of how students interact, arguing that it can affect learning, liking of school and other students, as well as self-esteem. As Johnson & Johnson (1994) pointed out, however, it is not enough to just put students in groups and tell them to work together for CL to work. How such groupings are structured will largely determine whether or not they will be more effective than competitive or individualistic groupings. CL is important for creating inclusive classroom environments that meet the needs of all students because it takes heterogeneity into account, encouraging peer support and connection. Given that most classrooms are heterogeneous, it only makes sense to use an approach to teaching and learning which accounts for this heterogeneity.

As university moves closer to the goal of providing education for all students within inclusive classrooms, increasing the amounts of attention and energy are being devoted to developing pedagogical approaches that are appropriate in heterogeneous classrooms. Cohen et.al, (2001) state that: "Teachers must structure the educational and social environment so that students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to interact across both perceived and actual differences and disabilities".

CL encourages mutual respect and learning among students with varying talents and abilities, languages, racial, and ethic backgrounds Sapon-Shevin & Duncan, (1992:34) report that: "Cooperative learning is effective in reading prejudice among students and in meeting the academic and social needs of students at risk for educational failure". All students need to learn and work in environment when their individual strengths are recognized and individual needs are addressed. If teachers or students are uncomfortable with CL, it is often because they have adopted a particular technique without a firm understanding of the underlying principles and do not have sufficient support to implement creative, multilevel CL activities that allow students to participate at different levels with differential goals and varying levels of support.

- CL Advantages

Richards (2002) states that teachers are generally left alone with their inner speech regarding the hundreds of decisions they need to make daily as Jackson (1968) observed, addressing such feelings with colleagues is rare. Besides reducing the isolation of teaching, there are several (other advantages of collaborative exploration of teaching, it can exclude the evaluative component of observation characteristic of the usual top down, hierarchical, supervisory model, (Slavin,1995:31) states that "professional development is seen as something that is evaluated with little attention

paid to the ways teachers evolve expertise in the practice teaching". Another advantage of collaborative exploration, according to Richardson, (1994)"is that it leads to shared or mutual reconstruction that is agreed upon by both practitioner and researcher", and although it "is not conducted for purposes of developing general laws related to educational practice (Slavin, 1995).

-CL Importance

Johnson & Johnson (1994) outlines five important elements for effective CL; positive interdependence and individual accountability promote face to face interaction, small group skills and group processing. Cooperation allows for positive interdependence where all group members work together to accomplish shared goals. Thus, individuals seek outcomes that are both beneficial to themselves and to the group members' cooperation and promote goal, interdependence which are positively linked in such a way that the probability of one person obtaining his / her goal is positively correlated with the probability of others doing so. It also rewards interdependence where all members in the group are given the same reward.

- Individual Accountability

Slavin (1995) argues that when CL is poorly constructed, its methods can allow for the "free rider effect "in which some group members do all or most of the work (and learning) while others do little or nothing. A key to eliminating this is to create individual accountability to ensure that all students learn and that no members in the group are ignored. This is possible by having both groups' goals and individual accountability. Students are provided with an incentive to help each other and to encourage each other to put forth maximum effort. Johnson & Johnson (1994) argue that individual accountability can be achieved through the use of individual assessment which is then used to determine the success level of the group as a whole.

Individual accountability can be achieved by frequently highlighting the contributions of each member. Teachers need to assess how much effort each member is contributing to the group's work, provide feedback to groups and individual students, help groups avoid redundant efforts by members, and ensure that all members are responsible for the final outcome. Johnson & Johnson (1994) highlight how to structure individual accountability through:

- Keeping the group size small.
- Giving students individual tests where they can not seek help from others.
- Randomly choosing students to answer questions
- Observe the group and record the frequency on contribution of each member.
- Assigning one member to be a "checker" who asks other group members to explain the reasoning and rational underlying group answers.
- Having students teach what they learned to someone else.

- Promotive Face-to-face Interaction

They physical arrangement of small heterogeneous groups encourages students to help, share, and support each other's learning. By working closely together, students can promote each other's success through explanations, teaching, checking for understanding, discussions, connecting old and new learning (Slavin,1995).

- Interpersonal and Small Group Skills

Johnson and Johnson (1994) argue that the more socially skilled students are, and the more attention teachers pay to teaching and rewarding the use of social skills. In this respect, the achievement that can be expected within CL groups is very high. Students need to learn interpersonal skills such as active listening, staying on task, asking questions, conflict management resolution, and so forth.

- Group Processing

Johnson and Johnson (1994) believe that group processing takes place on two levels- in small groups and the whole class. To allow for group processing at the group level, they argued that teachers should allow time and the end of each class for groups to process how effectively the members work together. Doing so, they argued, would:

- enable learning groups to focus on maintaining good working relationships among members.

- facilitate learning of cooperative skills.

- ensure that students think on the met cognitive as well as meta cognitive level, and

- provide a means to celebrate the success of the group and to reinforce positive behaviors.

Processing at the class level can be done by having the teacher occasionally observe groups, analyze problems and then provide feedback to the whole class. CL promotes effective and social benefits such as increased student interest in and valuing of subject matter, and increases in positive attitudes and social interactions among students who differ in gender, race, ethnicity, achievement levels and other characteristics. CL also creates the potential for cognitive and metagonitive benefits by engaging students in discourse that requires them to make their task. Students are likely to show improved achievement outcomes when they engage in certain forms of co-operative learning as an alternative to complete assignments on their own (Johnson & Johnson,1994).

A number of books have appeared in the last few years and provided hundreds of cooperative activities either designed for language classroom or easily adapted for language learning such as Kessler (1992), Kolb (1983) and Nunan (1999).What follows is a selection of cooperative activities which the author has used most effectively in language (as well as in teacher education) classrooms.

-Individual Learning

Having students learn by themselves at their own levels may lead them to make mistakes and lack confidence. In this instance Harmer (2001: 260) stated that: "individual students found themselves saying and writing things they might not have come upon with on their own, and groups' research was broader than an individual's normally was".

- Cooperative Writing

Harmer (2001) stresses the fact that cooperative writing works well with both process and genre-based approaches. In the first case, reviewing and evaluation are greatly enhanced by having more than one person working on it. In genre-based writing, two heads analyze genre – specific texts as well as, if no better than one head would do, and often create genre – specific texts more successfully as a result. Writing

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in groups, whether as part of a long process or as part of a short game – with communicative activities, can be greatly motivating for students, including as it does, not only writing, but research, discussion, peer evaluation and group pride in a group accomplishment. It is believed that the use of cooperative writing would make students learn more effectively. Harmer (ibid.) states that many of us also place a high premium on teaching techniques that go beyond mere mastery of content and ideas. We believe CL promotes a larger educational agenda which encompasses several intertwined rationales.

Slavin (1993) states that Group work can be an extremely useful addition to a large class. Not only does peer discussion help students understand and retain material, but it helps them develop better communication skills. Students also become aware of the degree to which other students can be a valuable resource in learning. As many students will say, they know they really understand the subject matter when they must explain it or teach it to a peer. Some instructors break up a lecture by having students divide themselves into groups of three or four and answer specific questions, or solve specific problems. Each group appoints a spokesperson who may have to report on the group's progress once the larger class reconvenes. It is not necessary to call on every group for a response–a general sense of the class's understanding can be gained by quickly polling several groups for their questions or comments. Group work can also be used on a more formal scale. Students can be divided into groups early in the quarter, and encouraged to share phone numbers and addresses. Then specific group projects can be assigned that require groups to meet outside of class.

3. Definition of Group Work

It is important to start by defining what group work is. According to Brown (1989:77), it is a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language. It implies small group work; that is, students in groups of perhaps six or fewer. Three important aspects should be highlighted in this definition. The first one is collaboration; in other words, cooperation. Students have to work together for the completion of the task. All the members of the group are like the pieces of a machine. If one does not work well, a malfunction may occur. Obviously, for lazy or irresponsible students, this is not a problem because the other members will take over and make the machine work somehow. But real cooperation in group work occurs when everyone is aware of his responsibility and commits himself to accomplish it in the best way possible. Kagan (1994:10) affirmed that division of labour is often established by assigning task roles (student 1 is to research the historical character's early life; student 2, his inventions, student 3, his married family life; student 4, his major inventions) or maintenance roles (student 1, you are the Materials Monitor; student 2, you are the Quiet Captain; student 3, you are the Task Master; student 4, you are the Recorder). Of course, all the members work together, discuss, come out with new ideas, change certain things; but if one does not comply with his/her role, the work is paralyzed. Roles are also changed within the group every time a new task is assigned. In this way, everybody will have a different responsibility each time a new group work is assigned. This is what Kagan (1994 :07) calls interdependency: "the success of every team member depends on the success of each member (if one fails, all do), then a very strong form of positive interdependence is created and team members

are very motivated to make sure each student does well". At first, roles can be assigned by the teacher, but later on, as students get better trained on successful group work, they can be responsible for assigning roles themselves.

The second and third aspects in Brown's (1989, ibid.) definition are interrelated. Self-initiated language refers to students using what they know and have learned in class to communicate with others in the classroom. In order to do this, the groups have to be small, as Brown *(Ibid)* previously suggests six students or less. In very big groups, shy or passive students tend to fall in silence and let the most talkative ones do the talking. Nunan (1999:157) also pointed out that one of the classroom variables that has had a marked effect on student participation in written activities has been group size. Students who remain silent in groups of ten or more will contribute actively to discussions when the size of the group is reduced to five or three.

-Group Work Advantages

Once group work has been defined, it is important to analyze why EFL teachers use group work. Group work is not just a time-filler, or a thoughtless activity that teachers sometimes use for checking pending papers or extra assignments. Group work should not be used as class time for teachers to read, to rest, to prepare other classes, or just to imitate other teachers that are using group work without really understanding what that is and entails. The real purpose of working in groups in an EFL class goes beyond the actual command: "Get in a group, please, and answer the following questions," which, in most cases, turns out to be an individual work. Harmer (2001) pinpoints the following principles in which group work is grounded:

- Students' processing language moves from units and pieces to more complex sentence structures faster and spontaneously. "Overanalyzing language, thinking much about its forms, and consciously lingering on rules of language all tend to impede this graduation to automaticity" (Brown, 1989: 56). The key element here is fluency over accuracy.

- Group work gives students more chance to interact and use the target language more freely. Instead of just having a few seconds to talk in teacher-fronted classes, students can participate longer in a small group and feel more confident to give their opinions and even make mistakes when just three or four classmates are looking at them. Brown (1989:178) states that "small groups provide opportunities for students' initiation, for face-to-face give and take, for practice [sic] negotiation of meaning, and for extended conversational exchanges, and for students adoption of roles that would otherwise be impossible"

- Language learning is much more meaningful. Instead of memorizing and/or drilling, students use language to talk about something that is appealing, contextualized and relevant to them. "Meaningful learning will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning" (Brown, 1989:57).

- Group work creates a positive atmosphere in the sense that some students will not feel vulnerable to public display that may cause rejection or criticism. It is totally true that shy or low risk-taker students feel much more confident working in small groups than in teacher-fronted classes. It is difficult to hide in small groups.

- Learner's responsibility and autonomy are encouraged through group work. "The small group becomes a community of learners cooperating with each other in pursuit of common goals"(Brown, 1989: 178). Students are not constantly relying on the

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teacher to complete their tasks. They learn that they can complete an activity successfully with the help of other classmates or by themselves.

- By using group work, the teacher has the opportunity to teach turn-taking mechanisms. As Krashen (1984: 22) suggested that teaching students how to take turns, as easy as this might seem, requires teaching a number of skills that are not automatically transferred from the mother tongue such as to tolerate silences, to direct gaze to addressees, to make use of floor-taking gambits, and to take longer turns.

- Group Work Disadvantages

As everything in teaching, group work has also disadvantages that are important to explore. The first drawback relates to noise. Obviously, students speak all at once trying to accomplish their task, and this may bother other colleagues. But as Doff (1992: 141) states "the noise created by group work is usually "good" noise since students are using English and are engaged in a learning task". What a teacher can do to solve the "noise problem" is to make students aware that they do not need to shout to be heard, and this will help to keep the noise at a moderate level.

Another negative aspect of group work is the fact that some teachers may lose control of the class or have difficulties controlling the class. However, even if students are working in small groups and are in charge of the completion of a task, the teacher is still the director and manager of the class and needs to make students aware of this. Doff (1992: 142) highlights that in order "to stop activities getting out of control, it is important to give clear instructions, to give clear defined tasks and to set up a routine so that the students would exactly know how and what to do". If a teacher circulates around the class to clarify doubts and to monitor what students are doing, there is no reason for losing control of the class. The use of native language and the lack of the correction of mistakes represent another dislikeable feature of group work. This is true even in teacher-fronted classes. Students make use of any opportunity to switch to their native language. To avoid this, Brown (1989: 180) suggests "to encourage students to practice using the target language in face-to-face contexts and to make them aware of the importance of some real uses for English in their own lives" When working in groups, students are surely going to make mistakes. But as Brown *(Ibid: 181)* point out "errors are a necessary manifestation of interlanguage development, and we do well not to become obsessed with their constant correction. Well managed group work can encourage spontaneous peer feedback on errors within the small group itself". We, teachers, are facilitators and guides, not police officers to stand behind our students' backs in order to correct everything they say or do. Nowadays, language teaching is heading towards autonomous learning not towards dependent learning.

- Forming Groups

Groups of students could be formed in different ways: whether by using the alphabetical list with three, four or five students. We can as well form groups by mixing students' different abilities. This method ensures that students interact and help each other. In other words, the less able students gain knowledge from more able ones.

-Group Work Grading

The grade for the work can be awarded to the individual or to all members of the group. It has been clarified in the following:

- Part of the grade may be the student's participation in the group discussion or activity.
- Part of the grade may include quantitative scores.
- Group members can anonymously grade the participation and contribution of the members of the group.

Exemplify and explain difficult elements to one another. Group work, then, makes the students comprehend that they need each other's resources and contribution to successfully complete and perform their tasks. Interaction within group work activities may be of great value in stimulating and developing the students' cognitive, social and linguistic abilities.

Results and Discussion

The results of the Teachers/Students' questionnaire are represented in this section. Some of the responses received significant results in terms of the positive attitudes they displayed towards cooperative learning through group-work, while some others did not. This section will briefly present those responses:

1-Teachers' Questionnaire
Question 1: Teachers' Opinions about Their Roles
Do you want you to act as a controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, or a participant?
According to the results revealed in the table above, 50% of participants argued that their roles to encourage students to write a paragraph would be as an organizer. This is a clear indication that the presence of the teacher inside the classroom is more than necessary.

Question 2: Reasons behind Teaching Writing Skill
Do you teach writing skill to reinforce students' vocabulary, enhance language development, meet students' learning styles or develop writing as a skill?
According to the results stated above, 50% of our informants responded that they teach writing skill for the sake of enhancing language development.

Question 3: Teachers' Opinions Concerning what has been Written Down
Do you give constructive advice on what has been written down?
The six (06) teachers (100%) gave a positive answer to this question. This actually shows their awareness and responsibility towards correcting what has been written down.

Question 4: Teachers' Opinions concerning what has been written down
If "yes", how?
The six teachers who said that they offer positive and constructive advice on what has been written down gave the following answers: -to empower students' abilities in writing, writing is actually a whole system; -because it is a kind of final revision and the last alternative for clarification using an illustrative example; -to improve their writing skill and avoid making mistakes; -because they are in need to that advice to guide them to go through the right path, so to achieve a good results. In addition it helps a lot to correct their mistakes and reinforce their writing skill.

Question 5: Teachers' Opinions about Following the Sequence of Planning, Drafting, Editing and the Final Draft.
Do you follow the Sequence of Planning, Drafting, Editing and the Final Draft? Yes or No ?
The table above indicates that all teachers with a proportion 100% said that they follow the sequence of drafting, revising, editing and proofreading. This is going to be the most appropriate sequence for students to achieve a better result.

Question 6: Teachers' Points of View About which Sub- process they feel that their Students are Really Involved in.
In Which Sub-process do you Feel that Your Students are Really Involved: Drafting, Revising, Editing, and Proofreading?
66.66% of our informants responded that they feel the involvement of their students in the drafting sub process. This is clear evidence that drafting is the key to the other steps.

Question 7: Teachers' Attitudes towards Written Topic as a Motivating Factor to Enhance Curiosity.
Do you Think that Writing such a Topic would Enhance Curiosity and Self-confidence?
100% of informants admitted that writing such a topic would enhance students' curiosity and self confidence. This indicates that the first gate to students' success in writing is going to be achieved by creating a motivating atmosphere.

Question 8: If "yes", how?
The teachers who said yes to item 7 reported the following answers:
-By the use of panoply of activities such as brainstorming, visuals aids, use of songs, diaries, plays, etc….
- By asking discussion questions to exchange ideas and benefit from each other.
- It depends on the topic.
- Asking various questions about the topic, raising debates, suggesting topic that are close to their interest and needs.

Question 9: Effects of Correcting Students' Mistakes.
In your Point of View, do you Think that Correcting such a Piece of Written Work is Efficient? Yes? No?
The table above shows that 100% of our informants responded by yes.
-This indicates that students need correction in order to recognize their mistakes.
-The majority of teachers gave the following explanation:
-To make the students aware about their own mistakes, errors and ultimately solve the problem of style, grammar, capricious English orthography.
-By correcting mistakes, students will be aware of their feebleness and they try to avoid them through time.
-The feed back after writing an activity is very necessary to enable learners to know their mistake as well as improve their writing skill.

Question 10: Teachers' Attitudes Concerning Written Topic
When assigning a writing topic, do you concentrate on the purpose of writing, the audience that you are writing for, or the content structure (ideas, argument)?
50 % of our informants agree that when they intend to assign a writing topic, they concentrate on the content structure (ideas, argument). This denotes that students are really in need to know about the content structure.

Question 11: Teachers' Opinions Concerning CL as an Element to Enhance Learning
Do you believe that CL is a vital element to enhance learning?
As it is expected, the six 06 teachers 100% gave a positive answer to this question. This actually shows the awareness of great value of CL in the learning process.

Question 12: Teachers' Opinions Concerning CL as an Element to Enhance Learning
If "yes" how?
The informants who said yes to question 11 gave the following responses: students share their experiences and their frustration is reduced in the long run; - understanding the ambiguous points through the clarification of the other elements of each group will begin earlier. Since there is a cultural, linguistic and human exchange between students, CL is a vital element to enhance the process of learning. For mastering the communicative language ability, there must be a cooperative learning where all the skills are going to be involved including the writing skill.

Question 13: Effects of CL on Students' Way of Thinking
Does CL Affect Positively Students' Way of Writing?
According to the results revealed in the table above that 100% of participants agreed that CL affects positively students' way of writing.

Question 14: Effects of CL on Students' Way of Thinking
If "yes" how?
The teachers who responded yes to question 14 gave the following answers: -by discovering flaws in their way of getting about their treatment of the topic; - students learn from each others' mistakes; -exchange information and learn new words, so they increase their bank of knowledge and their critical thinking will be increased; - encourage students to give their best when they work in groups, and reduce "shyness" among them.

Question 15: Frequency of Groups Organization
How often do you divide your class into groups: always, sometimes, often, rarely?
66.66% of informants responded that they sometimes divide their class into groups. This direct interpretation leads us to say that the majority of teachers are not aware of the importance of CL and group work in developing students' writing production.

Question 16: What are the Main Aspects you Take into Consideration when the Division of Groups is Taking Place?
Our informants responded the following answers: -understanding among the students. -Similar cognitive abilities; -similar social and educational levels; -the level of literacy, the nature of the subject.

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Question 17: Teachers' Opinions about Cooperative Activities
Have you assigned some sorts of cooperative activities?
The table above reveals that 83.33% of the participants (05) teachers said that they assign cooperative activities.

Question 18: What kind of activities?
The majority of the informants gave the following responses: - pair work, team work, and group work.

Question 19: How do you prepare your students for cooperative tasks?
All our informants agreed that the preparation for cooperative tasks should accompany the following:
- Brainstorming, use of visual aids, use of songs, exploring their beliefs and values.

Question 20: Teachers' Opinions about CL in the Interaction and Mastery of Critical Thinking.
Do you think that the interaction between students would increase their mastery of critical thinking?
100% of our informants admitted that the interaction between students would increase their mastery of critical thinking.

Question 21: Teachers' Opinions about CL in the Interaction and Mastery of Critical Thinking.
If "yes" how?
The majority of our informants gave their main motives and reasons for such decision:
- by comparing and contrasting their peers' points of view, way of thinking; -students will be given the chance to share their views and critic them by the control of the teacher of course.

Question 22: Teachers' Choice in Forming Groups
Do you Like to Lead your Group?
According to the results revealed in the table above, 66.33% of the participants argued that they like to lead their groups for not to create noise and choose those who are good in one side and let the other in the other side.

Question 23: Teachers' Opinions about Heterogeneous Groups
Do you Think that Heterogeneous Groups are Important for Cooperation Activities in your Class?
The table above indicates that almost all teachers with a proportion (83.33%) believe those heterogeneous groups are important for the cooperation inside the classroom.

Question 24: Teachers' Opinions about Heterogeneous Groups:
 If "yes" why?
The (05) five teachers who said that heterogeneous groups are suitable for the cooperation gave the following responses: -rich and colour of the group; -avoid shyness and all complex behaviours that may occur between both sexes; -to be more sociable and more self confident.

Question 25: Teachers' Opinions about CL as the Outlet to Interact
Do you think that CL is the outlet for your students to interact and share ideas?
These results show that our informants think that cooperative learning is the major outlet for students to interact and share ideas and thoughts.

Question 26: Teachers' Opinions about CL as the Outlet to Interact
If "yes" how?
The (04) four teachers, who said that cooperative learning is the major outlet for students to interact and share ideas, gave their motives and reasons by saying that everybody enjoys being listened to and to some extent challenged politely , particularly an effective teacher.

Question 27: Teachers' Attitudes about Students' Involvement inside Group Work
Do you involve yourself inside the group work?
All informants with the proportion of 100% agree that they involve students inside the group work in order to let them vivid and active**.**

Question 28: Teachers' Point of View Concerning Group Work
Do you think that students learn best when they are really involved in the process?
100% of our informants reported that students learn best when they feel that are really involved in the process.

Question 29: Teachers' Point of View Concerning Group Work
If "yes" how?
The teachers who said that students learn best when they are really involved in the process gave the following responses. Students are highly motivated when they feel they are apart (an important one) of a group (sense of belonging). Moreover, students will not be a recipients but rather active.

Question 30: Teachers' View Point about Cooperative Writing as a Motivating Factor
Do you believe that cooperative writing can greatly motivate and develop students' writing abilities?
The table above reveals that 100% of our informants believe that cooperative writing can greatly motivate students to develop their writing abilities, exchange ideas, vocabulary, informative point of view, way of thinking, emotions etc

Question 31: Teachers' Opinions Concerning Pair Work for Teaching the Writing Skill.
Do you think that pair work is good for teaching the writing skill?
As it is expected, the six (06) teachers with a proportion of (100%) gave a positive answer to this question.

Question 32: Teachers' Opinions Concerning Pair Work for Teaching the Writing Skill.
If "yes" how?
The majority of our informants responded as follows: - more intimate atmosphere and similar ideas; -evaluate each other and learn from their errors and mistakes; - it helps to share ideas.

Question 33: Teachers' Attitudes Concerning Feed back after Pair-work
Do you think that Feed back after pair work is necessary? Agree, Disagree?
The majority of our informants admitted that feedback time after pair work is necessary and can be helpful for all students.

2. Students' Questionnaire

Question 1: Students' Opinions about the Role of the Teacher
Do you want your teacher to act as a controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, or a participant?
42 % of our informants say that they want their teacher to act as a controller inside the classroom about what have been written down .this number gives us a clear idea that students need correction and grammar advice from their teachers.

Question 2: Students' Reasons for Learning Writing
Do you learn writing skill to reinforce your vocabulary, language development, learning style, or writing as a skill?
70 % of respondents say that they want to learn writing for the sake of reinforcing vocabulary. This means that students lack finding the appropriate vocabulary in their written production.

Question 3: Students' Opinions Concerning Teachers' Constructive Advice on What has been Written Down.
Do you want a constructive advice on what has been written down?
76% of respondents say that they want to be advised on what has been written, while 24% do not. This means that the majority of the students need to be helped.

Question 4: Students' Opinions Concerning Teachers' Constructive Advice on What has been Written Down.
If "yes" how?
The 38 % want a constructive advice on what has been written down. As a matter of fact they have many answers in common. Here are some of their opinions: - "I like teachers' advice on what I have written down, because by doing this I discover my mistakes in grammar (prepositions, conjunctions, tenses... etc)"; "-Help me how to organize my ideas and information."

Question 5: Students' Choice about Following the Sequence of Planning, Drafting, Editing and the Final Draft.
Do you follow the sequence of planning, drafting, editing and the final draft?
64 % of our informants say that they follow the sequence of planning, drafting, editing and the final draft. This is a clear indication that the best way to present essay or paragraph, teacher of written expression should respect this sequence.

Question 6: Students' Opinions on the Kind of the Sub- process they really Feel Involved in.

In Which sub- process do you feel that you are really involved: drafting, revising, editing or proofreading?

60 % of our informants say that they are really involved in the process of revising. This is clear evidence that students do need revision, checking mistakes and errors, before the draft is given.

Question 7: Students' Attitudes towards Written Topic as a Motivating Factor to Enhance Curiosity.

Do you think that writing such a topic would enhance curiosity and self-confidence?

76 % of our informants report that writing such topic would enlighten them different points they do not know about before, and would improve their curiosity and self confidence. These findings once again constitute clear evidence that teachers should focus on providing students with many topics in different fields.

Question 8: Students' Attitudes towards Written Topic as a Motivating Factor to Enhance Curiosity.

If "yes" how?

The 38 students who say "Yes" to item 8 reported the following forms. It seems to be a very interesting experience since it is a valuable break from the usual classroom routine:- Feeling more confident, - Discovering new vocabularies, - Memorizing more because we feel really involved in the process, -Freely participate and contribute with the rest of the class.

Question 9: Effects of Correcting Students' Mistakes

In your point of view, do you think that correcting such a piece of written work is efficient?

80 % of our informants think that correcting such a piece of written is efficient to the point of discovering our errors. The majority of students share the same response as follows: - Showing the right path instead the wrong ones, - Discovering mistakes and how to correct them, - How to organize ideas and information.

Question 10: Working Together Frequency

How often do you work together: always, sometimes, often, and rarely?

60 % of our informants say that they rarely work together. These findings reveal that practicing the technique of working together is a little bit ignored by our teachers despite its advantages.

Question 11: Students Attitudes Concerning Written Topic

When assigning a writing topic, do you concentrate on the purpose of writing, the audience that you are writing to, or the content structure (ideas, argument)?

62 % of our informants admit that they concentrate more on content structure (ideas, argument) when written topic is assigned. This clear evidence that what matter to students is how to organize their ideas and argument.30 % of our informants said that in their written topic they focus on the purpose of writing .i.e. why do I write such topic and for which reason.

Question 12: Students' Opinions Concerning CL as an Element to Enhance Learning
Do you believe that CL is vital element to enhance learning?
86 % of our informants say that CL is vital element to enhance learning because it encourages mutual respect among students with varying talents and abilities, language, racial.

Question 13: Students' Opinions Concerning CL as an Element to Enhance Learning
If "yes" how?
The 43 students who say that CL is vital element to enhance learning provide the following responses: - Learning through CL seems to be a very interesting technique for students learning as it includes many crucial instructions and activities that can help students learn more about this innovative technique and hence their better achievement, - the participants commented that humour and fun going to be a vital role in better learning and understanding as well and this going to happen if and only when CL is implemented, -working in CL atmosphere enables students to know each other and gain more new friends, feeling more confident and get rid from shyness.

Question 14: The Effects of CL on Students' Way of Thinking
Can CL affect positively your way of writing?
96 % of our informants state that CL may affect greatly their way of learning and more than that it helped them to improve and stimulate their way of thinking.

Question 15: Effects of CL on Students' Way of Thinking
If "yes" how?
48 students who say that CL affects positively their way of thinking .Here are some of their opinions: - it seems that through CL we would develop our way of thinking and organising our ideas and arguments and will not be come true unless we could cooperate together to find out our view points, share thoughts and information, - CL allows us to neglect being selfish, - we are going to accept others critiques and respect their opinions. - the majority of students' responses were very satisfactory, yet, they varied according to different advantages.

Question 16: Groups Division Frequency in Class
How often Does the teacher Divide your Class into Groups: always, sometimes, often, or rarely?
The majority of our informants 40 % say that the division of class into groups occurs sometimes .This clear evidence that teachers still unaware of the great importance of group work in developing the process of learning. Thus leads us to reconsider the procedure of implementing CL in developing students' written production.

Question 17: Students' Opinions about Cooperative Activities
Have you practised some cooperative activities?
All informants admit that they do not know about CL activities. This is clear evidence that teachers do not use this technique despite its great importance and value.

Question 18: Students' Opinions about CL in Interaction and Mastery of Critical

 Thinking

Do you think that the interaction with your teacher would increase your mastery of critical thinking?

96 % of our informants agree that the interaction with their teachers would increase their mastery of critical thinking. This once again makes us very pleased to obtain such valuable responses, which lead us to state that our students become conscious of the various importance of CL on developing their critical thinking to their written production.

Question 19: Students' Opinions about CL in Interaction and Mastery of Critical

Thinking

If "yes" how?

The 48 students who say that CL will help to develop their critical thinking agreed that it will help them also to make a careful judgement.

Question 20: Students' Choice in Forming Groups

Do you choose yourself to form groups?

The majority of students reply that they are not free to choose forming groups taking the choice to their teachers which considered an appropriate selection for them.

Question 21: Students' Opinions about Heterogeneous Groups

Do you think that heterogeneous groups are important for the cooperation in your class?

90 % of our informants agree that heterogeneous groups are important for the cooperation inside the classroom, given the fact that the difference in gender and level may result positively.

Question 22: Students' Opinions about Heterogeneous Groups

If "yes" why?

45 students who say that heterogeneous groups are important for the cooperation gave some the following responses as follows: - I really like working in heterogeneous groups, working together inside the classroom allows us to work together outside; - It seems that I will be able to learn in heterogeneous groups and truly understand things better than being alone; - We could freely express our ideas and thoughts in total confidence and of course with no shyness; - We accept critics from our colleagues and respect their opinions; - More relaxed atmosphere makes learning very easy.

 Question 23: Students' Opinions about CL as the Outlet to Interact.

 Do you think that CL is the outlet for you to interact and share ideas?

96 % of our informants admit that CL is the only outlet to leave the silence out of the classroom (to hear our voices), to interact and share ideas. This clear evidence shows that our informants convinced more about the idea of implementing the technique of CL.

Question 24: Students' Opinions about CL as the Outlet to Interact

If "yes" how?

The 48 students who say that CL is a vital element for the process of learning and only the outlet for students to interact and share ideas gave the following responses:

- Actually I want to express and develop my ideas and thoughts through discussion and interaction and to break the silence inside the classroom and being always absent; - CL creates an intimate friendly atmosphere and offer students with different levels and abilities to participate with their ideas; - We could free ourselves from remaining always silent and to become an active and dynamic element.

Question 25: Students' Attitudes about Students' Involvement inside the Group Work Activities
Do you involve yourself inside a Group Work?
The majority of our informants say that they to be an active participant inside the group work and share their ideas with the rest of the group.

Question 26: Students' Point of View Concerning Group Work
Do you think that you learn best when you are really involved in the process?
80% answer positively, while 20% think the opposite.

Question 27: Students' Point of View Concerning Group Work
If "yes" how?
As a matter of fact, the majority of the participants regardless of their gender think that working in groups would help them so much to better understand the material and stimulated their thinking. Students responded as follows: -become active participant inside group work will allow us to understand better than working individually; therefore, learning cooperatively may encourage diversity of understanding; -low level students may take a great advantage from high level ones by explanations and clarification; - it seems that students will feel less shy by working in small groups, especially in a relaxed atmosphere where they can benefit largely from each other.

Question 28: Students' View points About Cooperative Writing as a Motivating Factor to Writing
Do you believe that cooperative writing can greatly motivate you to develop your writing abilities?
88 % of our informants say that cooperative writing can greatly motivate students to develop their writing abilities. This means that the presence of this technique is more than a necessity.

Question 29: Students' View points About Cooperative Writing as a Motivating Factor to Writing
If yes why?
The 44 students state that cooperative writing can motivate learners to develop their writing abilities and their responses as follows: - working in cooperative writing seems certainly interesting, given the fact that each students will contribute to the successful accomplishment of any activity or task, therefore, they are very motivated, dynamic; cooperate with each other in performing task; - collaborative efforts among students may certainly lead to a higher self esteem, feeling less shy since students would become familiar with the group members and could freely express their opinions better than when it comes to face the whole class.

Question 30: Students' Opinions Concerning Pair-work for Teaching Writing
Do you think that pair-work is good for teaching the writing skill?
The majority of our informants, (86 %) said that pair work is good for teaching the writing skill. This means that the presence of this technique is necessary for teaching the writing.

Question 31: Students' Opinions Concerning Pair- work for Teaching Writing
If "yes" how?
The 43, who say that pair work is good are reported in the following: -working together allows us memorize better than being alone; -pair work facilitates explaining the concept and let us perform the activities together; -through pair work we can form new structure using new vocabularies; -we can detect our mistakes and errors.

Question 32: Students' Attitudes Concerning Feedback after Pair-work
Do you think that feedback times after pair-work is necessary: Agree or Disagree?
94 % of our informants agree that feed back after pair work is necessary. Given the fact that the only way to improve their writing abilities will not happen unless pieces of advice, criticism about how good or useful work should be done.

Conclusion
   After having analysed the questionnaires, we have found that teachers and students showed great interest towards working with CL because of its potential positive effects on developing the writing skill. Teachers' interest in the major advantages of teaching the writing skill through CL with group works is motivated by their desire to raise quality of their teaching and probably improving their students' written production. They seem to discover cooperative learning as a appropriate technique to try in class with small group works. Students also corroborate this belief to try innovative techniques susceptible to favour more learning efficiency.

Suggestions and Recommendations
   The process of writing actually is a very loose and complex one. Writing takes place anywhere and at anytime. People write letters, reports chats, etc. This could be a mere arbitrary and non-systematic process which has to be distinguished from formal writing that takes place in educational situation. In this instance Hosenfled (1977) states the following suggestions that will help implement cooperative writing activities:
- Balance cooperative work with individual tasks to encourage both cooperation and independence; - Clarify to your students why you consider peer work valuable and what you expect them to gain from it. You can spell this out in your assignment sheet, or distribute a special handout, if you wish; - Make it clear that collaborative work requires the commitment of each group member to the whole task; -Encourage or provide outlines and preplanning, so that all group members agree on purpose, format, and timeline; -Make sure the groups have deadlines for each important stage of a collaborative project; - Provide written instructions, guidelines, or checklists to direct their work and help you chart their progress; -Vary group membership from project to project, to give students an opportunity to work with different peers; -Encourage students to get to know each other, and vary the members of groups so students don't

settle into active and passive roles; -During in-class group work, listen in or contribute to the conversation (though you shouldn't feel compelled to stifle productive disagreement); -Consider having students evaluate each other's participation.

As most writers spend a good amount of their time planning before they write, we ask students to be clear about the message they want to convey, i.e., the content of their composition. They should be aware of their purpose (what they expect to achieve through their writing) and their audience (their knowledge, background, language abilities, needs, expectations, etc.) Caroline (2001) maintains that, since the choice of content, organisation, and language depends on these factors. Students are also instructed to consider the constraints (personal, material, system, time, etc.) that they are likely to face while writing and to have a clear understanding of what they expect their readers to do with the writing. While knowledge of "purpose" focuses on the writer, the awareness of "task" focuses on the reader. Since academic (or professional) writing at the tertiary level is largely a way of writing rather than writing on this or that subject, students are also made aware of three kinds of competencies that must be demonstrated in their composition: (1) subject competency, (2) organisational competency, and (3) linguistic competency. They must show that they can communicate their message (professional or subject knowledge) objectively, logically, and unambiguously, employing appropriate linguistic and organisational strategies. They are asked to collect data through library research, live interviews, and field trips. They must take notes, and critically evaluate the ideas of others to formulate and structure their knowledge about a specific topic. Planning content, structure, emphasis, and procedure help students to monitor the organization and development of their ideas. Preparing an action plan or a framework for writing (explaining, describing, stating, arguing, narrating, etc.), and considering the use of illustrations, nonverbal data, etc., prove effective in the right sequencing of ideas. Caroline (2001) adds, since the purpose of writing is to convey concrete information; we encourage students to make decisions regarding the specific content to be included in their text. The audience analysis that they have done in the pre-writing stage prepares them to decide on what they should or should not include to meet their readers' needs. They set out to give shape to the skeletal structure prepared before writing, considering (1) how content is given linguistic expression (through definition, description, explanation, classification, generalisation, comparison, contrast, and hypothesis, etc.), (2) how thought connectors are used, (3) how a formal discourse is organised, and (4) how subheadings, diagrams, tables, and charts can be used in the final layout of the paper. They construct the text with a distinct beginning, middle, and end, keeping logicality, clarity, brevity, and correctness in mind. Before you begin to write, you jot down everything you know about this topic, look at other resources, ensure that you understand everything you are supposed to do, add details or supporting ideas, and check to see if everything is on topic.

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