

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of High Education and Scientific Research
Dr. Moulay Tahar University, Saida
Faculty of Letters, Languages and Arts
Department of English Language and Literature



**Teaching Written Expression through Competency –Based
Approach**

**A case study: First year students at Ibn Sahnoun El-Rachidi Secondary
School (Saida)**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature as a partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Didactics.

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Academic Year: 2017/2018

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution. I also certify that the present work contains no plagiarism and is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Signature:.....

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Date:

DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this work for my parents for their insightful pieces of advice, for my husband and little daughter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go to my supervisor Dr. Benachour Nadia for her help in completing this research work.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee, Dr. Mouri, and Mr. Hadji Mohamed who have given their time to read and evaluate this humble work.

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Last but not least, I would like to express my regards and blessings to all of those who provided me with support during the completion of this research work.

Abstract

The world has recently witnessed rapid changes because of the globalization. Education, as the other fields, was influenced by these changes. Consequently, a recent approach known as the Competency-Based Approach was imposed in some educational systems. In 2003, Algeria has adopted this approach as a first step of change. The new approach aims to enhance learners' competencies in order to use them in their real life. Despite its importance, some Algerian secondary school teachers still find difficulties to implement this new approach appropriately to improve learners' writing. Therefore, this study is intended to explore the main problems that face teachers in teaching writing under this approach to secondary school pupils. It also aims to find out whether or not the use of self-assessment as feedback strategy improves their performance in writing production. To achieve these aims, two main research tools were used. A questionnaire was designed for secondary school teachers to know their views about the application of the Competency-Based Approach and a classroom observation for first year students of Ibn Sahnoun El Rachidi Secondary school at Saida. The experiment was a writing test used for experimental and control group but self-assessment was given only to the experimental group. To this end, the main findings obtained from the questionnaire is ; to implement the Competency Based Approach appropriately, teachers need an intensive training to overcome the lack of the theoretical part, providing materials and reducing pupils number by class. Concerning the use of self-assessment in writing, the results indicated that the achievement of experimental group was higher than the control group in the quality of writing. It is suggested to the teachers of English that the use of learners' self-assessment as an alternative strategy in teaching writing which can motivate pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

Keywords: Competency-Based Approach, competencies, experiment, globalization, self-assessment

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List of Abbreviations

CBA : Competency-Based Approach.

CBET: Competency-Based Education and Training

CBLT : Competency-Based Language Teaching

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as Foreign Language.

ESL :English as Second Language

US : United States

USA: United States of America

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Educational reforms in many parts of the world are expressed in terms of competencies to develop learners. Competencies are attained after various activities to reach excellence in doing specific skills enabling young people to adapt to the changing world. One of the approaches, which are seen as appropriate to the educational content, is the Competency-Based, which focuses on measurable and useable skills and abilities. It claims that learners should mobilize their values, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in a personal way to address the challenges successfully.

This alternative approach, applied in the Algerian educational system, is expected to allow learners to attain a level that makes them rely on themselves and competes with other people around the world either in the field of work or in other situations.

Writing plays a vital role not only in conveying information, but also in transforming information to create a new knowledge in such a demanding life. It is thus of a central importance for students in academic, second and foreign settings. In addition, writing is the skill mostly used to examine pupils' performances in order to pass to higher levels. It is also a complicated cognitive task because it is an activity that demands careful thought, discipline and concentration. Thus, it appears to be a challenging task for EFL learners including the Algerians, who still find difficulties in producing an adequate piece of writing in spite of the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach.

Learning to write has for a long time been claimed to be a very difficult skill to acquire by learners in comparison to listening, speaking and reading. What makes writing a very hard task is the fact that it requires some criteria of acceptability related to different aspects of writing which include content organization, vocabulary, language use, spelling, punctuation and accurate capitalization.

Considering the difficulties of mastering writing skill, there are many methods and strategies that are used in the teaching process to improve students' writing ability. One of them is the use of feedback in teaching writing skill. In general context of teaching, feedback is information given to the student about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving the performance. Feedback is always given by teacher. It is in accordance with one of the teacher's role during writing activity as feedback provider. Feedback also can be given by students themselves. Giving certain guidance or criteria by teacher, students can self-assess their own writing. It could help them to improve their writing ability.

Although the teaching of writing has undergone major changes in middle and secondary education, the teaching of writing remains traditional. The writing skill continues to be neglected due to many factors among which teachers' problems in teaching writing under the Competency Based Approach. Therefore, their students' compositions are seen as products to be judged only for the assignment of grades. In addition, heavy emphasis is put on examination as the only criterion for measuring academic achievements in the Algerian educational system. This research intends to investigate and analyze the main problems encountered by EFL secondary school teachers in teaching writing under this approach. In addition, the use of self-assessment to provide feedback becomes the concern of the study.

The present research aims mainly to show the effects of the Competency-Based Approach on students' writing proficiency in secondary school classes including the problems that the teachers face while applying this approach.. It also aims to explore the role of self-assessment as feedback strategy to develop students writing performance.

Finally, to provide teachers with useful recommendations which may help them in their teaching process. For this purpose the following research questions have been formulated:

- 1) How do teachers of secondary schools promote their students' writing proficiency when using the Competency-Based Approach?
- 2) Do teachers use self-assessment as feedback strategy to teach written expression?
- 3) What is the impact of self-assessment on students' production?

This study is designed to test the following hypotheses:

- a. It is hypothesized that if Algerian teachers of English at secondary school level knew how to apply the Competency-Based Approach effectively, they would promote their pupils' writing proficiency. Or, it is hypothesized that their main difficulties involve lack of theoretical background and training on the Competency-Based Approach.
- b. Teachers do not use self-assessment in teaching written expression.
- c. Self-assessment could improve students' production through engaging them to form the criteria to be assessed.

As a matter of fact, this study is intended to offer insights into theory and practice of writing skill. The findings of this study will have significant pedagogical implications for EFL Algerian teachers at the secondary level and will also show that if the Competency-Based Approach had been used appropriately, it would have brought better results, and we would have received students with better writing proficiency.

As self-assessment becomes an integral component of all teaching and learning, it is important for educators to fully understand how these assessment practices support the personalization of learning and ultimately result in improved learning outcomes for all students therefore this study also gives English teachers another way or strategy for giving feedback in the teaching and learning of writing to improve students' writing ability and make them more critical in the way of assessing their own work.

The present research is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter contains detailed information about the Competency-Based Approach as a new approach in Algeria. It is clarified by defining firstly the terms approach, method, and technique and presenting background information of this approach. This chapter also deals with teaching under the Competency-Based Approach showing teacher's role, learners' role, and the Characteristics of this Approach.

The second chapter, which is devoted to Writing under the Competency-Based Approach, presents definitions of writing, the main writing characteristics. It discusses the most difficulties which face the students when they write and an overview of the different writing approaches. Writing Assessment, types of assessment are presented because of their usefulness in teaching writing, mainly self assessment which is helpful for students' writing development.

The third chapter is the empirical phase of this study, in which data were collected using two instruments of research; the questionnaire for EFL teachers and experiment implementation for students and then this data have been analyzed and discussed. The obtained results allowed the researcher to bring forward some suggestions and recommendations for EFL teachers to teach writing effectively.

The population of this study is composed of thirty EFL teachers from different secondary schools and 80 students from first year scientific stream of Ibn Sahnoun El Rachidi secondary school-Saida.

The limitations, which faced the current research, can be summarized in the lack of sources, especially sources concerning the Competency- based Approach and lack of time since we did not take our themes from the beginning of the year. But, those limitations did not hinder the study and we managed to cope with the situation.

Chapter One:

An Overview of the Competency- Based Approach

- 1.1.** Introduction
- 1.2.** Definition of Technique, Method and Approach
- 1.3.** Background of the Competency-Based Approach
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 - 1.10.4.** Learner as a Problem-Solver
- 1.11.** The Rationale for Implementing the Competency-Based Approach in the Algerian Educational System
- 1.12.** Conclusion

1.1. Introduction

Language teaching field witnessed the emergence of various approaches which rise, either as an extension or a reaction to one another. This chapter attempts to shed light on the theoretical side of one of those approaches that is the competency –based approach, to trace its history, development and the reasons why it has been implemented in the Algerian educational system.

1.2. Definition of Approach, Method, and Technique

Approach, method and technique are the three terms which are often overlapped in language teaching. People often mention one of them but they refer to another. Even, people tend to use the term "method" for all of the three. Some people think that they refer to the same concept: a procedure of teaching a language. In this vein, are the three terms the same or different?

1.2.1. Approach

Anthony (1963) defines an approach as "a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and learning" (cited in Krumaravadiveli, 2006, p.48). Likewise, Harmer (2001) states that an approach is about both how to use language and how its components overlap. According to Richards & Rodgers (2002), an approach refers to " theories about the nature of language and language learning that serves as the source of practices and principles in language teaching"(p. 78). Besides, Davies (2002) argues that an approach can help the teacher but it may not offer detailed information about the teaching process and he says that " it is the realm of methods" (p. 186). It means that an approach is broader than a method which encompasses theories about language and language learning and is not about what the teaching process should include and this is represented by a method.

1.2.2. Method

This term refers to "the practical realization of an approach" (Harmer, 2001, p. 78). It means that an approach is applied in a method and the latter represents the practical part of it. In other terms, the method is "an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural" (Anthony, 1963, cited in Krumaravadiveli, 2006, p. 85). Moreover, for Davies (2002) a method includes a general approach but it is more detailed than an approach because it collects such things as syllabus, learning - teaching activities, materials and so on (p.186).

1.2.3. Technique

According to the American applied linguist, Edward Anthony, a technique is "the implementation which actually takes place in a classroom[...]Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well" (cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2002, p. 19).

All activities, that take place in a language class, are techniques. Techniques are not exclusive to certain methods. To some extent, different methods may have similar techniques even though they must have different techniques. Language teachers may develop their own techniques as long as the techniques are still consistent with the assumptions or theories of the methods from which the techniques derive. Therefore, the position of a technique is at the implementation phase and is often called procedure while approach and method are at the level of design (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p.16).

Understanding how people conceptualize the terms will provide language teachers with a clearer picture of language teaching methods. This understanding may avoid the teachers from misunderstanding the concepts among themselves. Following

certain methods, language teachers may be expected to develop their own techniques by considering the underlying principles of the methods. Approaches and methods are relatively permanent, but techniques may be adapted to the environment of the language learners and language teachers. The procedure of a method, which comprises a set of techniques, may not be fixed even though the assumptions of an approach and the basic principles of a method are relatively fixed.

1.3. Background of the Competency-Based Approach

Chelli (2010) states that the "theoretical roots of the competency based approach lie in the behaviorist model from the 1950s" (p. 14). Henny (2005) also agrees with Chelli about the starting point of CBA. He considers the emergence of CBA as a reaction to the situation after the Second World War (p. 14), where teaching English as a second or foreign language became an important matter, because of the role of English as international language for communication by the 1950, and the influence of the technological prosperity in reinforcing English. All these circumstances led to the need for practical English for people in many parts of the world rather than academic English language acquired in school (Richards, 2001, pp. 23- 24). Consequently, Extensive demands for curriculum development which led to the emergence of new reformulations suggested; for instance, by Bloom's Taxonomy which became the core of audiolingualism in 1960s in the United States. After that, a new approach called the Competency Based Approach emerged in the educational field (Henny, 2005, p. 16). "CBLT first emerged in the united states in 1970s and was widely adopted in vocationally-oriented education and in adult ESL programs" (Auerbach, 1986, pp. 411-412 cited in Richards, 2001, p. 128). Henceforth, one can conclude that both teaching by objectives that represent behaviorist perspective and CBA share the same purpose which is the formation of the learner who can apply his knowledge in real life.

Moreover, Richard (2006) gives more explanation about the development of this approach. He considers CBA as an extension of communicative language teaching (CLT) which emerged in the 1970s, and which has a great influence on language teaching around the world, especially approaches of language teaching that appeared today (Richard, 2006, p. 1). He considers 1970s as a point of departure in the way of the language teaching approaches and methods. In this year, old methods such as Audiolingualism Method and Situational Language Teaching; which focus on grammar became old schools. Thus, language ability oversteps grammar competence to communicative competence, while grammar competence aimed to construct correct sentences, the interest shifted to the knowledge and skill needed to use grammar and other language aspects to achieve different communicative purposes.

Communicative language teaching has passed through a number of phases. In its first phase, 1970s and 1980s the interest was turned to the development of syllabus and teaching approach that will be suitable with the new conception of communicative competence. This led to many suggestions about the organization of syllabuses in terms of functions and notions rather than grammatical structures (Richards, 2006, p. 11). After that, supporters of CLT realized that many English learners have specific needs in their occupational or educational settings. Furthermore, employers, among others, denounce schools and universities' incapacity to form effective adults able to transfer to real-life situations what they have been inculcated, an opinion backed by Slavin (2003) who views that:

If a student can fill in blanks on language arts test but cannot write a clear letter to a friend or a perspective employer, or can multiply with decimals and percent on a math test but cannot figure sales tax, then that student's education has been sadly misdirected. (p. 241)

For Slavin, if a learner cannot apply what has been acquired in school and in extra-school context; then her/his education needs to be reconsidered.

In this regard, the approach called Competency- Based Approach, which is an educational movement that emerged in 1970s in the USA, came as an attempt to bridge the gap between school life and real life; relating school acquisitions to diverse and pertinent contexts of use inside as well outside school. The learner will, thus, see learning as being worthwhile and having relevance both for his studies and his future. The CBA was first applied in US military field. It has, then, been extended to the professional training domain where it demonstrated its worth. The application of the CBA in US educational field came as a response to the problems this field has witnessed. In the light of this tight, Tuxworth (1990) highlights that “The 60’s were tumultuous times in education in the USA: demands for curriculum reform, dissatisfaction with teacher training were features of the climate when emerged the Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET)” (p. 11).

1.4. Definition of Competence

Competence is often considered as an important concept in order to learn any foreign language. Mansfield (1989) claims that the term competence differs from one view to another some of these views see it as a broad concept which is doing with occupational tasks; however, others consider it as a narrow concept which focuses on "the routine aspect of work activity, and veers towards the input of knowledge, skills and understanding"[sic] which are attributed of individuals’’ (p. 23). According to Deseco (2005), the term competence is defined as "A system of internal and external mental structures and abilities assuming mobilization of knowledge, cognitive skills and social behavioral components such as attitudes, emotions for successful realization of activity in particular context "(cited in Chelli, 2010, p. 58). In spite of the variety definitions, all of them stress the fact that competence is both a physical and an intellectual ability to do something well through repeated experiences.

1.4.1. Definition of Competency

In studying competency, one is faced by the lack of unified definitions, and this leads to confusion between terms such as competence, competency, competencies, and competences. For example, the *New Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2005) defines competence as “the ability to do something well” (p. 294). Oxford further states that competence and competency are synonymous as are competences and competencies. This view is also shared by Dobson (2003) in his definition, “Competency (Also competence) the ability to perform tasks and duties to the standard expected in employment” (p. 62).

Attempts by researchers, such as Blakemore, to define the term competency have resulted in various definitions. Blakemore (2008) from his part coined the term of competency as follows: “A competency is a skill performed to a specific standard under particular conditions”. Then, he describes competencies as “result from breaking down a job or role into the specific and observable skills that are needed to do it well” (p. 2). We notice that the writer in his definition emphasizes about some key words which represent the main elements that distinguish between the two terms competence and competency which are specific and particular condition; therefore, one can consider the competency as superior level in mastery and accuracy to do thing in comparison to competence, the competency can also be realized in specific condition.

Another definition of competency is stated by The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (2002) as follows: “competency is the combination of skills, abilities, and knowledge needed to perform a specific task” (n.d.). The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (2002) believes “Competencies are the result of integrative learning experiences in which skills, abilities, and knowledge interact to form bundles that have currency in relation to the task for which they are assembled” (p. 7). From this definition, one can infer that competency consists of a set of components which are skills, abilities, and knowledge and the competencies as a

collection of competency. Later, Quality Assurance Manual for Flight Procedure Design (2009) proposes a definition to Competency as “A combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes required to perform a task to the prescribed standard” (p. xi). Then, he also describes its components from his view and defines them as follows: “A skill is the ability to perform an activity that contributes to the effective completion of a task”, “Knowledge is specific information required for the trainee to develop the skills and attitudes for the effective accomplishment of tasks, and” “Attitude is the person’s mental state that influences behavior, choices and expressed opinions” (p.9). All these definitions enable us to have a clear idea about the concept 'competency' which involves being good at doing something.

1.5. Definition of the Competency-Based Approach

The Competency Based Approach (CBA) is one of the current methodologies that can be described as an extension of communicative language teaching movement. Richards & Rodgers (2001) hold that CBA focuses on the outcomes of learning. It addresses what the learners are expected to do rather than on what they are expected to learn about. The CBA advocates defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable descriptions of knowledge, skills and behaviours that students should possess at the end of a course of study. Similarly, Schneck (1978) views the CBA as an outcome based instruction that is adaptive to the needs of students, teachers and the community. Competencies describe the students’ ability to apply basic and other skills to situations that are commonly encountered in everyday life. Therefore, CBA is based on a set of outcomes that are derived from an analysis of tasks typically required of students in real life situations. To Savage (1993), the competency based model was defined by the U.S. Office of Education as a performance based process leading to demonstrated mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in the society. It is, therefore, a functional approach to education that emphasizes life skills and evaluates mastery of those skills according to actual learner performance. Similarly, Marwick (1986) holds that competencies consist of a

description of the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours required for effective performance of a real world task or activity. These activities may relate to any domain of life.

To conclude, as earlier stated, CBA is the pedagogy of integration. It consists of knowing what to do, where, when and with whom; or, being linguistically, communicatively and sociolinguistically competent with the learned language. In order to effectively solve problems in real life, one has to deploy knowledge, know-how and attitudes drawn from several domains of life like history, science and mathematics. CBA therefore integrates these domains in its approach. Furthermore, it seeks to bridge the wall between school or the classroom and everyday real life: seeking and giving information by interacting with people in the market, hospital, and school, offices through listening, reading, writing and speaking.

1.6. Characteristics of the CBA

Few years have now elapsed since the new approach has been implemented by the institution in order to meet the requirements of external and educational standards. The CBA, as stated by syllabus designers, has a number of key features which render it different from other approaches.

1.6.1. Action-Oriented Approach

CBA is a structured approach to learning that is directed towards achieving specific outcomes. Such results, however, do not pertain only to the academic knowledge, where rote memorization of pre-fabricated knowledge is required. It is about assisting learners to acquire skills and knowledge, thus, they are able to perform a task or tasks to a specific standard under certain conditions. The emphasis in competency-based learning is on performing rather than just knowing. To put it differently, it is on the achievement of competence. The latter is defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2006) as "the ability to do something well" (p. 294). It

is a statement of what someone needs to do to carry out a specific task. In the context of language teaching, a competence is defined in terms of what a learner is required to do (performance), under what conditions it is to be done (conditions), and how well it is to be done (standards). Language is viewed as a set of interacting competences and the focus is on the learners and their capacities in order for them to acquire these competences. The latter are linked to their in- school and out- school needs and involve the integration as well as the mobilization of a set of skills, attitudes and knowledge to face problem- situations. With regard to this, three key elements are to be retained: knowledge, skill, and attitude.

Several scholars have written about knowledge from theoretical as well as pedagogic perspectives. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), “language knowledge is what is in the mind of language users, and when they use it appropriately to achieve their communicative purpose in a given context, they exhibit their language ability” (p. 21). In simpler terms, knowledge in general is content such as data, facts, concepts, rules, laws, strategies and principles related to a discipline. It refers to all information stored in memory, including common sense knowledge.

Skill, as noted by Sullivan (1995), is a task or a group of tasks performed to a specific level of competence or proficiency which often use motor functions and typically require the manipulation of instrument and equipment. It is a ‘know-how-to-do’ process which integrates knowledge of the contents of different disciplines. There are intellectual, mental, strategic, socio-affective and psychological skills (Riche et al., 2005).

An attitude is identified as a relatively stable and sustainable organization and integration of certain values and beliefs around an object or a situation which facilitate certain behaviours. It is not directly observable, but can be inferred from the observation of behaviours. Attitudes toward the learning situation refer to “the

individual's reaction to anything associated with the immediate context in which the language is taught" (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 127).

1.6.2. Problem- Solving

CBA is based on the theory that learning is most effective when it involves problem –solving situations. A problem- situation entails an obstacle to confront, or a problem to solve. Perrenoud (1999) asserts that “a problem- situation is centered on an obstacle to overcome through hypothesis generation; the obstacle to overcome needs to be challenging, but not insurmountable” (p. 44). To solve that problem, learners are required to transfer skills and knowledge acquired at school to real- life situations. Ingram (1975) views that transfer of knowledge “has to do with the effect of past learning on present learning and with the effect of intervening learning on the recall of past learning” (p. 264). Actually, the main objective of the CBA is the application of knowledge acquired in one situation to new settings.

However, how well learners use the skills acquired at school in real- life situations depends on the instruction provided by their teacher. Slavin (2003) states that “students must receive specific instruction on how to use their skills and information to solve problems and encounter a variety of problem- solving experiences if they are to be able to apply much of what they learned in school”(p. 241). Accordingly, problem-based learning provides training in transfer of what has been learnt to other contexts. It is also important to note that:

Transfer can take place when two factors are taken into account; first, how well the skills or information were learnt in the initial situation, and second, how similar is the initial situation to the situation to which this information is to be applied. (Slavin, 2003, p. 242)

CBA provides complex tasks based on challenging questions or problems that involve the learners' problem- solving, decision making, investigative skills, as well as reflection and test learners' capacity for overcoming obstacles. This approach claims

that learners should mobilize their values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours in a personal and independent way to address challenges successfully. Challenges are presented everywhere and they can be academic, but also practical and life-oriented. Languages are learned more effectively and lastingly when they are used to solve problems through hypothesis testing.

Problems make learners think and they learn by thinking and doing. Bowden (2007) says that “the purpose of thinking is not to be right but to be effective[...] Learning how to think more effectively is not difficult and can dramatically improve our ingenuity in solving problems” (p. 38). Armed with this knowledge, teachers are urged to place learners’ in situations involving problems to reflect on, instead of requiring them to receive passively information provided by their masters. In front of problem- situations, learners capitalize on their prerequisite knowledge to find a solution, and this will lead to the construction of new knowledge.

1.6.3. Cognitive and Social- Constructivist Approach

CBA centers on a conception of learning which is both cognitive and socio-constructivist (Rich et al, 2005). It is a cognitive approach, in that it is indebted to Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives. Bloom (1956) claims that all educational objectives can be classified as ‘cognitive’ (related to information) and ‘affective’ (related to attitudes, values and emotions) or ‘psychomotor’ (related to bodily movements). He (1956) states that cognitive objectives form a hierarchy by which the learner must achieve lower order objectives before he or she can achieve higher ones. Cognitive learning goes beyond the behaviourist learning of facts and skills, adding cognitive apprenticeship to the learning process. It focuses on building a learner’s experiences and providing learning tasks that can challenge, but also function as ‘intellectual scaffolding’ to help pupils learn and progress through the curriculum. Broadly speaking, cognitive theory is interested on how pupils understand the material, and thus in aptitude and capacity to learn and learning styles. As such, it is the basis of

constructivism and can be placed somewhere in the middle of the scale between behavioural and constructivist learning.

A constructivist view of learning suggests an approach to teaching that gives learners the opportunity for concrete, contextually meaningful experiences through which they can search for patterns, raise their own questions, and construct their own models, concepts, and strategies. The classroom in this model is seen as a mini-society, a community of learners engaged in activity, discourse and reflection. A prevailing assumption of constructivism is that learners are self-motivated and self-regulating beings who acquire the fundamental skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, calculating and problem solving as by product of encouraging and communicating appropriate and meaningful activities.

Viewed from such a perspective, learning is not seen as the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the learner. Rather, it is regarded as the active participation of the learner, on the one hand and the creative use of newly-built knowledge through interaction with other learners, on the other. This signals a move away from attention on teaching to attention on learning; classrooms are places in which pupils learn rather than being mainly places in which teachers teach. Teachers are facilitators of learning.

1.7. Language Competencies within the CBA

Language involves three basic competencies:

1.7.1. Interactive Competency

The CBA aims at developing learners' ability to use the language orally to interact with others in order to create social relations, express needs, understand and address needs of others and to get things accomplished. Engaging in a discussion is an example of using interactive competency.

1.7.2. Interpretive Competency

It also targets learners' ability enhancement to understand both written and spoken language through reading and listening, and to interpret it appropriately. Reading is the ability to understand and interpret written texts; listening is the ability to understand and interpret oral language. Reading and listening are thus addressed separately.

1.7.3. Productive Competence

It seeks the development of the productive competency that confirms the learner's ability to produce coherent, appropriate and relevant messages in writing and speaking. It is also the ability to effectively express ideas and organize thoughts appropriately.

1.8. Supporting Competencies within the CBA

In order to develop the above competencies, learners also need to develop the supporting competencies, namely linguistic and language strategies.

1.8.1. Linguistic Competency

Linguistic competency includes the learning and mastery of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary needed in a given context. There is a set of descriptors of linguistic competency for each grade level.

1.8.2. Language Strategies

Language strategies are ways that help learners to acquire, remember, organize and use information on an ongoing basis. The language strategies are incorporated into the competencies, rather than listed separately.

1.9. Teacher's Roles within the CBA

Under the CBA, the teacher's role has to comply with the underlying assumptions and principles of the approach. In other words, the teacher has to shift his role, not as a model, but as a co-communicator so that learners have plenty of time and possibilities to take part dynamically in class interaction. In fact, the CBA advocates the learner's autonomy and knowledge construction. To attain these objectives, the teacher has to adapt to the roles of a facilitator, a mediator and a motivator.

1.9.1. Teacher as a Facilitator

The move to a more learner-centred view of learning has required a fundamental shift in the role of the teacher. No longer is the teacher predominantly as a dispenser of knowledge and information or walking tape recorder, but rather as a facilitator or manager of the learner's learning. The more responsibility and freedom is given to the learner, the greater the shift is required in the teacher's role.

In fact, the introduction of the problem-based learning with a consequent fundamental change in the learner-teacher relationship has highlighted the change in the role of the teacher from one of knowledge provider to one of facilitator. The teacher's role is not to inform the learners but to encourage them learn for themselves and facilitate learner's knowledge construction. In other words, the emphasis thus turns away from the instructor and the content towards the learner and learning (Gamoran, Secada & Marrett 1998, p. 38). This dramatic change of role implies that the facilitator needs to display a totally different set of skills than a teacher (Brownstein 2001, pp. 240-247). A teacher tells, a facilitator asks; a teacher lectures from the front, a facilitator supports from the back; a teacher gives answers according to a set curriculum, a facilitator provides guidelines and creates the environment for the learner to attain her/his own conclusions; "a teacher mostly gives a monologue, a facilitator is in continuous dialogue with the learners" (Rhodes & Bellamy, 1999, p.17). To sum up,

the teacher should provide the appropriate environment to facilitate learning. In the light of this idea, Einstein proclaims that: “I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn” (quoted by Walter & Marks, 1981, p.1).

In fact, teacher’s facilitation of learning does not rely only upon his knowledge, the tool she uses, the lesson planning he prepares, etc., but teacher’s personal attitudinal qualities have an effective impact on learners’ learning. In this vein, Rogers (1969) states that:

We know[...] that the initiation of such learning rests not upon the teaching skills of the leader, not upon his scholarly knowledge of the field, not upon his curricular planning, not upon his use of audio-visual aids, not upon the programmed learning he utilizes, not upon his lectures and representations, not upon an abundance of books, although each of these might at one time or another be utilized as an important resource. No, the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner. (p. 105)

According to the quotation above, it is quite clear that learners’ learning depends much on attitudes and behaviours that characterise the teacher-learners’ relationship that prevails inside the class environment.

1.9.2. Teacher as a Mediator

As a mediator, the teacher lays the platform for teaching/learning process. Mediation means interposing. The teacher interposes something within the environment with which the learners interact. The problem for the teacher is to make appropriate stimuli available for the learners’ interaction to help them select and organize these stimuli in ways that develop their thought processes. To make this possible, the teacher should redefine learning which imperatively requires them to

redefine teaching. Optimal learning requires teaching that supports and facilitates it without controlling, distorting, or thwarting the learning.

The teacher helps learners see realistic purposes for school activities in relationship to their own needs and goals; therefore, he

- ✓ helps learners to discover.
- ✓ exposes them to many potentially interesting facets of the world.
- ✓ arranges physical environment, which provokes curiosity; encourages them follow up the interests stimulated by the environment.
- ✓ elicits from them what they want to find out.
- ✓ places them in active and creative roles of explorers, inquirers, designers, performers...etc.
- ✓ helps them define complex problems.

As a mediator, the teacher should help the learners solve problems themselves better than giving them the solution. He interferes by asking a question here, offering a useful hint there, directing learners' attention to an anomaly, calling their attention to overlooked information, and supporting them as they synthesize what they are learning into new concepts and schemas.

1.9.3. Teacher as a Motivator

Many teachers state that they try to motivate the learners by encouraging the results that are satisfying and pleasurable. No doubt, tests can be valuable tools for self-evaluation. Yet, tests are not the only means, which can be used for the purpose, and results are not always valid. To restrict learners' achievements entirely to tests and marks may lead to competition, which precludes cooperation and mutual agreement among learners. Teachers, who try to make learning satisfying, use a wide range of tools for recognition and appreciation of learners' work. Praise is their main forte. Marks should be regarded as symbols of rewards rather than as tools of fear. Generally,

teachers, who try to motivate learners by applying either the carrot or the stick policy, are largely engrossed with their own goals.

Teachers, who mechanically assign each hour's work without guiding and motivating learners to see the larger sequence of which it is a part, can serve dooms and will usually have little intrinsic appeal. Thus, they will deprive learners of the opportunity to carry their existing motivations into the classroom in ways that could help their learning.

To motivate learners and serve as precursor, teachers should implement motivational strategies which encourage positive attitudes to learning in all respects. They have to foster realistic belief attainments and facilitate learning processes. Besides, they supply the means of making learning enjoyable, memorable and pertinent. The most important teacher's motivational behaviours for success can be abstracted, according to the studies of Dornyei (1994, pp. 515-525), as follows:

- a)** A set a good example with your behaviour
- b)** create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom
- c)** present tasks properly
- d)** develop a good relationship with the learners
- e)** increase learners' linguistic self-confidence
- f)** make language classes interesting
- g)** promote autonomy
- h)** personalise the learning process
- i)** increase learners' goal orientedness
- j)** familiarize learners with the target culture
- k)** establish cooperative learning and maintain group dynamics

(Quoted in Williams & Burden 1997, p. 134)

Doing so, the teacher can play an effective role of motivator and encourage learners to learn the FL.

1.10. Learner's Roles within the CBA

As far as the learner is concerned, his status has enormously changed: he changes into a learner, taking in charge his own learning in an “autonomous” way. In other words, the English language session is no longer centred on the teacher but on the learner.

In this spirit of interaction and focalisation on learner's learning, the group dynamics is also regarded as a major factor of motivation for the language acquisition. Role playing, group and pair work are encouraged to establish an atmosphere of confidence and cooperation to favour communication. In this manner, the “feedback”, traditionally delivered by the teacher, will also be produced by learners themselves, by monopolizing competencies of each one, developing and valorising mutual help and exchanging ideas.

Each learner determines himself, his position and role with regard to the othermembers of the group. He manages and creates with his classmates (pairs/group) the appropriate learning environment inside the groups. The teacher will have to lose the practice of dictating the behaviours, to correct the errors, to set up as a critic; he will remain in withdrawal but always with a finely tuned listening of his learners. Consequently, he will weave a communication network much closer to the real life.

1.10.1. Learner as a Knowledge Processor

Learners become knowledge processors when they are given the opportunity to observe, apply and refine through practice. In this model, learners reflect on their practices in diverse situations and across a range of tasks, and they articulate the common elements of their experiences.

Learners' development depends to a great extent on language awareness which is not restricted to a focus on language itself, but also to a cognitive reflection upon

language functions. In fact, language mastery requires much more than just familiarity with the vocabulary and grammar of the language. It also involves awareness of how language operates to influence thinking, emotions, and understanding. Language awareness can be fostered by giving learners various choices in learning activities. This variety of choices stimulates learners' interests and has a definite potential for their development as knowledge processors.

1.10.2. Learner as an Effective Performer

Generally, learners, who are taught to be increasingly, are aware of their learning will be more effective performers and, as a result, will become active in monitoring their progress (Lee & Solomon, 1992; Paris & Winograd, 1990).

The role, teachers should play as mediators in the learning process, is crucial to the development to self-determined and independent learners. The attainment of these outcomes may take some time and energy on the part of the teacher. The focus on this type of learning will ultimately contribute to the learners' development as an effective performer and thus a critical thinker.

1.10.3. Learner as a Problem-solver

Yet, few instructional design prescriptions are available for designing problem-solving instruction and engaging learners. To render learners problem-solvers necessitates the involvement of a variety of cognitive components, such as propositional information, concepts, rules, and principles (domain knowledge). However, it also involves semantic knowledge. A successful problem-centred teaching should focus on problem-solving and planning strategies more systematically and intensively than is typically the case in most classrooms.

The aim behind learners' learning is to acquire the appropriate strategies that enable them to be effective learners, i.e., to function as problem-solvers. Yet, teachers

should play an efficient role to help learners acquire the characteristic of problem-solvers by instilling in them constant curiosity and questioning, enjoyment to figure out things, seeking challenges, persistence, resourcefulness, independence and confidence.

Acquiring these strategies enable learners to actively seek, appropriately use and continuously create knowledge. They reflect on their own learning, draw on personal knowledge and intuition, and challenge the basis of assumptions and perceptions.

1.11. The Rationale for Implementing the Competency-Based Approach in the Algerian Educational System

The transformational processes observed nowadays in social life concern all the fields of social activity and existence, in particular the field of education as a basic component of the formation of a person's world outcome. Over the last decades, the requirements placed upon education systems have been influenced by rapid progression often unpredictable processes of public transformations, disintegration of states, changes in the geopolitical map of the world, scientific discoveries and their implementations.

Modern society is characterized by rapid changes in all spheres of life –a feature characteristic of societies in transition –changes take place quickly due to the factors which stimulate the economy and industrial development and which affect the development of international relations, global processes of migration and the field of education. Therefore, the re-formulation of educational goals in both developed and developing countries becomes a necessity because the world which is being formed due to a collision of new values and technologies, new geopolitical relation, new life styles and communication requires brand new ideas. It is why education at present is subject to great changes taking place in modern society. The development of education was influenced by such features of social development as globalization,

democratization, disintegration of the union of the nuclear power blocs and the formation of a unified information space.

In this respect, first, students need to be able to use a wide range of tools for interacting effectively with the environment: both physical ones such as information technology, and socio-cultural ones such as the use of language. Second, in an increasingly interdependent world, students need to be able to engage with others, and since they will encounter people from a range of backgrounds, it is important that they are able to interact in heterogeneous groups. Third, students need to be able to take responsibility for managing their own lives, situate their lives in much broader social contexts and act autonomously.

Similarly, according to the general objectives assigned to the teaching of English in the Algerian Educational system, a socio-constructivist and efficient cognitive design has been set with the purpose to install competencies in the learner. This is due to the failure of the Communicative Approach to enable learners to reach an acceptable level performance which allows them to communicate whenever it is needed, especially in the era of globalization and job requirement. Educational experience in many countries shows that one way of updating the content of education is the orientation of the training programmes towards the CBA.

Scientists in European countries consider that knowledge, skills, working habits acquired by young people if transformed into competencies would enable intellectual development of an individual and the formation of the ability to quickly respond to the demands of the time. Thus, in order to integrate in the globalized world, Algeria opted for such a reform to enable young people to reach an international level in terms of required competencies.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, one can state that the Competency-Based Approach emerged to bridge the gap that exists between school acquisitions and social practices. It is an approach that revolves around three key notions that are competence, transfer of knowledge, and problem-situation. Competence involves the integration of knowledge, skills, capacities, and attitudes. Problem-situation is the obstacle learners need surmount. Transfer of knowledge refers to the application of what has been learnt in other contexts of use. In an attempt to shed light on the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach in Algerian schools and an overview of this approach is provided.

Chapter Two:
**Writing Under the Competency Based
Approach**

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1.1. Introduction

In today's society, writing is an essential skill. Yet, it is a subject with which most students struggle. They often do not understand how to improve their writing skills. Furthermore, Students frequently have negative attitudes towards writing, which affects their growth and development as writers especially in foreign languages; therefore, selecting the most appropriate approach to teach this skill and involving students in assessing their writing through self-assessment is one of the principles of CBA to develop independent, lifelong learners and improve their motivation.

In this chapter, we will define the writing skill, and will show the relationship between writing and the other skills. Then, we will discuss the approaches used for teaching writing mainly those that can be used under the CBA. Finally, we will shed light on the different types of assessment especially the importance of self-assessment in the classroom.

1.2. Background

There are four major skills in English language teaching and learning. These skills are: listening, reading, speaking and writing. They are divided into receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (writing and speaking). Writing is one of the most important skills in English as a Foreign Language. It allows writers to explore thoughts, ideas, and make them visible and concrete, encourages thinking and learning, motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed.

1.3. Definition of Writing

The writing skill is a productive skill. Many scholars define it in different ways. Byrne (1988) defines it as "writing involves the conventional arrangement of letters into words, and words into sentences that need to flow smoothly to form a coherent whole" (p.1).In here, Byrne defines the writing as a process of collecting

letter and words to produce a coherent piece of writing, its sentences go smoothly together. However, Rivers (1968) points that “writing is the act of putting in conventional graphic form what has spoken” (p. 242), in other words Rivers summarizes that the writing is a graphic that describes what it is said. Similarly, Hyland (2003) regards writing as “marks on a page or a screen, a coherent arrangement of words, clauses, and sentences, structured according to a system of rules” (p. 3), which means writing consists of a set of symbols, words and sentences arranged according to some grammatical, syntactical and semantically rules to create a meaningful piece of writing.

There are many writers who write on their first experience in writing such as: Fitzgerald who wrote “all good writing is swimming under water and holding your breath” (n.d.) Strachey mentions that “first I write one sentence. Then I write another. That’s how I write. Therefore, I go on. But I have a feeling writing ought to be like running through a field“(p.7) (Quoted in Hedge 2005, p.7), Fitzgerald compares the writing by swimming because when someone under the water hold his/ her breath the same way when the students is writing, he/ she must keep his/her mind with writing to avoid losing the ideas. While Strachey defines his writing experience as a process of ideas, one idea following the other and it follows a set of steps to create a piece of writing.

However, Academic writing defines writing as a progressive activity because it is when you start writing, you already start thinking about the next idea; however, when you finish writing; start reading for any addition or correction. As a conclusion, writing is a set of steps; it is not activity stop for one-step.

Many people have reasons to write which are summarized from Hedge (2005) as follows: help students learn the system of language, establish learner’s progress or proficiency, develop self-expression, careful mode of working with language which enables students to explore and reflect on language in a conscious way, and to contribute to intellectual development and to develop self-esteem and confidence.

Writing skill is a process to express thoughts and feeling in letters and words. It is a productive skill like speaking but it is characterized by specific characteristics which make it unique or more specific from the others. For a clearer picture of the difficult nature of the act of writing, a comparison between writing and speaking on one hand, and writing and reading on the other hand, will be of great help.

1.4. The Difference between Writing and Speaking

Language skills are divided into two types: receptive skills, listening and reading and productive skills, writing and speaking. Although the latter is involved in the same type (productive skills), there are some differences between them. Some authors as Gardener (2003), Rogers (2005), Brooks & Grundy (1998), Hedge (2005), Sperling & Freedman (2001) share the same idea about the difference between writing and speaking. These differences are classified into:

1.4.1. Status of Speech and Writing

Children automatically start speaking and then move to learn how to write a piece of writing. For Gardener (2003, p.1), learning to speak comes before learning to write and speaking is an acquired skill from birth; in contrast, writing is required to learn it. For this reason, linguistics gives the primacy to speech.

1.4.2. Distance

It means that the time and space between the speaker and the listener are limited (face-to-face conversation) but between the writer and his audience there is no limitation in both time and space. Rogers (2005) states that " writing allows to communicate at a distance, either at a distant place or at a distant time" (p.1). In addition, Gardener (2003) adds that writing is less restricted by time and space and can be left to read in the next day or sent to someone in another place (p.1). Sperling& Freedman (2001) clearly state that both writing and speaking can be a form of communication, and speakers communicate with each other; in contrast, writers work in relative physical isolation" (p. 8). According to Brown (1994), "writers generally have more time to plan, review, and revise their words before

they are finalized, while speakers must plan, formulate, and deliver their utterances within a few moments if they are to maintain a conversation "(cited in Weigle, 2002, pp. 15-16).

1.4.3. Permanence

Written language is characterized by stability which can be read in one time or reread in another one. Gardener (2003) points out that writing is more permanent than speaking and it can be protected for years or even centuries (p.1).

1.4.4. Structure and Style

A written text is more structured and formal than speech. According to Brookes & Grundy (1998), writing has specific types of text, which is different from speaking; for example, organizing what we have to say is different from organizing what we have to write such as the form of a letter or e-mail messages (p. 2). Hedge (2005) claims that an effective writing requires a well organization of the information, ideas or arguments; an understanding meaning; the use of complex grammatical devices and a good choice of vocabulary, grammatical items, and sentence structures to achieve a style that is appropriate to the topic (p. 7). Certainly, written forms are more complex than spoken ones because they involve complex sentences and long clauses, and are characterized as more structured forms of communication than speech.

1.5. The Relationship between Reading and Writing

Writing and reading are usually designed separately under the belief that these two skills are totally different; however, they are interdependent processes that are essential to each other and mutually beneficial. The relationship between reading and writing is based on communication because both processes should be developed as a natural extension of the child's need to communicate. In other words, if reading and writing are to be communicative, then the reader needs to read with the sense of the writer and the writer needs to write with the sense of the reader.

“Reading and writing are similar processes of meaning construction involving the use of cognitive strategies. This is because both processes involve the individual in constructing meaning through the application of complex cognitive and linguistic abilities that draw on problem solving skills and the activation of existing knowledge of both structure and meaning ” (Hyland,2003,p. 17).

Nelson (1998) also notes, “In reading, meaning is built from texts and in composing meaning is built for texts” (p. 279). Therefore, reading is the construction of meaning through relationships of parts from the text, while writing is relating our prior knowledge and experience to the text by putting meaning on the page.

Reading may yield for students’ new knowledge within a subject area, but more importantly, it provides them with the rhetoric and structural knowledge they need to develop, modify, and activate schemata, which are valuable when writing (Hyland, 2004, p. 17). He adds explaining that extensive reading can furnish a great deal of tacit knowledge of conventional features of written texts, including grammar, vocabulary, organizational patterns, interactional devices and so on (Hyland, 2004, p. 17.). Therefore, what students read, particularly specific genres to which they are exposed, are important elements. According to the writer reading and writing are complementary skills in that they are processes in which students interact with texts meaningfully because growth in one skill inevitably leads to growth in the other; that is, students become better readers by strengthening their writing skill and vice versa. Hence, second language teachers need to utilize strategic methods; the concepts: reading to write and writing to read can be two facilitative strategies for instruction. Reading to write is based on the notion that reading supports and shapes second or foreign learners’ writing through acquisition of language input when students are performing reading tasks. Through reading, students acquire knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures or rhetoric

features of texts. On the other hand, writing to read encourages the student to interact meaningfully with texts addressed to various types of audience.

To sum up, reading is an integral part of writing. One of the techniques of writing successfully in an academic environment is to be able to integrate the important points of what you have read into your own writing. To do this, it is necessary to have a clear picture of what we have read and this entails active and focused writing. As reading is an integral part of writing, it is worth developing strategies which help students make the best use of their reading. As an effective reader not only of other authors' work, but also of his work, any of the techniques used in approaching written texts can be used to edit and work his/ her own writing. This will enable him/her to make sure that what he/she writes will make sense to the person who will read it.

1.6. Writing Difficulties

As any learning activity, writing has problems or difficulties which hinder the learners in their learning process or make the piece of writing not good as well as Seely (2005) summarizes those difficulties as follows:

1.6.1. Punctuation

Punctuation, as Seely (2005) defines it, is set of conventions to make it easier to read written English. Harmer (2004) claims that if capital letters, full stops, commas, sentence and paragraph margins are not used in the right way, they can give a negative comprehension and difficulty of trying to understand a text (p. 255). For example, the sentence should begin with a capital letter. There are many students who make mistakes in punctuation which make their piece of writing lose its strength and cohesiveness. Each punctuation mark has its function, for example:

- Full stop: to mark the end of a sentence, after some abbreviations
- Question mark: is used to indicate that the sentence is a question.
- Exclamation mark: it indicates that a sentence is exclamatory.
- Colon: it introduces a list.

- Semicolon: it is used to separate two clauses that are related.
- Comma: we use it to separate items in a list.

1.6.2. Spelling

The spelling is a big problem for many students, according to Harmer's (2001) book *'The practice of English language teaching'*, some spelling may have an effect on evaluating a text by a reader and repeating the use of bad spelling is considered as lacking education or care. He (2001) also claims that " an issue that makes spelling difficult for some students is the fact that not all varieties of English spell the same words in the same way" (p. 256). He adds that to promote the students' spelling, we should advise them to read extensively.

1.6.3. Vocabulary

All of us have a vocabulary we get it from many ways like reading, check it in dictionaries, but there are some limits that hinder the correct use of that vocabulary. Some of those limits are summarized as follows:

- The word which I understand them when I read it but I cannot recall it when I need to use it.
- I know it but I need to check the dictionary to confirm its meaning.
- I know the word and I use it always in conversation, but casual in writing.
- Words I have never encountered before.

1.6.4. Grammar

As Seely (2005) states, the most difficult aspect in writing is grammar because when the learner starts writing an essay he/ she finds his/ herself in big problem for example with the types of sentences (compound sentences, complex sentence). They also face problem in misusing the coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

However, Hedge (2005) declares that the main problems of writing go around on the grammar and other problems which are summarized as follows:

- The student may use the unclear cohesive ties.
- There are many students who may use the cohesive ties appropriately, but they place them wrongly in sentence, overuse them, or fail to use the correct punctuation.
- Some students may find difficulties in paragraphing, difficult to construct topic sentence and supporting details.
- There is the problem of words, some students always use the same words, and the overuse makes the piece of writing boring.

In the same line of thought, Shoebottom (2014) classifies four main linguistic problems of writing which face the EFL learners' as follows: Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar, and Usage. In contrast, Arnold (1999) claims that the various emotions affecting language learning are intertwined and interrelated in ways that make it impossible to isolate completely the influence of any one of them, the psychological system can also effect on learners' writing, and for example piece of writing of someone was angry not like another one who was happy.

1.7. Writing Approaches

Writing plays a vital role not only in conveying information but also in transforming information to create new knowledge in such a demanding life (Weigle, 2002, p. 2). It is thus of central importance for students in academic, second and foreign language learning. Therefore, selecting the most appropriate approach to teach this skill is something fundamental. The evolution of the approaches to writing started from classical to current ones; in other words, from the product approach to the process approach then to the genre approach which is the most recent one.

1.7.1. The Product Approach

Until the 1970s, the teaching of a second language writing focuses on the sentence structure which was proposed by Behaviourism (Matsuda, 2003, p. 19). This approach is known as the product approach or the text based approach which

emphasizes the form, so that a great deal of efforts is given to the description of structural rules of texts. Developing writing in this view focuses on the formal features of texts. From this perspective, the piece of writing is independent from their context and the writer's personal experience can be understood by any one, since all writers and readers share the same practice, so that they have the same interpretations and understanding (Hyland, 2002, pp. 6-7). In writing instruction, training is vital to achieve explicitly and accuracy structure (Hyland, 2002, p. 7). Teachers in this perspective focus on form and usually present authoritative texts for students to imitate or adapt using textbooks which offer many models. They see that errors must be corrected or eliminated (Tribble, 1996, p. 5).

Furthermore, Hyland (2002) points out that " Guided composition is the main method of teaching writing in this approach" (p.7). In the same vein, Pinca (1982) describes guided composition as set of combining and substitution activities to help student learn about sentence structure (cited in Matsuda, 2003, p. 19). In addition, he gives more details about guided composition by saying that a guided composition encompasses any writing for which students are given help such as" a model to follow, a plan or outline to expand from a partly written version with indication of how to complete it, or pictures that show a new subject to write about in the same way as something that has been read" (Pinca, 1982, cited in Matsuda, 2003, p. 20).

Despite the benefits provided by this approach for the accuracy structure of the sentence, it arouses deficiency in its application, since it forms students who can produce grammatically correct sentences, but in the same time they cannot realize a good piece of writing (Matsuda, 2003, p. 20).

1.7.2. The Process Approach

The introduction of the process approach has been motivated by dissatisfaction with the product approach. In the 1980s, changes happened in both second language acquisition and composition. Thus, writing researchers and teachers shifted their concern from textual features to the process of writing itself (Matsuda, 2003, p. 21).

This led to the emergence of the process approach, which "emphasized the view of writing as a process of developing organization as well as meaning" (Matsuda, 2003, p. 21).

Tribble (1996) views that the process is a reaction against this tradition and focuses on the writer as an independent producer of texts, it also stresses on a cycle of writing activities, which help the learners from the generation of ideas and move from collection of data to a finished text. On the other side of the corner, Richards & Schmidt (2002) define the process approach as "an approach which emphasizes the composing processes writers make use of in writing (such as planning, drafting and revising) and which seeks to improve students' writing skills through developing their use of effective composing processes" (p.422). In other words, to produce a successful piece of writing, the teacher should teach students the writing process and focus on it during the writing, while Harmer (2004) notes that the process approach follows the four main stages which are: planning, drafting, editing (reflecting and revising) and final version. Harmer likes Jack and Richard for the sectioning the writing process, Harmer adds one step which is a final version to show in writing that there are many versions because each time when the writer revises and corrects mistakes, in the last he finds himself writing more than one version to obtain clean and clear piece of writing.

Additionally, Applebee (1986) notes that the process approach "provided a way to think about writing in terms of what the writer does (planning, revising, and the like) instead of in terms of what the final product looks like (patterns of organization, spelling, grammar)" (p.96). Applebee mentions the main stress of this approach, which is what the writer does such as: planning and revising....etc. He also mentions the difference between the process and product approach which is the process based on the writing stages. In other words, writing is "a recursive rather than a linear process" because the nature of writing itself is "recursive, non-linear" (Brookes & Grundy, 1998, p. 9). The process is collected of some stages that overlap: planning, drafting (including several drafts before the final draft), revising

and editing; it allows the writer to go back and forward without worrying the flow of his ideas.

The Process Approach is very inclined towards a learner-centred teaching. The students are concerned actively all along the process. Johns (1990, p. 26) argues that the students are involved actively in:

- preparing writing through creation and other prewriting activities,
- revising their papers at the universal levels, generally through group work,
- postponing concerns with error correction of the sentence-level until the final stage (editing).

Silva & Matsuda (2001) describe the process approach to teach writing as “an approach that emphasizes teaching writing not as product but as process; helping students to discover their own voice; allowing students to choose their own topics; providing teacher and peer feedback; encouraging revision and using student writing as the primary text of the course” (Quoted in Vanderpyl, 2012).

However, the process approach is criticized by Hyland (2003) who sees that it has weaknesses from a social perspective. The first weakness is that this approach views writing as “a decontextualised skill” (p. 18), by considering the individual as an isolated writer expressing personal meanings. What is needed from the writer is to rely on general principles of thinking and composing to set out and communicate their ideas. This, however, would give the learner an access to be active in processing the information but ignoring the real processes of language use. Thus, Hyland (2003) clarifies the process approach and tells how some writers write but not why certain linguistic and rhetorical choices are made by them.

The second weakness is that, in the process model, the teacher’s role is reduced as s/he makes the students themselves respond to their writing. The third weakness is that the students in the process classroom are not provided with conscious teaching “in the structure of the target text types” (Hyland, 2003, p.19).

They are expected to rewrite, or write a second draft based on the marginal comments given by their teacher.

1.7.3. The Genre Approach

The genre approach has been advanced as a solution due to the fact that more attention was paid to the nature of writing in various situations. This approach focuses on models and key features of texts written for a particular purpose. By setting out stages, or moves of valued genres, teachers can provide students with explicit grammar of linguistic choices, both within and beyond students, to produce texts that seem well-formed and appropriate to readers (Martin, 1992; in Hyland, 2004, p. 19). This means that this approach is interested in form and function of the written productions.

According to Richards & Schmidt (2002), the genre approach is based on different types of text structures genres children encounter in school work are observation, comment, recount, narrative and report. It also controls specific types of writing to participate in asocial process. However, to the adult it starts from recognition of discourse community in which the learners will be functioning. On the other hand, Swales (1990, p. 58) defines the genre approach as following:

A genre comprises a class of communication events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. (Quoted in Hedge, 2000, p.320)

In other words, Swales states that the genre approach based on two aspects that are communication events and communicative purposes. Here, the genre approach can be classified as writing for social purposes, in many domains in life like letter, emails; therefore, the criticism directed to this approach is that it minimizes the creativity of the student, since there are typical models which are exposed to the students for imitation.

All these approaches have been criticized and no single approach fits all kinds of learners, it is why there is a tendency to combine more than one approach seeking better results in language learning and writing. Hyland (2004, p. 19) asserts that writers need realistic strategies for drafting and revising but they also must have a clear understanding of genre to structure their writing experiences according to the demands and constraints of particular contexts. As a matter of fact, this calls for the combination of the process and genre approach for more effective teaching of writing.

1.7.4. The Process-Genre Approach

Today, many teachers recognize that the use of one approach to teaching is not really beneficial as each one has its advantages and disadvantages. Thus, drawing from more than one approach, or making a kind of combination between approaches proved more efficient. One way of doing that is to combine the Process Approach and the Genre Approach to teaching writing. This can help students to develop their writing competence through the whole writing process and make them aware of the purposes and the context of writing. Among the researchers who advocate the use of this approach, Badger & White (2000) who call for the use of the Process-Genre Approach in teaching writing. They analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the Product Approach, the Genre Approach and argue that the three approaches are complementary and identified as an integrated approach which consists of the combination of the three approaches. Lee et, al. (2009) also suggest the Process-Genre Approach to teaching writing. They aim to help students cope with writing in an academic setting through the use of this approach. According to them, students will learn how to plan, organize, research and produce different genres through a variety of relevant and challenging tasks. They also provided exercises of self-evaluation checklists and peer review checklists to help students be more autonomous in their learning

In this approach, writing is viewed as involving knowledge about language (as in the Genre Approach and the Product Approach), knowledge of the context in

which writing happens and especially the purpose of writing (as in the Genre Approach) and skills in using language (as in the Process Approach). Writing development happens by drawing out the learners' potential (Badger & White, 2000). Through the implementation of the Process-Genre Approach, students have the opportunity not only to enjoy the creativity of writing, but they also understand the linguistic features of each genre and emphasize the discourse value of the structures they are using. This can help them develop into independent writers.

Because writing is such a complex task, it requires from the teacher to be an assistant and a guide to work closely with students, encouraging and offering them helpful feedback and suggestions. This can activate students' motivation, a necessary factor for developing students' writing competence. Besides, by training students in applying writing strategies and by including different skills: reading, listening and speaking in the process of writing will reduce students' anxiety and enhance their writing in different contexts.

As a synthesis of what we know about the Process-Genre Approach, we deduce that the principles of this approach can be summarized in the following points:

- Balancing form and function
- Scaffolding language and learning
- Providing meaningful response and formative assessment

1.8. Assessment in the Competency-Based Approach

Any novice teacher should have background knowledge about the CBA and how it can be applied. Assessment is one of the important elements in this approach and the teacher should know how to assess the students' production.

1.8.1. Definition of Assessment

As Richards & Schmidt (2002) define assessment as "A systematic approach to collecting information and making inferences about the ability of a student or the quality or success of a teaching course on the basis of various sources of evidence"

(p. 35). In other words, “Assessment involves much more than measurement. That is, in addition to systematically collecting and analyzing information, it also involves understanding and acting on information about learners’ understanding and on performance in relation to educational goals (Greenstein, 2010, p.6).

From these selected definitions, we can say that assessment places the needs of students at the centre of teaching and that is an important and integral part of the learning and teaching process. Moreover, assessment serves several purposes and provides information about the knowledge, skills and attitudes students have acquired. In fact, assessing helps to determine the level of competence the students have acquired and whether they can apply that knowledge that can help in providing high-quality instruction for students.

1.8.2. Function of Assessment

The main reason to assess any task in learning process, Ur (2012) suggests those main functions:

- Evaluate students’ overall level.
- Evaluate students’ progress.
- Evaluate how well students have learnt specific material during a course.
- Evaluate students’ strengths and weaknesses.

1.8.3. Principles of the Competency-Based Assessment :

Successful assessment should consider some principles. The basic principles of assessment are that what is to be assessed is to be valid, reliable, flexible and fair, as illustrated by Hagar et.al. (1994).

1.8.3.1. Validity:

Assessments are valid when they assess what they claim to assess. This is achieved when:

- Assessors are fully aware of what is to be assessed.
- Evidence is collected from tasks that are clearly related to what is to be assessed.
- There is enough sampling of different evidence to demonstrate that the performance criterion has been met.

1.8.3.2. Reliability:

According to *Assessment in competency based education* (2007), reliability is defined as " The assessment produces the same results on different occasions and with different assessors" (p.11). In other words, the learner can get the same mark but at different periods of time. Furthermore, McMillan (2007) states that reliability is related to three main concepts: consistency, stability, and dependability of the score (p. 69).

1.8.3.3. Flexibility

Assessment is flexible when it is interpreted successfully and adapted to a range of training modes and the different needs of the learners.

1.8.3.4. Fairness

This principle gives the importance to all the students not only a group of them. McMillan (2007) maintains that a fair assessment is one which gives all students the same opportunity to learn in order to show their achievement. According to Dobson (2003, p. 21), fairness is the assessment where the learner:

- has a very clear understanding of what is expected and what form the assessment will take.
- is treated equitably.
- knows the criteria that will be used to judge performance.
- has opportunities for the assessment decision to be reviewed or to appeal the assessment outcome.

1.9. Types of Assessment

There are some types of assessment which are important in teaching. Among them, we can present diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment.

1.9.1. Diagnostic Assessment

Although, some authors delineate diagnostic assessment as a component of formative assessment, most consider it a distinct form of measurement.

Dobson (2003) claims that this kind of assessment aims to stand on the points of strength and weakness of students by collecting evidences about the needs of the students (p. 19). In the Algerian Educational syllabus, this kind of evaluation is used at the beginning of the year, and at the beginning of certain sessions, in order to get a good insight about the student's previous level. For the teacher, this kind of evaluation allows him to design remedial activities as a solution and adjust the programme to meet the students' needs.

1.9.2. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is the assessment that takes place during a course or a programme of study as an integral part of the learning process and as such it is up to the teacher to design and implement for improving teaching or learning. Similarly, formative assessment refers to frequent interactive assessments of student progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately. It is sometimes defined as assessment for learning. It provides feedback to both teachers and learners about how the course is going and if the learners are doing what they need to do. Otherwise, the teaching and learning strategies chosen are in need of modification. It is supported by Cizek (2010, p. 7) who notes that: in the middle.

Formative assessment refers to the collaborative process engaged in by educators and students for the purpose of understanding the students learning and

conceptual organization, identification of strengths, diagnosis of weaknesses, areas of improvement and as a source of information that teachers can use in instructional planning and students can use in deepening their understanding and improving their achievement. It means that it aims at informing teachers and pupils on levels reached. It helps to find out in what areas difficulties in learning lie, so as to offer strategies intended to promote learning.

1.9.3. Summative Assessment

We described previously formative assessment as assessment for learning. In contrast, summative assessment is considered as assessment of learning; it is the process that concerns final evaluation to ask if the project or the programme meets its goal or not.

As pointed out by Brown (2004), summative assessment aims to measure the amount of knowledge assimilated by the students at the end of an instructional unit (p.6). Similarly, McMillan (2007) states that this kind of evaluation is more formal (p.17). It means that students get marks after a measureable test in a given time.

1.10. Forms of Writing Assessment

Assessment forms are influenced by the change in teaching languages. As a result, there is a shift from traditional forms of assessment to recent ones such as the use of the portfolio, peer and self-assessment

1.10.1. Portfolio

In education, a portfolio is defined as" purposeful collection of work that provides information about some one's efforts, progress or achievement in a given area. It is a learning as well as assessment tool'' (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 407). Brown (2004) cites that the components of portfolio in the list below:

- Essays and compositions in draft and final forms.
- Reports, projects, outline.
- Poetry and creative prose. .

- Journal, diaries and other personal reflection.
- Tests, test scores and written home works exercises.
- Notes on lectures.
- Self and peer assessment or comment, evaluation and Checklist (p. 256).

1.10.1.1. Advantages of Portfolio

Weigle (2002, p. 199) gives some benefits of using a portfolio which are:

- A portfolio is a collection of writing product.
- It is an opportunity for students to show their writing performance in various genres and for diversity of readers and purposes.
- The portfolio is a reflection to the learning situation since it describes what the student has done in the class.

The evaluation of the portfolio is usually in the end of the term, this enables the students to enrich and enhance his piece of writing till the time of evaluation:

- Portfolio includes pieces of writing selected from the student with guidance of the teacher.
- It gives sense of responsibility of the student.
- It contains reflective essays that represent kind of self-assessment.
- It is a tool to enhance student's ability and organization

The use of the portfolio in teaching writing is a heavy workload for teachers especially in large classes as it requires not only a good and a careful planning, but also a complete involvement in order to guide students and make them progress in writing.

However, it remains one of the best assessment tools because it enables students to understand different writing processes and provides them with an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in different genres.

1.10.2. Conferencing

During the process of writing, teachers continuously assess students' writing using different ways (formative assessment). Teachers can give feedback on student writing through face-to-face conferencing (Kynland, 2003, p. 192).

This kind of feedback, which is a one-to-one conversation between the teacher and student, is an effective means of a teacher response to student writing. The interactive nature of conference gives teachers a chance to respond to the diverse cultural, educational and writing needs of their students, clarifying meaning and resolving activities, while saving the time spent in detailed marking of papers. Conferencing is a form of oral feedback which enables the teacher to find answers to some problems.

However, it should be planned carefully, so that it can have lasting effects on improving students writing in later assignments.

According to Kroll (1990), one advantage of conferencing is that it “allows the teacher to uncover potential misunderstanding that the student might have about prior feedback on issues in writing that have been discussed in class”(p. 259). Hence, all kinds of feedback presented by the teacher are of such an importance to students’ progress and are great triggers to students’ intrinsic motivation, a necessary element leading to the intellectual development of any learner in any field. However, the teacher should avoid degrading remarks; he should be very careful about the comments he makes to the students in order to make them develop their writing competencies.

1.10.3. Peer Assessment

In addition to the feedback received from the teacher, students can be assessed by their peers when they exchange their pieces of writing. “Peer assessment requires students to provide either feedback or grades (or both) to their peers on a product or a performance, based on the criteria of excellence for that product or event which students may have been involved in determining” (Falchikov, 2007, p.132).

Evaluating the work of peers is a social activity, especially when the peer assessment is non-anonymous. This kind of behaviour enhances collaboration and activates positively the interaction between students. “Collaborative peer review helps learners engage in a community of equals who respond to each other work and together create authentic social context for interaction and learning” (Mittan,

1989, p. 198). However, as students lack experience in writing, they may provide their peers with vague comments or they may focus on accuracy rather than on organization, coherence and clarity; thus, they should be trained in assessing their peers' products. In order to be effective in doing that, Kroll (1990, p. 259) suggests the following questions for peer response:

- What is the main purpose of this paper?
- What have you found particularly effective in the paper?
- Do you think the writer has followed through what the paper set out to do?
- Find at least three places in the essay where you can think of questions that have not been answered by the writer.
- Write those questions on the margin as areas for the writer to answer in the next draft.

These questions, of course, can be modified depending on the purpose of writing and the areas to be assessed; therefore, it is up to the teacher to provide students with helpful feedback and a clear understanding of what to look for in their peers' work. This can be done through well-elaborated checklists to guide students during the assessment process. For peer assessment to be more effective, the learning environment should be supportive. Students should feel comfortable, trust one another in order to provide constructive feedback and at the same time develop their writing abilities.

1.10.4. Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is defined as the process of assessment where students reflect on their work, judge it based on goals or criteria, and then revise (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009). It is done on rough copies of work in order to allow for revisions and improvements. Rolheiser & Ross (2001) add that this type of assessment, which is based on evidence of learning in relation to the learning goals, is then used to improve and direct subsequent learning. Joyce, Spiller & Twist (2009) concur with the idea that student self-assessment is actively engaging and purposefully involving students in each stage of the assessment process. Stiggins et

al. (2006) stress the importance of involving students in their learning and assessment processes. In fact, this is the basis for the students' work. The authors add that students need to be more responsible for their learning. By involving them in the assessment process, teachers encourage students to recognize their aptitudes and progress and take ownership of their learning. Through reflection, students will develop a deeper understanding and remember it longer (Stiggins et al., 2006).

However, self-assessment is not a new technique, but a way of increasing the role of students as active participants in their own learning (Boud, 1995). It is mostly used for formative assessment in order to foster reflection on one's own learning process and results (Sluijmans et al. 1998) the fact which develops in them a kind of autonomy and helps them to rely on themselves.

Andrade & Valtcheva (2009) highlight three steps necessary to involve students in effective self-assessment:

- Articulate clear expectations for the task. These have been created by the teacher, the student, or both.
- Students self-assess their work based on the expectations.
- Students use this feedback to direct their further learning and set goals.

1.10.4.1. Advantages of Using Self-assessment

The support for the use of student self-assessment is overwhelming. Davies (2000) supports the use of self-assessment by articulating that when students self-assess, they develop the skills necessary to be independent, lifelong learners. According to Kramer (2009), the culmination of the assessment process is the students' ability to discuss and articulate clearly regarding their learning. These discussions become more meaningful, specific, and targeted. Students begin to gain a greater sense of control over their learning and confidence in their abilities. Stiggins (2002) claims that student self-assessment allows students to become in charge of their learning and make decisions for continued success. He argues that this leads to the construction of lifelong learning. Rolheiser & Ross (2001) agree

that student involvement in assessment can be powerful due to its effect on students' academic success, drive, and self-confidence in their learning abilities. The authors further develop this idea by stating that self-assessments give teachers information about pupils effort and persistence they would otherwise lack. Joyce et al. (2009) add that this intrinsic motivation is due to students' greater responsibility for their own learning. Andrade (2008) articulates that when students were active participants in the assessment process it helped them feel more prepared, improved quality of the product, and made the goals achieved more transparent. Skilling & Ferrell (2000) add that self-assessment supports the development of critical thinking skills.

Strengths in using self-assessment, according to Sambell & MacDowel, 1998, p.39) are that:

- It can foster students' feeling of ownership for their own learning,
- It can motivate students and encourage their active involvement in learning,
- It makes assessment a shared activity rather than alone (i.e. more objective),
- It promotes a genuine interchange of ideas,
- It leads to more directed and effective learning,
- It encourages students to become more autonomous in learning;
- It signals to students that their experiences are valued and their judgments are respected,
- It develops transferable personal skills,
- It produces a community of learning in which students feel that they have influence and involvement,
- It reduces the teacher's workload, and makes students think more deeply, see how others tackle problems, pick up points and learn to criticize constructively.

From this list of strengths, one can conclude that this kind of assessment, as a tool for learning, has considerable impact on students' learning and development

into reflective and independent learners. Moreover, Self-assessment is beneficial to teachers as Rolheiser & Ross (2001) claim that making self-assessment criteria clear and specific to learning targets helps clarify what is important for student performance. This clarity leads to more focused teaching. Stiggins (2002) asserts that teachers benefit because their teaching becomes more directly tied to student needs, because students become more motivated to learn, and time is saved as a result of more effective and efficient classroom assessment. Andrade (2008) concludes, “If students produce it, they can assess it: and if they can assess it, they can improve it” (p.63).

1.10.4.2. Implementing Self-assessment Effectively

Effective self-assessment involves at least three steps:

1.10.4.2.1. Clear Performance Targets

In order for self-assessment to be effective, students must have clear targets to work toward. In other words, students must know what counts! Clear criteria for assignments that will be graded should be made available to students before work on the task begins. The assessment criteria can be created by the teacher or co-created with students. The criteria can be arranged in a simple checklist or in a rubric.

1.10.4.2.2. Checking Progress toward the Targets

This is where the actual self-assessment takes place. Once students know the performance targets (step 1), they create a draft of the assignment, compare the draft to the targets, and identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.

1.10.4.2.3. Revision

Using the self-generated feedback from step 2, students revise their draft, trying to close the gaps between their work and the targets. This step is crucial. If students do not have the chance to revise and improve their work, and possibly their grades, they are unlikely to take the self-assessment process seriously.

1.10.4.3. Self-assessment Tools

In order to evaluate students' texts, teachers can develop some guidelines to be able to grade them such as rubrics and checklists.

1.10.4.3.1. Rubrics.

These may be called scoring rubrics that are defined as descriptive scoring schemes that are developed by teachers or other evaluators to guide the analysis of the products or processes of students' efforts (Brookhart, 1999). A scoring rubric represents a set of guidelines that describe the characteristics of the different levels of performance used in scoring or judging a performance. One common use of scoring rubrics is to guide the evaluation of writing samples. Judgement concerning the quality of a given writing sample may vary depending on the criteria established by the individual evaluator. By developing a pre-defined scheme for the evaluation process, the subjectivity involved in evaluating a paragraph or an essay becomes more objective. Rubrics can be used for grading a large variety of assignments and tasks.

Students may be involved in rubric construction in order to increase their awareness as assessors or other teacher and colleague can also be involved. In addition to the use of rubrics for formative assessment, they can also be used for grading; this will assure fairness in assessing the students' work.

A rubric can be a very effective tool for guiding students' self-assessment. Because it includes vivid descriptions of what excellent and poor work look like, a rubric can help students get a strong sense of the quality of their work and—perhaps more importantly—provide guidance about how to improve it.

1.10.4.3.2. Checklists

A checklist is another assessment tool in a form of a list used to assess learning or teaching. It determines what the student has learnt in a certain area

according to fixed criteria. It usually offers a yes/no format in relation to the students demonstration of specific criteria.

Checklists are very useful tools in writing courses as they are designed by teachers to guide students in assessing their learning. They are generally very simple scaffolding their meta-cognitive development and enabling them to grow more confident and ultimately leading them to autonomy. Checklists may be used in self-assessment making learners aware of their learning and the strategies they are using. This kind of reflection develops their meta-cognitive abilities and can increase their motivation to learn; therefore, they become more proficient language learners. In addition to this, checklists can be used in peer assessment guiding students in order to provide a beneficial feedback necessary for the improvement of learning.

To conclude, Rubrics are excellent tools for guiding self-assessment but checklists can work equally well, or better, depending on the assignment. For larger, complex assignments, rubrics typically work best. For shorter, less complex assignments, checklists are often more appropriate.

1.11. Types of Rating Scales

The teacher has some effective ways in assessing his students work. The common method used is scoring. The first step in scoring process is to choose the type of rating scale. In the literature of writing the common rating scales are holistic scoring analytic scoring and checklists.

1.11.1. Holistic scoring

Holistic scoring is a kind of scoring which may be useful for large numbers of essays in that it does not take much time to grade them. According to this approach, the written work is read as a whole in order to decide of its grade, but the teacher or teachers have to grade the compositions based on chosen models in order to be objective. The essay is read quickly to determine whether it is stronger or weaker if compared to the models (Brown, 2004, pp.242-243).

The advantage of the holistic scoring (Moskal, 2000) is that “it takes much less time than other scoring methods. Each reader of a holistically scored essay reads the essay through quickly, matching its quality to that one of the model essays”. However, readers may choose to focus on different aspects of the written products; consequently, the grades will vary from one reader to another. Holistic grading is ideal for large enrolment courses in which two or more teachers are responsible for the grading like in official exams.

1.11.2. Analytic Scoring

"Analytic scoring scripts are rated on several aspects of writing or criteria rather than given single score" (Weigle, 2002, p. 114). In this kind of scoring scale, the rater sets group of criteria according to his objective of evaluation for example (content; organization, and vocabulary). This type is considered the useful one. The well-known analytic scale in ESL was created by Jacobs et.al. (1981), who sets the following criteria: content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics, then, the text is evaluated through these criteria. Many instructors choose to use analytic scoring because of its strengths, some of which are as follows (Moskal, 2000, p. 121):

- It helps instructors keep the full range of writing features in mind as they score.
- It allows students to see areas in their own essays that need work when accompanied by written comments and a breakdown of the final score. Its diagnostic nature provides students with a road map for improvement.

Indeed, analytical scoring is a relevant way in scoring the students because it allows the teacher to assess effectively and to know the weakness and the strength of his students.

1.12. Conclusion

Writing plays a vital role not only in conveying information but also in transforming information to create a new knowledge in such a demanding life. It is thus of central importance for students in academic, second and foreign language learning.

In this chapter, we tried to give an overview of the available approaches to writing starting from the Product Approach to the Process-Genre Approach which is the most recent one that complies with the principles of the CBA. In parallel with those approaches, questions of how to assess or evaluate writing gave rise to certain methodologies for assessment. One of them is the use of self-assessment in the teaching and learning of writing to improve students writing competency.

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Interpretation

- 3.1. Introduction**
- 3.2. Aim of the Questionnaire**
- 3.3. Sampling and Population**
 - 3.3.1. Teachers**
 - 3.3.2. Learners**
- 3.4. Description of the Questionnaire**
- 3.5. Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire**
- 3.6. Experiment Implementation**
- 3.7. Objectives of the Experiment**
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 - 3.8.1. The Control Group**
 - 3.8.2. The Experimental Group**
- 3.9. Content of the Experiment**
- 3.10. The Test**
- 3.11. Measures used in this Experiment**
 - 3.11.1. Assessment Grid**
- 3.12. Data Analysis and Interpretation**
- 3.13. Interpretation of the Experiment**
- 3.14. Recommendations**
 - 3.14.1. Writing under the CBA**
 - 3.14.2. Implementing Self-assessment**
- 3.15. Conclusion**

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher attempts to investigate how the Competency-Based Approach will help the students to improve their writing skill and the use of self-assessment as feedback strategy to enhance the student's achievements. Thus, this chapter is devoted to introduce the research methods and the population used. Then, it deals with data collection: questionnaire and experiment. Finally, it concludes with the discussion of the obtained results.

3.2. Aim of the Questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to investigate the main problems that face secondary school teachers in teaching writing under the CBA. It also aims to know how to implement this approach effectively in order to enhance students' writing competencies to use them in real life.

3.3. Sampling and Population

3.3.1. Teachers

The population of this study is composed of thirty EFL teachers at secondary schools. It focused on a sample of teachers, who were selected randomly from six different secondary schools in Saida. They were given four days to give back the questionnaire according to their requests because of work pressure. All of them participated positively (100%), providing useful and appropriate information

3.3.2. Learners

The chosen population for classroom observation is the first year students of Ibn Sahnoun El Rachidi secondary school-Saida. The first class includes 40 students and the second class also includes 40 students. Both of them are scientific stream and have studied English as a foreign language for four years in the middle school.

3.4. Description of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for gathering information from respondents. It is one of the primary sources of obtaining data in any research endeavour. However, the critical point is that when designing a questionnaire, the researcher should ensure that it is “valid, reliable and unambiguous” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 438). In other words, the questionnaire is a list of questions related to one topic; it is probably most used and most abused of the data gathering devices since it is easy to prepare and to administer.

The teachers’ questionnaire is used to gather information about teaching written expression to secondary school students under the CBA. It was a mixture of close - ended and open ended questions. It consists two main sections.

3.4.1. Section One:

This section contains questions from 1 to 4. Those questions are used to gain general information about the participants such as gender, their experience in teaching English at secondary school and the number of students in each class.

3.4.2. Section Two:

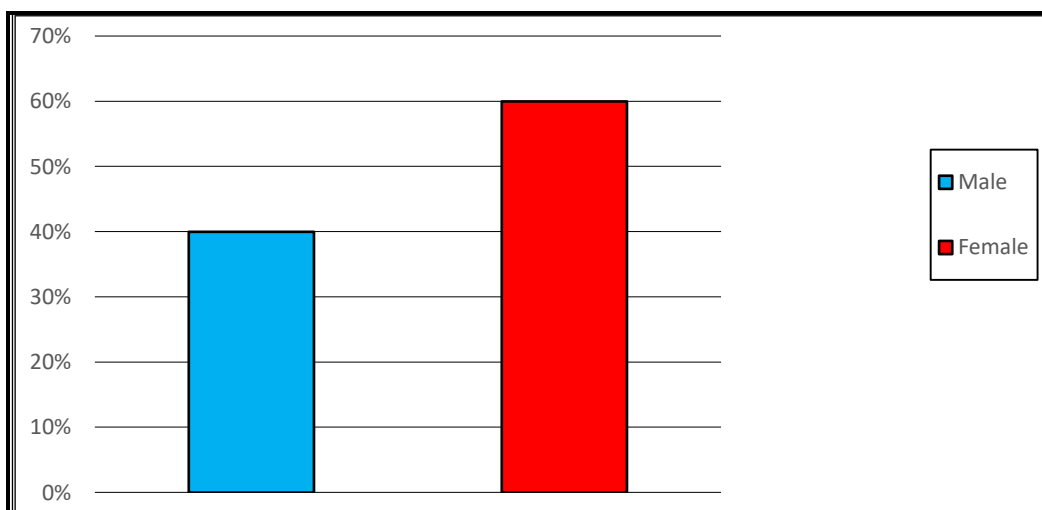
It consists of questions from 1 to 11. This section is about teaching writing under the CBA including different questions concerning the teachers’ knowledge about the different approaches of teaching writing skill, the level of first year students, the frequent mistakes of students production, the role of the teacher in the classroom, the ways teachers’ use to evaluate students production and the main problems in implementing the CBA in secondary school classes. The last question is devoted to teachers' suggestions to improve writing skill.

3.5. Analysis of the Teachers’ Questionnaire

This part presents the results of the questionnaire. As stated previously, the first part of this questionnaire is used for the participants’ profile, while the second part includes the necessary data for the situation analysis of this research.

A. Section One: Background information**Question 1:** The gender**Table 3.1:** *The gender of population*

Gender	Number of teachers	Percentage
Male	12	40%
Female	18	60%
Total	30	100%

**Figure 3.1:** *The gender of population*

From the teachers' answers, the researcher observed that the percentage of female teachers is 60%, whereas the percentage of male teachers is 40%. Therefore, she found that the number of female teachers in secondary schools is higher than male teachers.

Question 2: What degree (s) do you have?

Table 3.2: Teachers qualification

Degree / Qualification	Number of teachers	Percentage
license	21	70%
master	09	30%
Total	30	100%

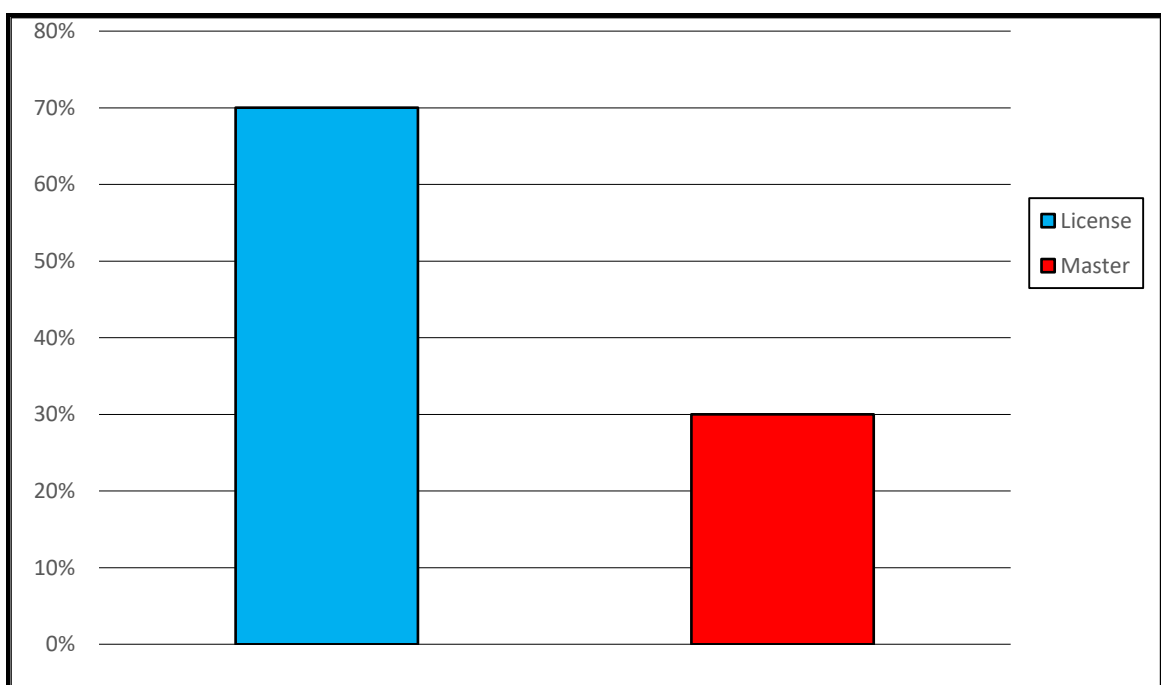


Figure 3.2: Teachers qualification

When we asked what degree teachers hold, 70% of them English teachers have a license degree, while 30% have a Master level.

Question 3: How long have you been teaching?

Table 3.3: *Teaching experience*

Years of teaching experience	Number of teachers	Percentage
Less than 5 years	09	30%
5 – 15 years	15	50%
More than 15 years	06	20%
Total	30	100%

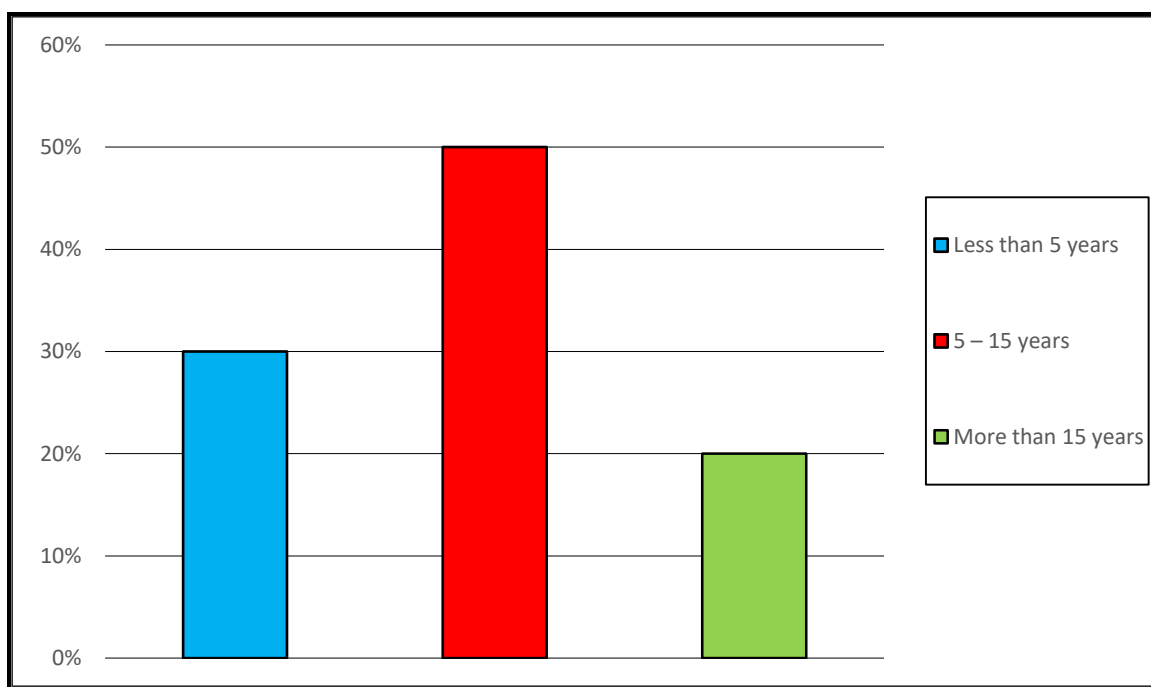


Figure 3.3: *Teaching experience*

As it is shown in Table 3.3, 30% of the questioned teachers have been teaching English for less than 05 years; 50% of them have been teaching English for 05 to 15years and20% of the teachers have been teaching English for more than 15 years. This result shows that most of secondary school teachers are experienced teachers.

Question 4: The number of students in each class is

Table 3.4: *The number of students*

Number of students	Number of teachers	Percentage
Less than 25	3	10%
30 - 40	18	60%
More than 40	9	30%
Total	30	100%

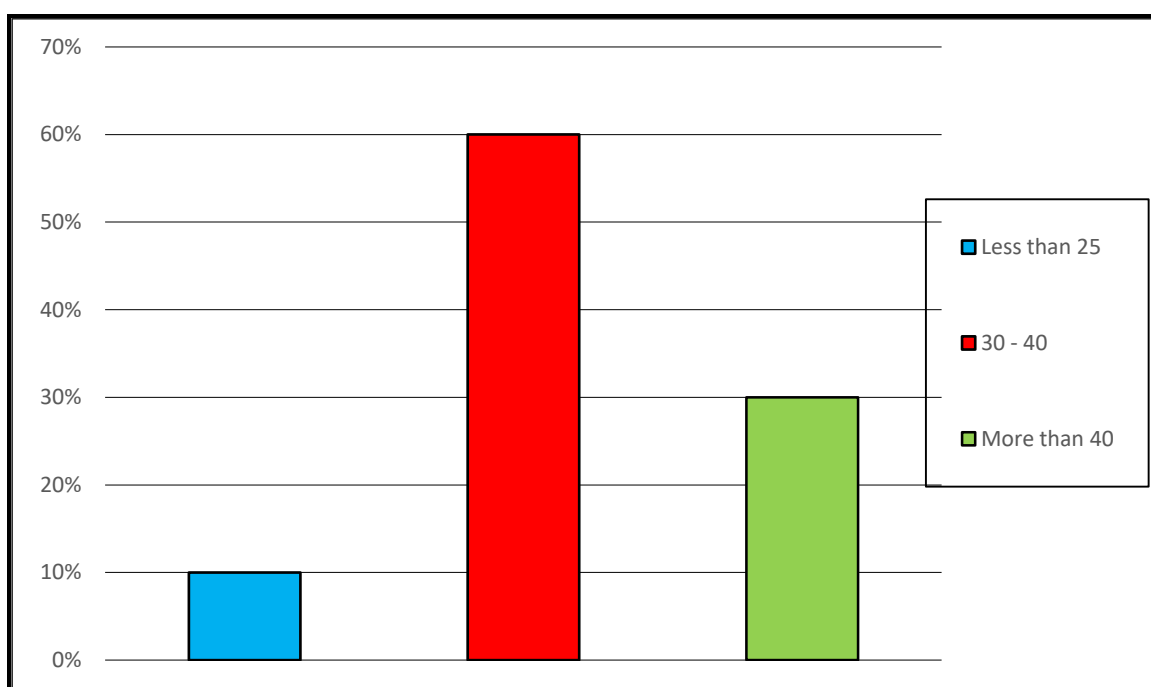


Figure 3.4: *The number of students*

This question seeks information about the average size of students in classes, the result demonstrates that the majority of the teachers confess about the number of the students which is between 30 and 40 students. Hence, between 60 % and 30% of the teachers said that they have overcrowded classes and their average is between 40 and 45 students, whereas about 10% of the teachers claimed that they have normal classes.

This leads us to conclude that classes are crowded in normal situations and there are cases where are overcrowded.

B. Section Two: Writing under the Competency-Based Approach

Question 5: Are you implementing the Competency-Based Approach in teaching writing?

Table 3.5: *The use of CBA*

Implementing the CBA	participant	Percentage
Yes	21	70%
No	09	30%
Total	30	100%

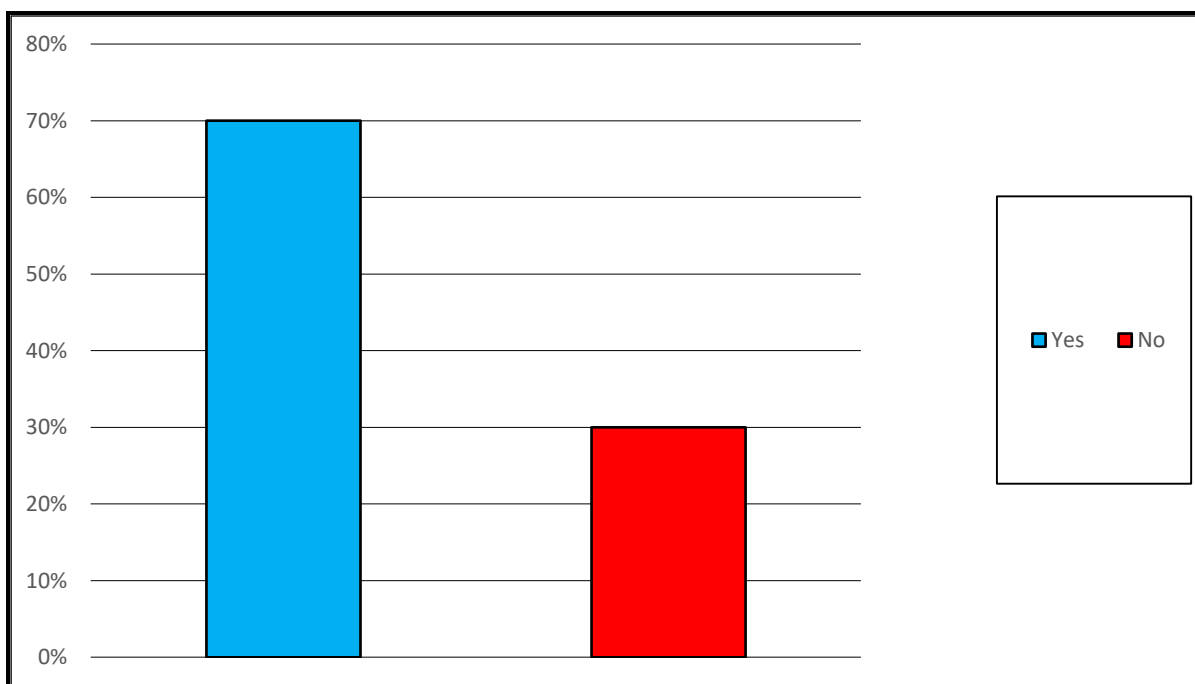


Figure 3.5: *The use of CBA*

In this part, the researcher wanted to know if secondary school teachers are really applying the CBA. About 70 % of the teachers are not implementing this approach while around 30 % of them claimed that they are implementing this approach.

Question 6: Do you have any background knowledge about writing approaches?

Table 3.6: Background knowledge about writing approaches

	Participants	Percentage
Yes	09	30%
No	21	70%
Total	30	100%

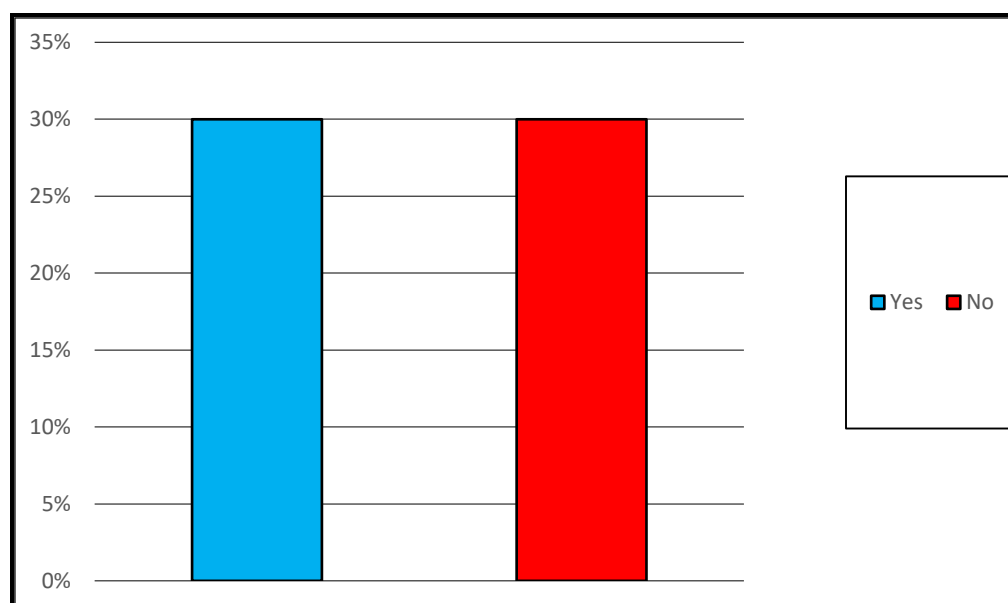


Figure 3.6: Background knowledge about writing approaches

This question aims to know if teachers have any background about the different writing approaches. From the table above, we can see that 70% of the teachers have no idea about the theoretical part of writing although writing is considered the most difficult skill in language teaching while the minority or 30% of teachers said that they have some backgrounds.

Question 7: What is the approach you use to teach writing?

Table 3.7: *The appropriate writing approach*

	Participant	Percentage
Product	15	50%
Process	08	30%
Genre	00	00%
No answers	07	20%
Total	30	100%

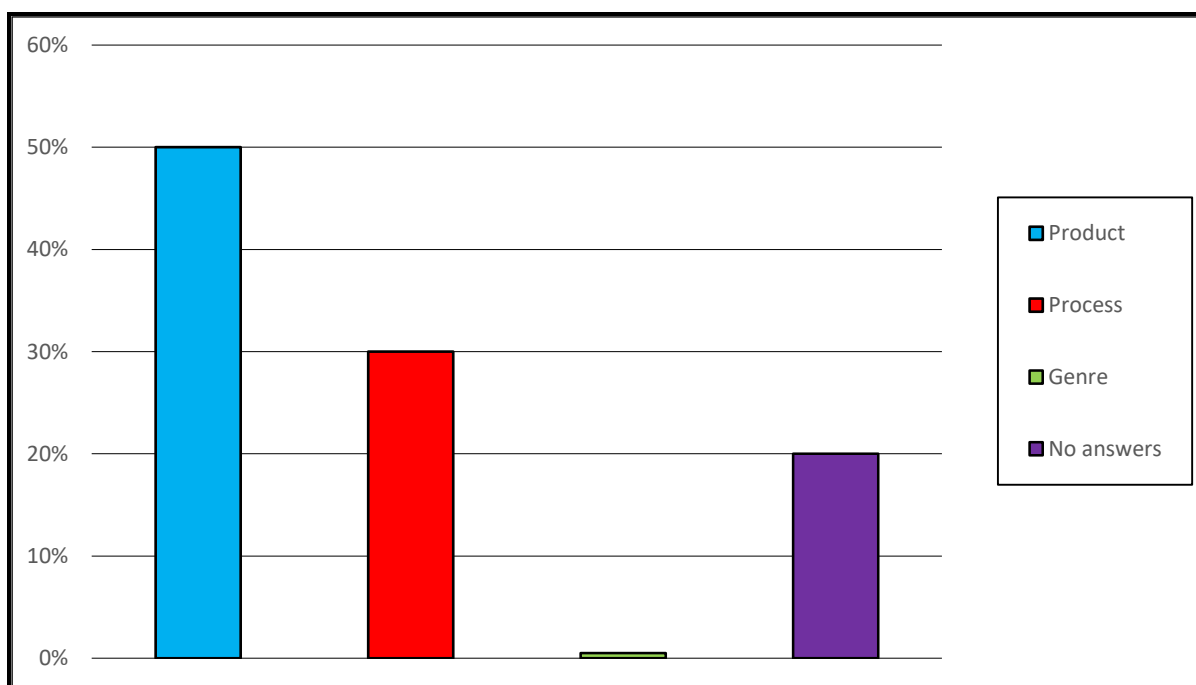


Figure 3.7: *The appropriate writing approach*

According to the results above, half of the teachers (50%) use the product approach and 30% of them employ the process approach; while no one uses the genre approach. 20% of the teachers refused to answer this question and thought that the question is ambiguous.

Please, explain the reasons for choosing this approach.

Teachers provided us with the following reasons for their choice of the different approaches:

The product approach: some teachers thought that it is the most appropriate approach to their students to improve their writing skill and others believed that this approach emphasizes the final draft that the student writes. It helps to check exactly the students' understanding, while few teachers said that they are not well informed about the other approaches.

The process approach: the teachers, who choose the process approach, believe that this approach helps the students to follow the writing steps to be more careful from going out of subject. In their opinions, this approach involves students in a step by step practice, which facilitates the activity of composition.

Concerning people, who ignored to answer the previous question, justified that they are not using a certain kind of approach, they do not really know them, teachers are not aware of the theoretical approaches of writing and lack of training. As a conclusion, one can say that the majority of secondary school teachers ignore the three writing approaches.

Question 8: How do you manage your work in writing tasks in the classroom?

Table 3.8: *The management of work*

	Participant	Percentage
Individual	21	70%
Pair work	06	20%
Group work	03	10%
Total	30	100%

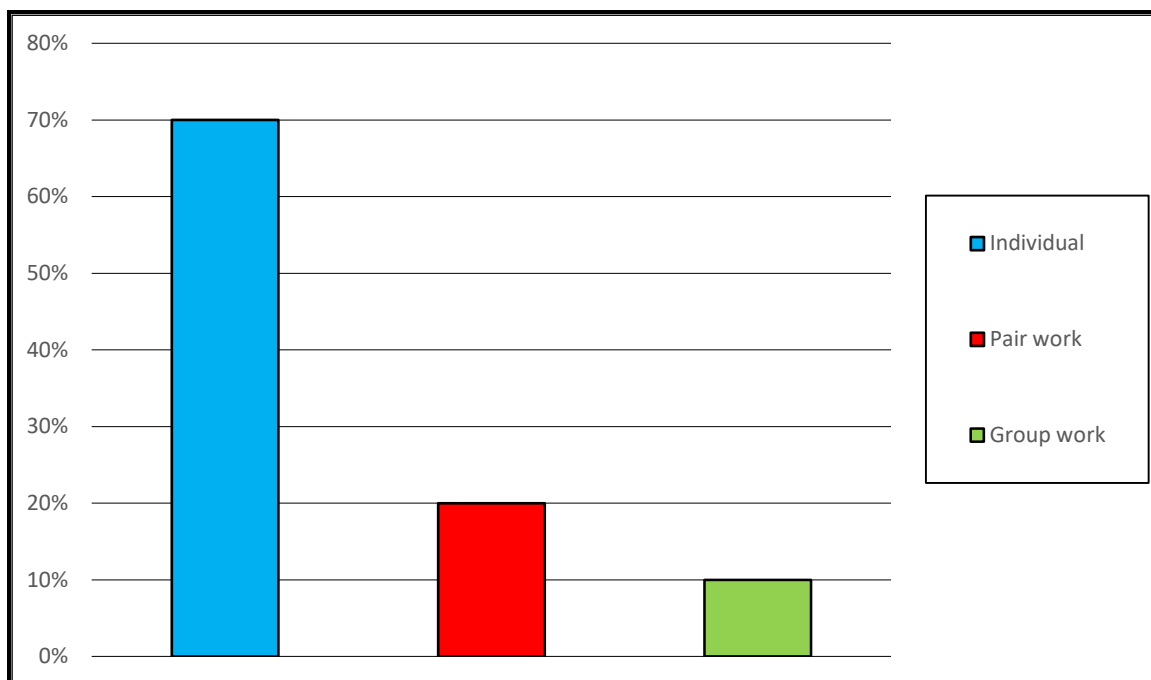


Figure 3.8: The management of work

Table and figure 3.8 show that 70% of the teachers teach the writing task based on individual work. 20% of teachers prefer pair work, while 10% of the teachers replied that they choose to use groups in order to let students learn from one another.

Question 9: The level of first year students in writing is

Table 3.9: Students' level in writing

Level	Participant	Percentage
Weak	21	70%
Average	09	30%
Good	00	00%
Total	30	100%

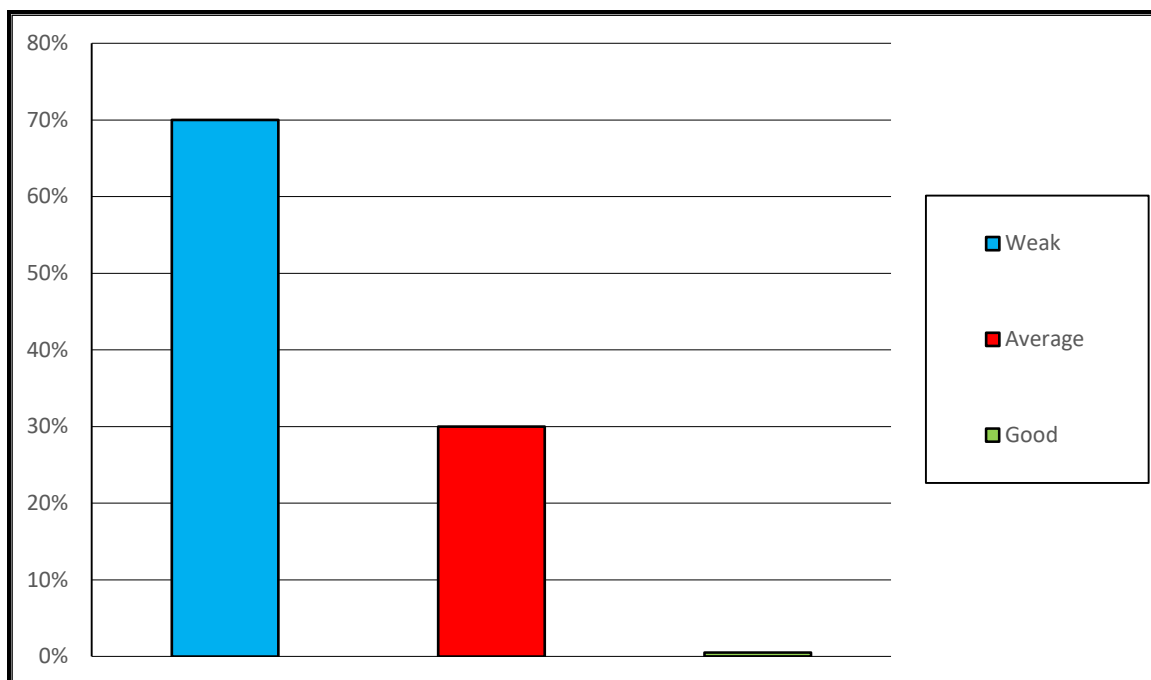


Figure 3.9: Students' level in writing

As shown in the table above, most of the answers 70% revealed that the level of students in writing is weak. Others around 30 % declared that the results of their students are average and no one said that it is good.

Question 10: When evaluating your students writing composition what are the most frequent mistakes

Table 3.10: Teachers' views toward the most frequent mistakes of students writing

	Participant	Percentage
Content organization and punctuation	03	10%
Vocabulary	09	30%
grammar	12	40%
spelling	06	20%
Total	30	100%

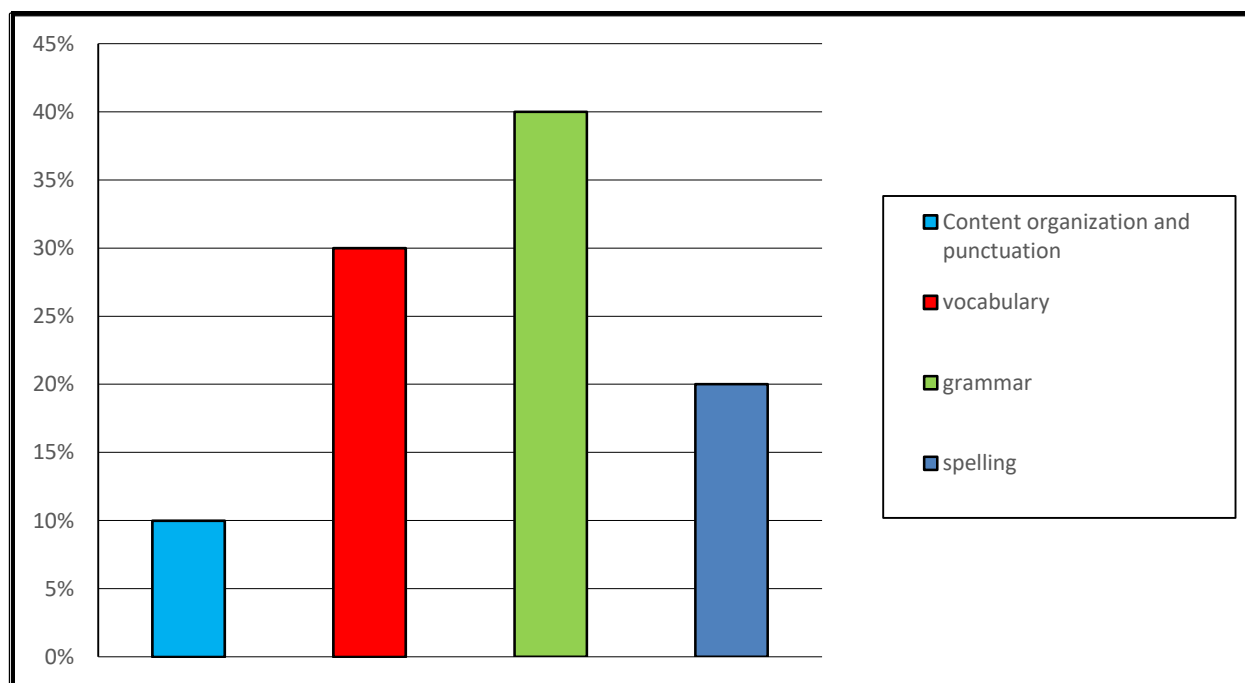


Figure 3.10: Teachers' views toward the most frequent mistakes of students writing

The aim of the question is to have an opinion about students' weaknesses in the writing skill. According to table and figure 3.10, 40% of teachers focused on grammar as the most frequent mistakes, 30% of them said vocabulary and 20% for spelling. The less percentage 10% was given to content organization and punctuation.

Question 11: What kind of teacher do you consider yourself when you teach writing under the CBA?

Table 3.11: The role of teacher

	Participants	Percentage
Facilitator	09	30%
Conventional	21	70%
Total	30	100%

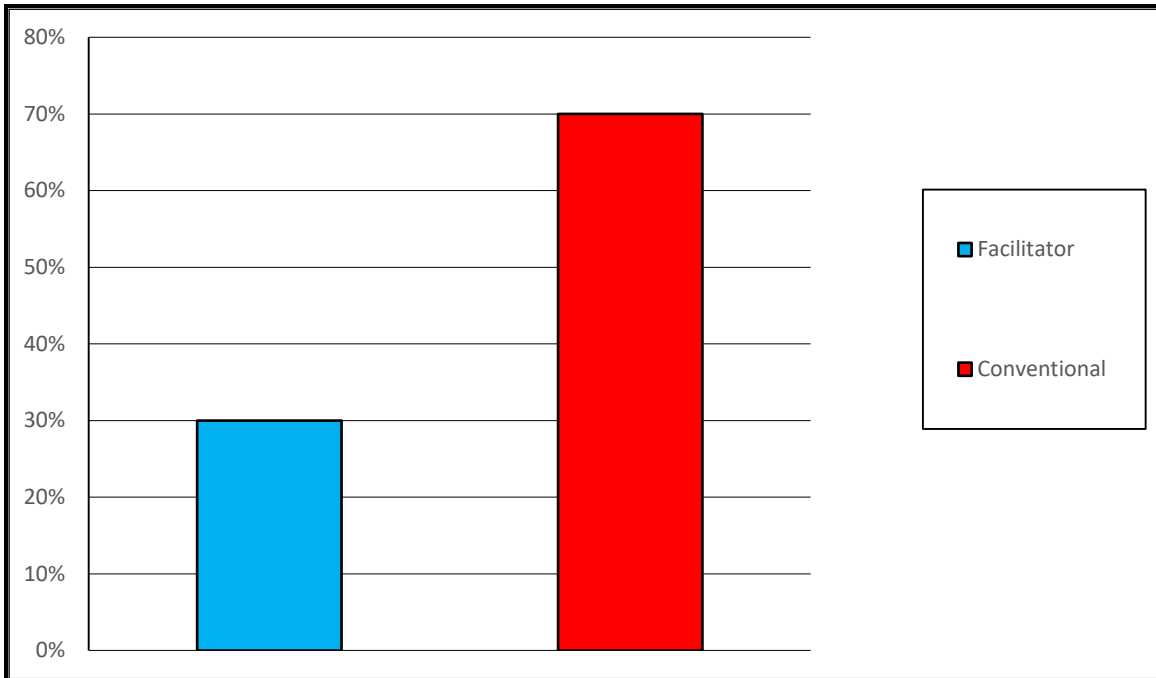


Figure 3.11: The role of teacher

This question aims at highlighting the teacher's role in the CBA. According to the results above, 70% of teachers said that their role is just information provider using direct instructions, whereas 30% of the teachers said that their principle role is that of facilitator; that is, they help, check, and correct spelling mistakes in addition to guide students to achieve their goals.

Question 12: Which type of assessment do you use in your teaching?

Table 3.12: Type of assessment

	Participants	Percentage
Diagnostic	06	20%
Formative	06	20%
Summative	15	50%
Self-assessment	03	10%
Total	30	100%

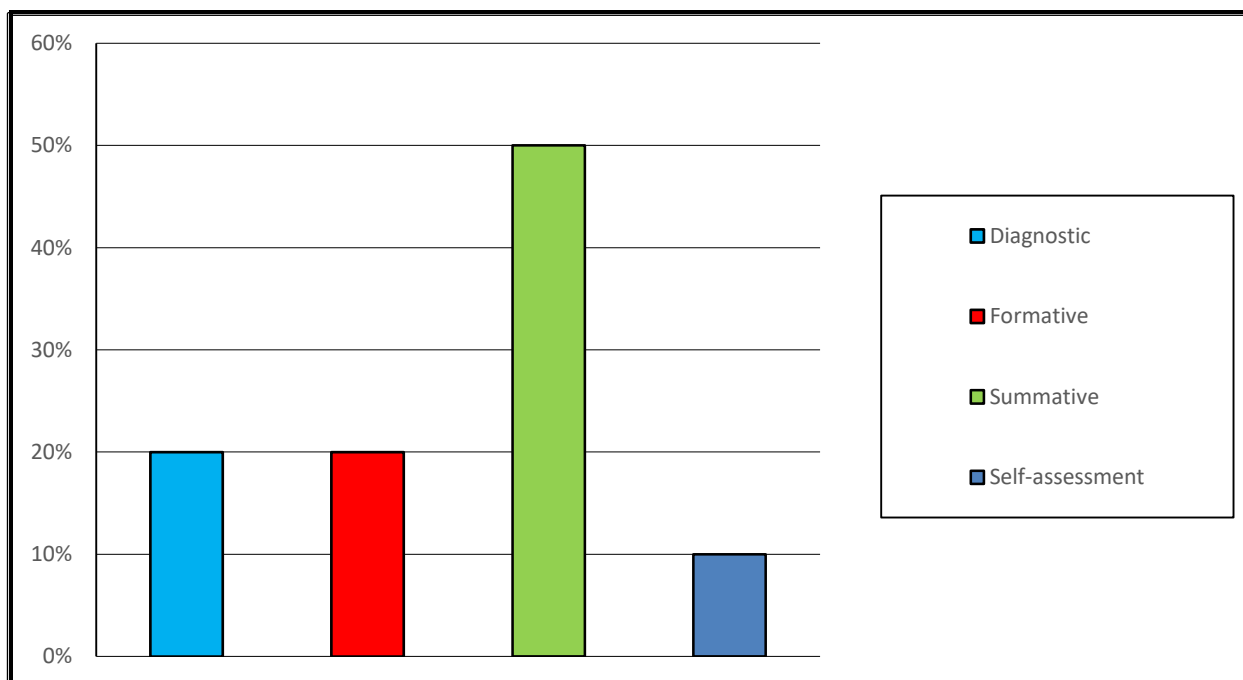


Figure 3.12: Type of assessment

The previous table and figure reveal that half 50% of the teachers use summative assessment in order to measure what students have learnt at the end of the unit then come formative and diagnostic assessment with the same percentage 20% and the last is self-assessment with a percentage of (10%).

Question 13: Which type of assessment do you use to assess your students writing performance?

Table 3.13: Type of writing assessment

Kinds of assessment	Participants	Percentage
Formative	06	20%
Summative	21	70%
Self-assessment	03	10%
Total	30	100%

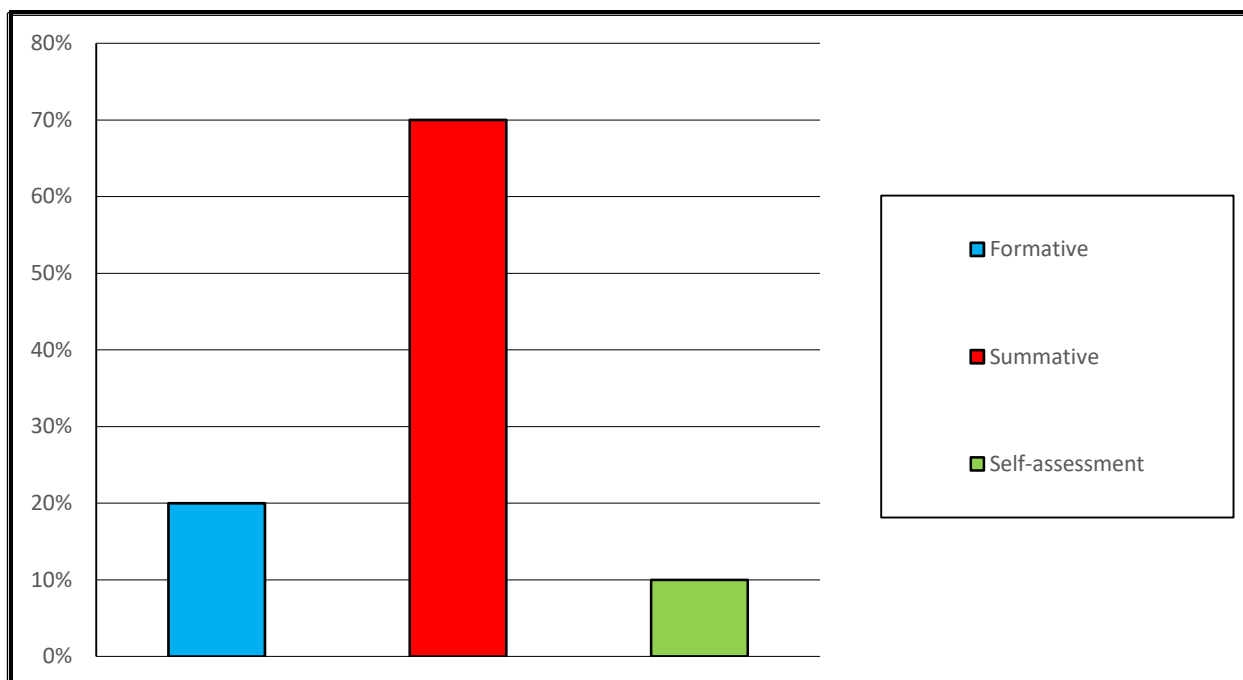


Figure 3.13: type of writing assessment

The results demonstrated that the majority of teachers (70%) agreed on the fact that they use summative assessment to evaluate students writing performance, while 20% of them use formative assessment and only (10%) of teachers employ self-assessment.

Question 14: Do you think that the competency-based approach has positive effects on students' writing achievements?

Table 3.14: Teachers' opinion about the effect of CBA

	Participants	Percentage
Yes	03	10%
No	27	90%
Total	30	100%

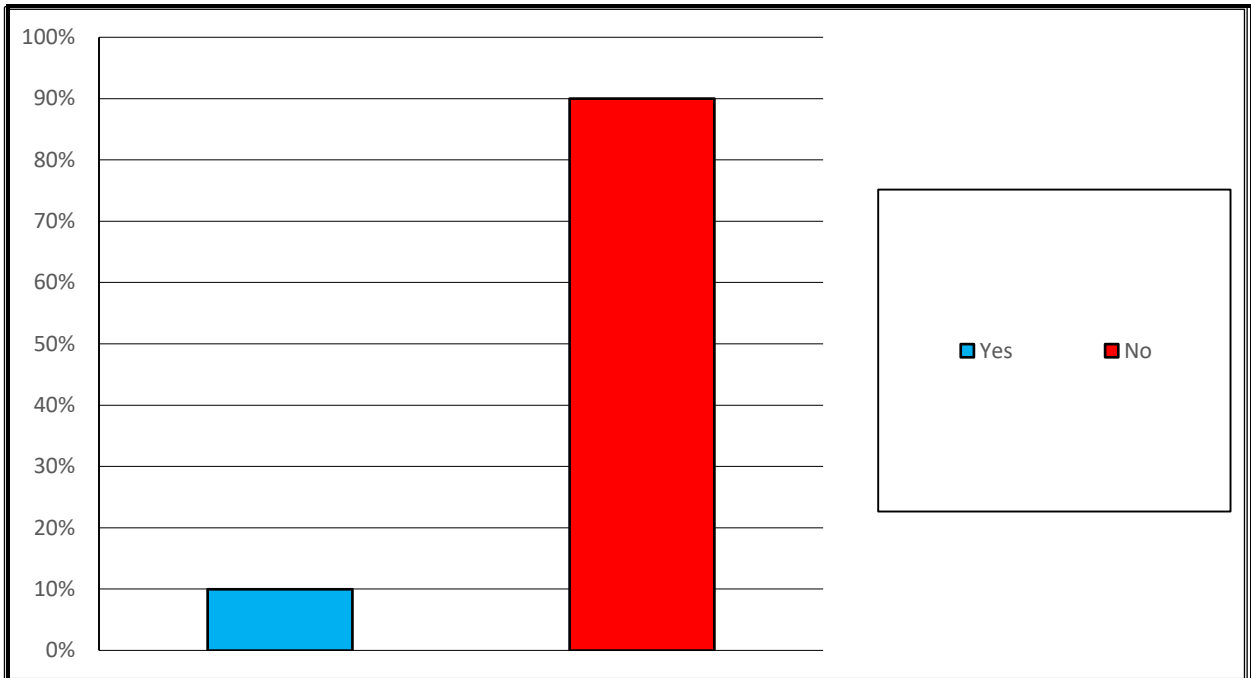


Figure 3.14: Teachers' opinion about the effect of CBA

As table and figure 3.14 indicate, the highest rate of the respondents (90%) agreed on that the CBA did not improve students writing achievements. To clarify, about 60% of them said that it is not applied appropriately in the field, 20% were not well informed about such approach and 10% were with the use of a new course books without applying CBA.

Table 3.15: Problems in implementing the CBA

	Number of teachers	Percentage
Not and equate	00	00%
Not applied	18	60%
not well informed	06	20%
Just using the book	03	10%

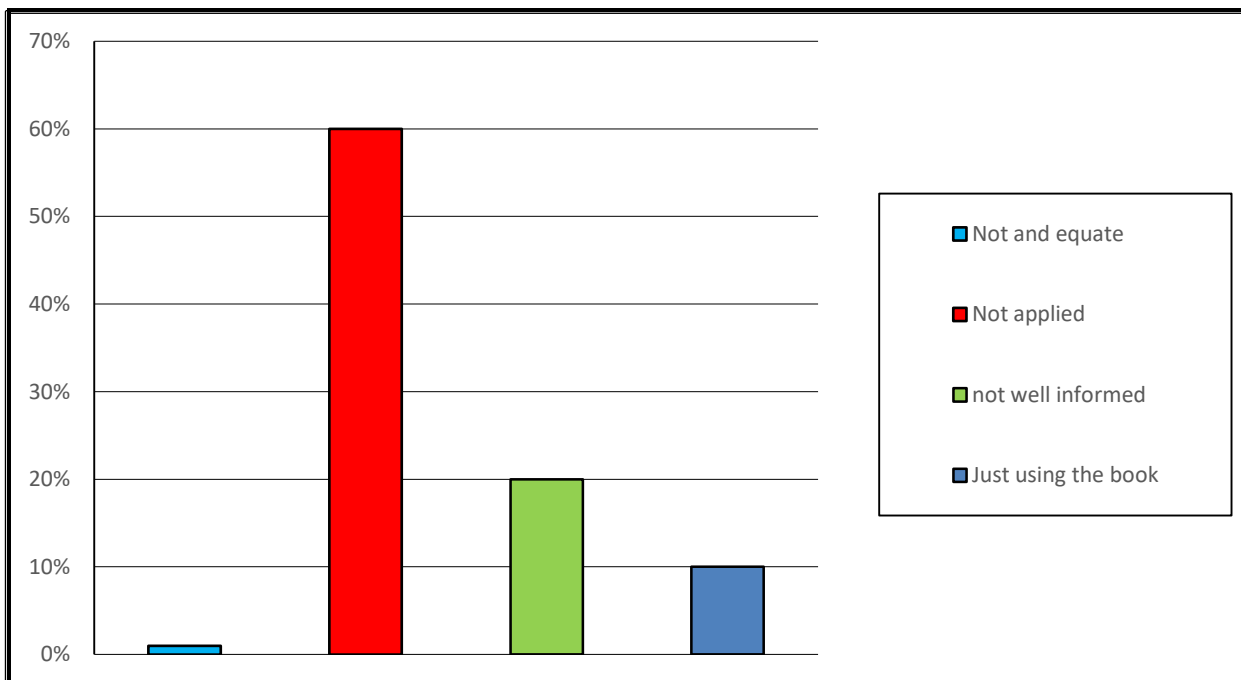


Figure 3.15: Problems in implementing the CBA

Some teachers add more reasons like:

- Lack of service training is one of the factors hindering the improvement of writing.
- Because the teachers are not aware of the different theoretical background of the approaches used in teaching English under the CBA.
- Crowded classes, the lack of practical sessions.
- The inadequacy of the in-service training.
- The lack of materials [lack of audio-visual aids].
- The lack of student's background knowledge.
- The weak level of the students.
- The insufficient time.
- Length of the syllabus.

Question 15: What do you suggest to improve teaching writing skill to first year students in secondary school?

The last question, in the second section, aims at providing some solutions to improve students' writing skill. The proposed suggestions vary from one teacher to another, but researcher had noticed that the majority of the teachers, who answered this question, agreed on reducing the number of the pupils in each class to give the opportunity to look at what each pupils is doing with the purpose of guiding and advising him. In general, their suggestions were organized as follows:

- Intensive collaborative efforts from teachers and inspectors to implement the CBA in teaching writing process successfully.
- Specific training to the teachers.
- Giving more time for writing courses in order to allow students to practise writing as much as they can and be able to help them with necessary feedback.
- Vocabulary activities should be introduced in writing courses to enrich students' lexical competence because a big number of students cannot express themselves fluently as they cannot find the right words to do that.
- Encourage students to read in order to improve their level.
- Motivate and encourage students for learning English language through using technological tools during teaching.

3.6. Experiment Implementation

3.7. Objectives of the Experiment

Considering the difficulties of mastering writing skill, there are many methods and strategies that are used in the teaching process of writing under the CBA. These methods and strategies are used to help students to have good ability in writing. One of them is the use of self-assessment as a tool that allows students to understand their strengths and weaknesses in writing. The aim of this experiment was to determine if

the contribution of student's self-assessment as a feedback strategy improves the students writing quality.

3.8. The Sample

The chosen population is 80 students from first year scientific stream of Ibn Sahnoun El Rachidi secondary school, Saida. The students used in the experiment, were divided into two groups of forty pupils for each, a control group (N= 40) and an experimental group (N= 40) of first year pupils in the academic year 2017/2018. The groups were homogeneous as their age were between 14 and 16 and had the same educational background. They have studied English as a foreign language for four years in the middle school.

3.8.1. The Control Group

An intact group of forty (N= 40) first-year students (scientific stream) from both sexes was involved as a control group. The group was not randomly chosen; all of them have the same educational background, age and the average of the class is 11. They studied the same content related to the unit. The classroom writing assignment for this group was to write an expository paragraph about pollution.

3.8.2. The Experimental Group

An intact class of forty (N= 40) first-year students scientific stream was used in this experiment in order to implement self-assessment as a tool to improve pupils writing skill under the CBA. The group was not randomly chosen; it includes both genders, all of them have the same educational background, age and the average of the class is 11. The classroom writing assignment for this group was to write an expository paragraph about pollution. This group was introduced to self-assessment and was engaged to the formulation of criteria for self-assessment task to make decisions about the standards of performance expected. Pupils were provided with this checklist to be used in the revision phase.

3.9. Content of the Experiment

The experiment consisted of applying self-assessment in the writing course only for the experimental group. The experiment implementation was carried in the second term.

As expository writing is the main objective of the unit, pupils were required to write an expository article about pollution using all what they had seen in the previous lessons. For this purpose, we found it useful to define this type of writing.

Exposition is a type of oral or written discourse that is used to explain, describe, and give information or inform. In such types of writing, the writer exposes information or ideas, by giving explanations. Examples of this kind of writing includes informative writing in which the writer provides information in a clear and concise manner, explaining the steps procedure of something, reporting new information, or conveying technical information in a simple.

3.10. The Test:

The assignment task was a direct type of test, where the participants had to write a paragraph about pollution, asking them to explain the causes and suggest solution to the problem. This activity was chosen on purpose, as it was supposed to assess pupils writing competency. In addition, it could help us as a researcher to find out if our informants who used self-assessment employ what had studied to improve their writing composition. The time allotted to write the composition was one hour.

3.11. Measures Used in this Experiment

We formed our test from the examiner's guide aims at supplying the teachers with some information and recommendations to help them prepare their pupils for the Baccalaureate English paper. It also provides useful guidelines for assessing a good writing paper.

Pupils writing can be evaluated on four factors: relevance, coherence, use of linguistic resources and excellence vocabulary to give a complete picture of a student's writing performance

3.11.1. Assessment Grid: In this study, we opted to measure the four elements as follows:

Table 3.16: Assessment grid

Criteria	Indicators
1. Relevance	Students production aligns with the situation requirements : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Format: letter / e-mail / invitation / instructions / newspaper article - Objective: to inform/ to describe/to complain / to sensitise / to advise / to warn ...etc. - Target audience: fellow citizens / consumers - Target language: functional language and vocabulary related to the topic.
2. Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of meaningful sentences. - Use of appropriate connectors, time indicators ...etc. - Logical organisation and development of ideas.
3. Use of linguistic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Correct use of grammar: tenses, word order, subject-verb agreement ...etc. - Use of simple, compound and complex sentences. - Correct use of mechanics: spelling, capitalization and punctuation.

4. Excellence (creativity + vocabulary Wealth)	- Originality and creativity: new ideas, varied vocabulary items.
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3.12. Data Analysis and Interpretation

All the data were collected throughout the EFL writing course, which ensures the validity of the present study. After data collection, the researcher will present the control group and the experimental achievements according to the criteria cited above.

Items 1-2: Relevance (it includes items 1/2)

Table 3.17: Relevance of ideas

	Control group		Experimental group	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Participants	12	22	34	06
Percentage	45%	55%	85%	15%

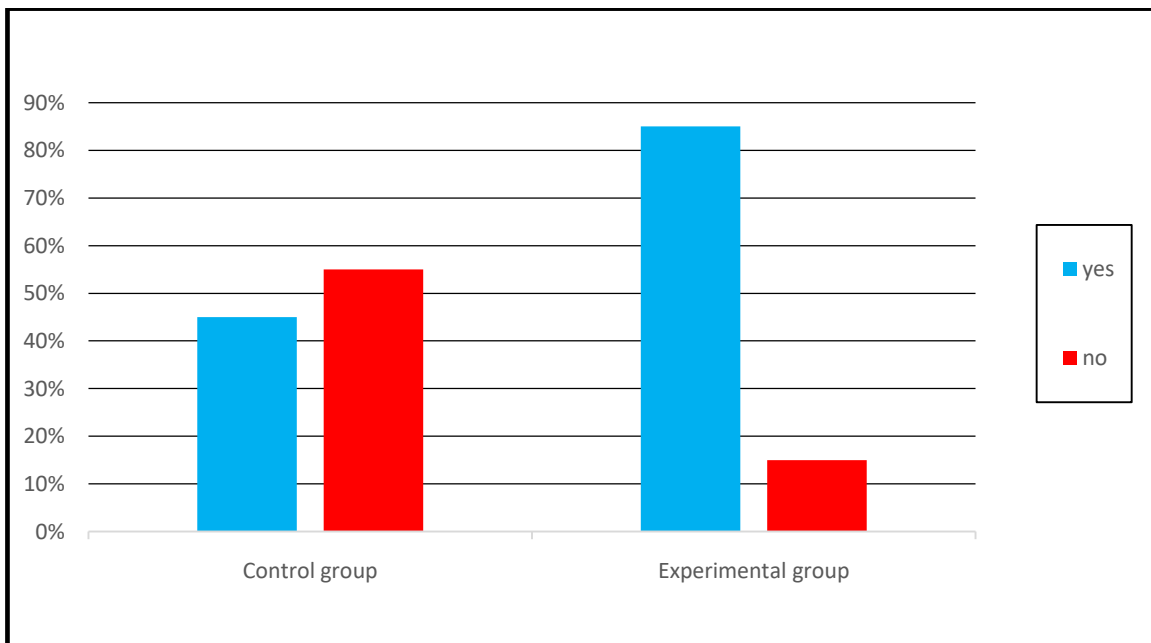


Figure 3.16: Relevance of ideas

As shown in table and figure 3.16, the control group has just 45% of the students who respected the topic, while 55% of them did not respect the topic given. The difference is 10%. In contrast to the experimental group, about 85% of them respected the topic and just 15% did not; the difference is 70%. Thus, the distinction of the experimental group is higher than the control group. The variance between the two groups is 60%.

Items 3-4-5-6: Coherence of ideas

Table 3.18: Coherence of ideas

	Control group		Experimental group	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Participants	16	24	30	10
Percentage	40%	60%	75%	25%

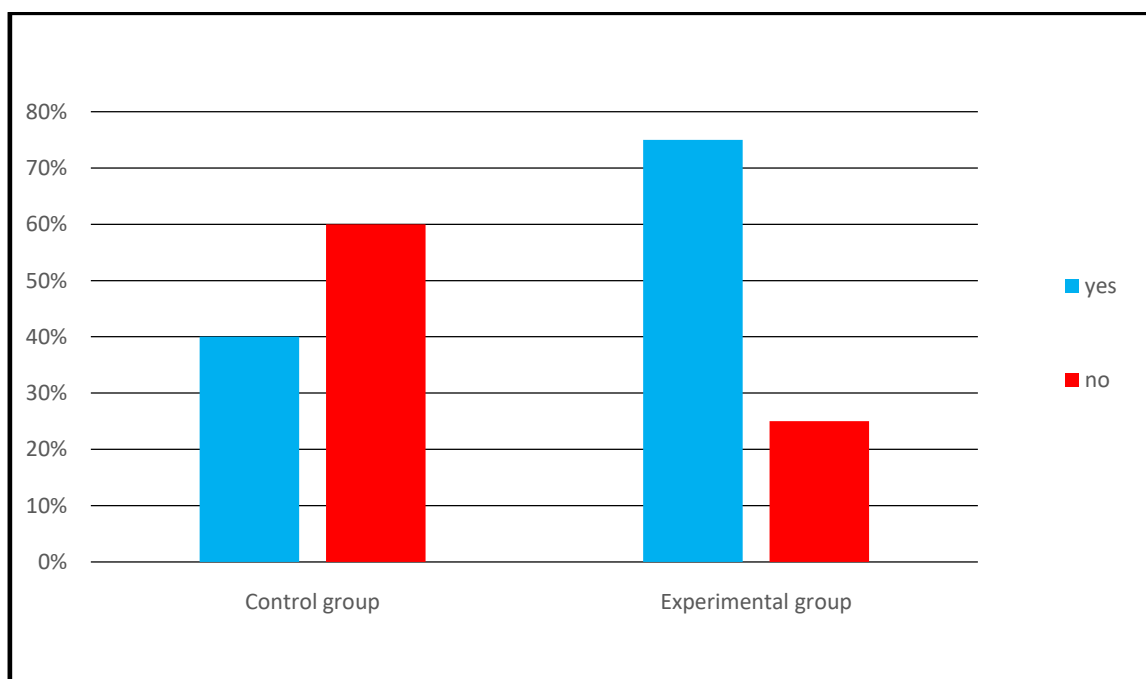


Figure 3.17: Coherence of ideas

From the table above and figure, the researcher can notice that the highest percentage 60% of students faced difficulties with coherence whereas 40% used logical organization of ideas. The difference is 20%. On the contrary to the control group, the experimental group had higher achievements. About 75% of the pupils used meaningful sentences with appropriate connectors and only 25% of them had lower achievement. The difference is 50%.

Items7-8-9: Use of linguistic resources

Table 3.19: The use of linguistic resources

	Control group		Experimental group	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Participants	30	10	34	06
Percentage	75%	25%	85%	15%

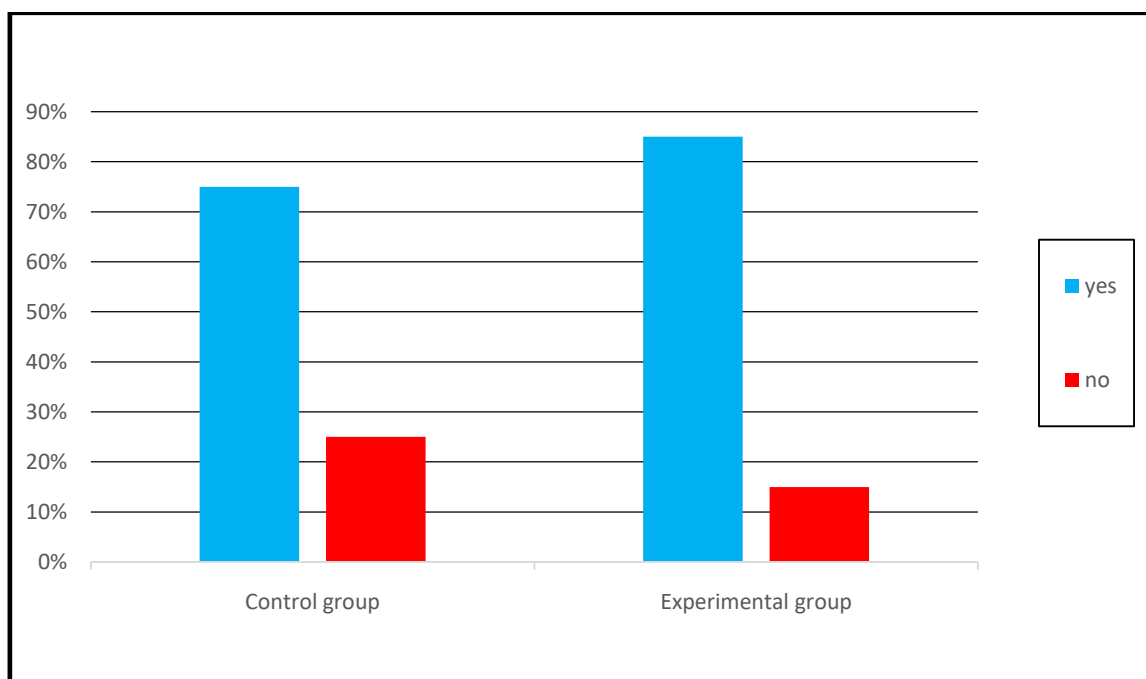


Figure 3.18: The use of linguistic resources

The results obtained denote that most pupils of the control group (75%) did not make spelling and punctuation mistakes, while (25%) did grammar mistakes. The distinction is 50%. Besides, the majority of students (85%) of the experimental group produced paragraphs free of punctuation and grammar mistakes, whereas about 15% of them faced problems in spelling and grammar mistakes. The distinction is 70%. The variance between the groups is 20%.

Item 10: Originality and creativity

Table 3.20: Originality and creativity

	Control group		Experimental group	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Participants	18	22	30	10
Percentage	45%	55%	75%	25%

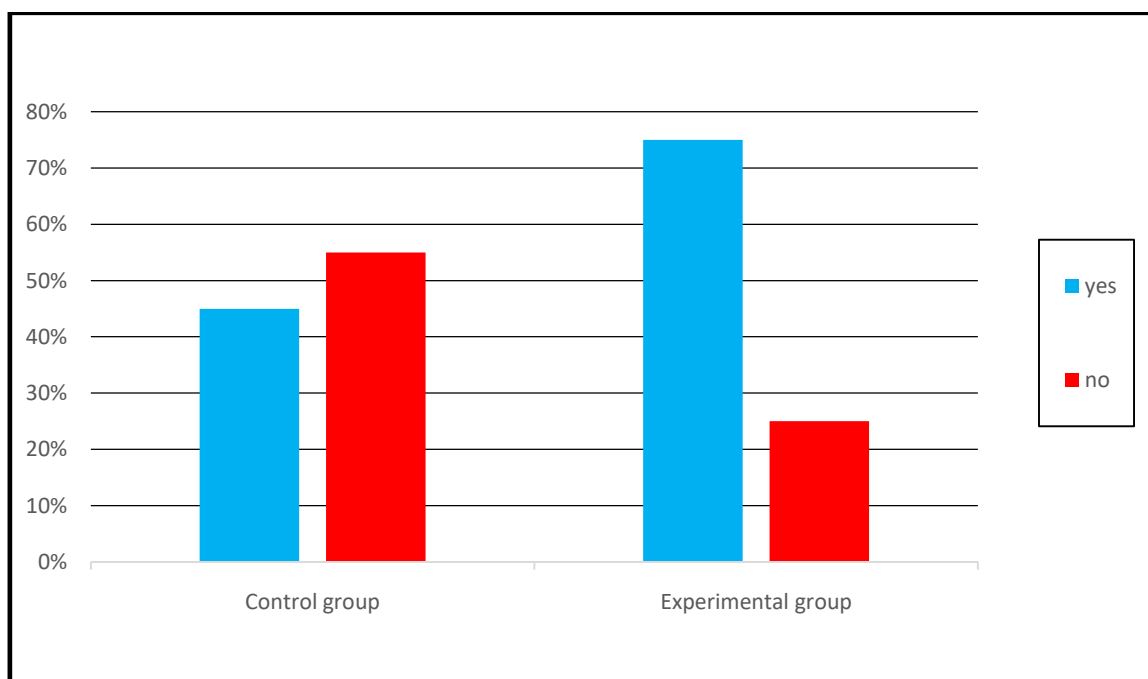


Figure 3.19: Originality and creativity

From the findings above, it is noticeable that 45% of the pupils from the control group used new ideas and varied vocabulary items, whereas 55% of them utilized poor vocabulary in their writing. The difference is 10%.

Concerning the experimental group, about 75% of the pupils showed a higher level in using an interesting vocabulary, while the minority (25%) used an acceptable level. The difference is 50%. Hence, the variance between the groups is 40%

3.13. Interpretation of the Experiment

The results obtained in both groups will be compared in order to show if any improvement occurred, in comparison to the control group results, the experimental results showed that most of the categories from the rubric demonstrate growth. The largest growth areas was in relevance with 60% of pupils showing improvement in respecting the type of the topic, then originality and creativity was the next largest growth area, with 40 % in which they utilized an interesting and anew vocabulary . Next, the increase of using coherent ideas with different cohesive devices in compound and complex sentences, with 30%.Finally, Punctuation and capitalization were the categories that illustrated a difference of only 20% of students since the control group gained nearly the same percentage with the experimental group because they relied on their prior knowledge to avoid mechanic mistakes.

As the results show, improvements in writing quality in each category are extremely positive. When pupils practice self-assessment and respect the criteria, they become more aware of the goals and language levels they were expected to reach in EFL writing. The majority of the students showed that they had become better at understanding what skills they needed to improve through having to pause and reflect on their work in relation to expectations.

On the contrary, to the control group, who did not obtain higher results in grammar and coherence of ideas, were unable to produce complex sentences, which

mean that their writing productions were at their lowest level in this area. This suggests that the way used for assessing writing to the control group was not successful and pupils forgot to invest and integrate all what they learnt from the whole unit in their paragraphs.

Concerning pupils' punctuation, capitalization and organization showed a higher achievements in which were referred to their prior background four years of studying writing in the middle school.

Summing up, it was noticeable that the experiment was successful in that the large majority of the experimental group appreciated most, the fact that after having thought about what needed to be improved in their writing; they had an opportunity to revise their work for second time and correct the draft version. The overall results of the whole experiment showed a positive correlation between the use of self-assessment and improvement in the quality of writing.

3.14. Recommendations

3.14.1. Writing under the CBA

Based on the results of both the questionnaire and the experiment, the researcher suggest some recommendations that should be taken into consideration to improve teaching and learning writing according to the Competency-Based Approach:

- **Seminars for Teachers**

Teachers need to know what the CBA is, in terms of language theory, design, and procedure in order not to be under pressure. Besides, they need to be adequately prepared and supported through high quality of training courses to attain effective professional development. Seminars, on regular intervals, will be of great help for teachers, especially if inspectors present model lessons, and collaborate with novice teachers.

Such seminars can direct some teachers to teach the way they are required to teach, and not the way they were taught. If such seminars cannot be held, teachers can form local teachers' groups, and hold regular meetings to discuss the implementation of the CBA. They can take turns in planning and executing lessons in such meetings, every group member must prepare at least one model lesson. By the end of the year, all lesson models can be grouped in a document for future use, or consultation.

- **Time**

The time allotted to teach writing in secondary school classes is not sufficient to improve the pupils writing competency. Teaching English language should take an available time, which is more than three hours per week. Available time helps students to write effectively and achieve proficiency of this difficult skill.

- **Students' Self-learning**

The CBA aims to build and develop the learners' abilities in order to use it in real life. To realize this aim, teachers should be aware of how they can help their learners to construct and enhance their own knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Therefore, the teacher, in this approach, plays the facilitator role inside the classroom by motivating and helping his students in their learning process.

- **Engagement in Authentic Writing Activities**

Writing is the second productive skill that helps people in translating their thoughts and ideas into words. It becomes easier if students are engaged in authentic writing activities, which are those in which students are asked to express their thoughts, to share their ideas, or to describe their lives and experiences.

- **Encourage Reading to Improve Writing**

As teachers, we should stress reading and writing connection in our teaching lessons and make pupils aware that without building knowledge from reading; they will not be able to develop their writing proficiency.

- **Incorporation of Vocabulary Activities in Writing Courses**

Planning vocabulary activities in writing courses would be beneficial for pupils as they could help them to enrich their vocabulary concerning a certain type of text. Thus, a good selection of activities based on the kind of text dealing with can foster pupils' writing fluency.

- **Reduce Pupils Number:**

According to the questionnaire's result, the researcher observes that most of the classrooms include more than 35 pupils in each class. However, applying the Competency-Based Approach entailed classes that involve between 23 and 25 pupils. The crowded classroom is one of the major problems, which hinder the teacher to apply exactly the CBA. Moreover, to follow the writing process and to provide pupils with feedback for their various drafts or even to use group work in such classes are impossible since they give the chance for the pupils to increase noise, carelessness, and irresponsibility of doing their tasks.

As a conclusion, we hope that these recommendations would encourage and improve our learners' level to become good writers.

3.14.2. Implementing Self-assessment

There are some suggestions to the teachers who want to use self-assessment as feedback to improve pupils' writing ability.

- Intensive conversations with pupils' needs to occur before introducing any self-assessment practices.
- Introduce the concept and begin providing practice opportunities very early in a paper if you are going to use it. Boud (1995) argues that the way in which self-assessment is implemented is critical to its acceptance by students. According to Boud (1995), the implementation process needs to include:
 - o A clear rationale: what are the purposes of this particular activity?
 - o Explicit procedures—students need to know what is expected of them.
 - o Reassurance of a safe environment in which they can be honest about their own performance without the fear that they will expose information, which can be used against them.
 - o Confidence that other pupils will do likewise, and that cheating or collusion will be detected and discouraged (Boud, 1995, p.182).
- Teacher should choose the important criteria to be assessed on the assessment sheet. It has to be done to make pupils focus on the important points that must be assessed.
- Self-assessment can be integrated into most learning activities by regularly providing opportunities for students to identify or reflect on their progress in relation to particular learning outcomes.
- Teacher should give appropriate time for students to do self-assessment.
- Finally, pupils must be able to adjust their work prior to graded evaluation. At this point they react to feedback and adjust their strategies, typically through rubrics or rating forms. These concrete self-evaluation methods provide objective feedback and identify specific areas of strength or weakness. Moreover, students' can improve their writing ability.

3.15. Conclusion

At the end of this study, what could be observed through the analysis of the data collected from the questionnaire is that the majority of teachers in the secondary school are not aware and well informed of the principles of the CBA, while others avoid changing their teaching habits. These teachers will succeed in implementing the Competency-Based Approach unless they are trained regularly by inspectors. On the other hand, the experiment proved that the use of self-assessment, as feedback strategy, could improve the pupils' writing ability through helping the learners to re-evaluate their writing content and motivate them to further develop their writing skills. It also gave them an opportunity to reflect, and to grow through reflection. Finally, we proposed some recommendations that can be used by the EFL teachers to achieve a successful teaching writing process.

General Conclusion

Because of the rapid changes including huge development of high technologies and fast growing economic conditions, skills that were appropriate two decades ago no longer prepare learners for the real world beyond school. They need to be able to use a wide range of tools for interacting effectively with the environment such as information technology and to use a language necessary for interacting with people from different nations. In addition, the fact that society has also changed its world views, values and norms urges educational institutions worldwide to search for the most suitable way to educate young people in a way that enables them to take responsibility for managing their own lives and acting autonomously.

Countries and education authorities, together with all educational institutions play an important role in innovating and updating the teaching contents, which involves the preparation of a human being for life in family, community and country, for work and creativity, and for his self-realisation as a person in the society. Thus, the revision and the adaptation of the syllabus, their contents and outcomes are essential to comply with the prospects and requirements of the modern society.

Being aware of the importance of education , Algeria cannot neglect all these changes happened in such a fast pace that they caused the need for an urgent review and reform of the educational policy at all levels since the existing systems did not fully meet the modern challenges. Moreover, the role of English as the language of international trade, technology and the path of globalization are factors that cannot be ignored if Algeria hopes to become a highly competitive player. Therefore, as there is a clear need for future generations to master the language, the Competency-Based Approach, a socio-constructivist and cognitive design, has been set with the purpose to install competencies in the learner. This new vision concerning education was the result of the influence of socio-constructivism and new life demands. It is why a number of countries, including Algeria, have adopted the Competency-Based Approach. In this perspective, teaching and training are considered as instruments for the development of autonomous individuals able to face challenges and adopt critical

positions in order to adapt to new situations. According to this approach, learners are no longer viewed as empty recipients waiting for linguistic pieces to be poured into their heads to be memorized and, then reproduced. Rather, they are active agents in the language learning process. It is a learner-centered approach where less direct teacher involvement and more learner participation and responsibility are recommended. This view represents a shift of control from the teacher into the hands of learners, the core of the learning process. That is why in 2003, Algeria has adopted this approach to be implemented in its educational system.

Learning a foreign language requires learning the four skills of this language. Language teachers usually follow a certain order; beginning with listening, speaking, reading and then writing. The reason behind leaving writing at the end is that it is viewed as the most difficult skill. For many years, the emphasis was just on the oral approach rather than on the written one, which was almost neglected.

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging and complex tasks for language learners. It is a difficult skill that requires considerable effort and practice on both the learners' and teachers' parts to reach an acceptable level of writing. Since writing is the skill used to examine pupils' performances. This is particularly the case of the Algerian educational system where writing examinations are the means teachers use to determine learners' acceptance to upper classes.

Teaching how to write effectively is one of the most important life-long skills educators impart to their students. When teaching writing, educators must be sure on how to select resources and support materials that not only aid them in teaching how to write, but that will also be the most effective in helping their students learn to write. Pupils should be made aware of the writing process through the intensive practice of writing which leads to the effective use of the writing techniques that allow them to decide about what to write, how to write, and how to evaluate what they write.

Giving students feedback in the classroom during the learning process has been proved to increase learning and improve student outcomes. When given correctly, feedback guides the pupils in their learning process and gives them the direction they need to reach the target or goal of the lesson. Feedback sends a message to the pupils that the instructor cares about the learning taking place. It also allows the learner to become more engaged and involved in the classroom.

As the role of writing in language learning increases, classroom assessment practices of writing also become increasingly important. Both summative and formative writing assessment may be given through different forms. The difference between them formative assessment is referred to as assessment for learning. It is intended to improve learning by giving the student feedback on his or her progress, in distinction to summative assessment, which is used in order to measure, or sum up, what has been learnt.

Self-assessment as feedback strategy is considered to be able to play a key role in formative assessment. Through feedback, the student has the opportunity to understand what positive qualities his or her work has, or what needs to be worked on more. In this way, the student is helped to develop autonomy. When feedback is given before the assignment is graded, the pupil's reflective ability is believed to develop further. It is a way for the learner to learn how to assess his or her work realistically, while at the same time being given a sense of control of the learning situation. In the end, the learner should be able to become both responsible and self-sufficient in learning and not dependent on the teacher's guidance.

The present study attempted to highlight the effect of the Competency-Based Approach on teaching writing using self-assessment as feedback strategy to promote writing ability. It has provided us with insights into secondary teachers' problems in teaching writing under the Competency-Based Approach. This has been done for identifying an important area, which needs to be widely investigated because many

learners come to the secondary school with a low level in writing. This also intends to stress the need that writing needs to be taught starting from the middle school to enable learners develop their writing competence required to reach academic success.

The dissertation includes a theoretical part, which is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is about an overview of the Competency-Based Approach and the second one is about theoretical issues in teaching and assessing writing under this approach. While, the third chapter includes the practical part which represents secondary school teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation analysis.

This study departed from three main hypotheses. The first hypothesis was proved by the answers of EFL teachers who confirmed that they do not apply the Competency-Based Approach correctly and they are really facing problems, which affect the development of competencies of both the teacher and the students. Some of these problems are lack of theoretical background and training, crowded classes, lack of time allotted to teaching writing, lack of teaching aids and technological tools in schools and the ignorance of some teachers through sticking with their traditional methods to assess writing skill .

The second hypothesis was proved when the EFL teachers mentioned through their answers that they did not use self-assessment to evaluate writing skill. Instead, they rely on summative assessment, which helps them to look for the final product in terms of content that is why the production of their learners is weak without any improvements; they still rely on traditional methods to assess writing skill.

The last hypothesis, which was about the use of self-assessment as tool to improve the writing skill, was proved by the implementation of the experiment. The results obtained in both groups were compared in order to show if any improvement occurred, the data showed a positive correlation between the use of a rubric for self-assessment and improvement in the quality of writing. To conclude, when teachers engage learners in their design to form self-assessment rubrics and when they set goals

that aid their improved understanding, and then identify criteria, self-evaluate their progress toward learning, reflect on their learning, and generate strategies for more learning, they will show improved performance with meaningful motivation. Surely, those steps will accomplish two important goals-improved student self-efficacy and confidence to learn as well as high scores on tests.

This study faced many limitations in the process of the work such as the lack of the sources concerning the Competency-Based Approach and the lack of time, which did not help us to achieve our research, as it should be. However, we managed to cope with the situation.

At the end of this research and the results concluded from the teachers' questionnaire and the classroom observation, we suggest some pedagogical implications to help teachers to adjust their teaching based on CBA principles for better implementing the Competency-Based Approach and for creating an appropriate environment for the teaching/learning process we suggest the following:

- Improve teachers' pre-service training.
- Organize seminars that would offer teachers with plenty of opportunities to meet other teachers and exchange personal experiences about the application of CBA in their classes.
- Provide schools with the necessary materials and the new technologies that help teachers to get through the new approach easily
- Reduce the number of pupils per class

In order to apply self-assessment successfully, learners must have an understanding of the criteria that they measure their performance against in order to be able to evaluate what makes a piece of work good or poor. Internalising these criteria encourages deep rather than surface learning and greater autonomy. In order for this to take place; the assessment criteria must be transparent and comprehensible to learners so that they can effectively judge how well they have met them. Where possible,

student involvement in the formation of these criteria is desirable to enhance pupil's understanding of academic standards and the expectations you have of them.

What the researcher dealt with in this research is just one technique that can improve the writing skill. We have the intention to complete further research about new techniques that can improve and assess writing skill.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is an important part of my research study. It aims to explore the impact of the competency based approach and the use of self-assessment as tool to improve students writing competence. Therefore, your answers and suggestions will be very helpful and useful in my research project.

Please tick the appropriate box or write full statements if necessary.

Section one: Background Information

1. Your gender: Male Female
2. What degree (s) do you have?
 - a) License
 - b) Master
3. How long have you been teaching?
 - a) Less than 5 years
 - b) between 5 and 15 years
 - c) more than 15 years
4. The number of pupils in each class is :
 - a) Less than 25 students
 - b) Between 30 and 40 students
 - c) More than 40 students

Section Two: Writing under Competency-Based Approach

1. Are you implementing the Competency-Based Approach in teaching writing?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
2. Do you have any background knowledge about writing approaches?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
3. What is the approach you use to teach writing?
 - a) The product approach
 - b) The process approach
 - c) The genre approach

✓ Please, explain the reasons for choosing this approach

.....

.....

.....
4. How do you manage your work in writing tasks in the classroom?
 - a) Individual work
 - b) Pair work
 - c) Group work

5. The level of first year pupils in writing is:

- a) weak b) average c) good

6. When evaluating your pupils writing composition what are the most frequent mistakes:

- a) Content organization and punctuation b) Vocabulary c) Grammar d) Spelling

▪ Others:.....
.....

7. What kind of teachers do you consider yourself when you teach writing under the CBA?

- a) Conventional information-provider b) Facilitator

▪ Others:.....
.....
.....

8. Which type of assessment do you use in your teaching?

- a) diagnostic b) formative c) summative d) self-assessment

9. Which type of assessment do you use to assess your pupils writing performance?

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

10. Do you think that the Competency-Based Approach has positive effects on students' writing achievement? Yes No

✓ If no, is it because the Competency-Based Approach?

- a) Is not an adequate approach.
 b) It is not applied appropriately by secondary teachers.
 c) Secondary teachers are not well informed about the Competency-Based Approach.
 d) They are just using new course books, but not really applying the Competency-Based Approach.

- Other reasons

.....
.....

11.What do you suggest to improve teaching writing skill to first year pupils in secondary school?

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Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix B

Writing Assessment

Student's name:

Date:

Title of writing:

Topic: Pollution is a very serious problem, in your opinion what are the causes of pollution? And how can we protect our environment from this problem?

Assessment items	Yes	No
I respected the topic.		
I used an expository type in my writing.		
I organized my thoughts.		
My work has beginning, middle and end.		
I used transitional words, such as first, next, then ...		
I used connectors of cause and result (because, since ,thus, as a result ...)		
I tried to use each verb with its suitable subject.		
I used correct grammar (conditional type 1, present, future ...)		
I used capitalization and punctuation correctly.		
I used range of interesting vocabulary related to pollution in my writing.		