The Role of Pre-writing Strategies to Enhance the Students' Idea Generating Abilities: The Case of First-Year Computer Science Students of Haramaya University

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ABSTRACT

This research was aimed at fostering students' idea generating abilities via the implementation of pre-writing strategies. The study adopted an action research design. The first phase involved problem identification and causes of the problems through focus group discussion and classroom observation. After identifying the challenges, systematically planned actions were implemented for eight successive weeks. During the intervention phase, awareness was created among the students on the importance of using idea-generating strategies before starting to write a text. As a result, four idea-generating strategies were employed; brainstorming, clustering, free-writing and questioning. Finally, the results of the actions taken were evaluated via observation, questionnaire, and focus group discussion. The findings reveal that the students showed interest in using idea-generating strategies, and the strategies used helped them to come up with adequate ideas in order to develop a text. The strategy also helped them to think exhaustively about what to write and how to support their argument before starting writing the actual text. Out of the four strategies employed, brainstorming was found to be the most convenient strategy to generate ideas. The strategies used were found to prevent students from unnecessary pen pause and frequent deletion of what they produced. Therefore, it is possible to comprehend from this action research that using idea-generating strategies will ease the practice of developing a text.

Key words: Action Research, Idea-generating Strategies, Pre-writing Strategies

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The teaching of writing in many contexts is limited to asking students to produce a complete written work forgetting the process (Hyland, 2003). However, Writing requires composers to carry out a series of activities that involve not only writing ideas but also establishing goals, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making drafts, reading and reviewing then revising and editing them (Brown, 2007; Hedge, 2000; Badger & White, 2000). Students as composers are required to perform specific skills such as the organization of information and the manipulation of linguistic skills that may be difficult to master without any plan (Brooks, 2004). Unreasonably, due to time constraints, instructors tend to set aside the importance of pre-writing especially if they need to cover a syllabus over a short period of time (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Brookes (2004) asserts that writing is difficult for students if they are required to write a passage without using any pre-writing strategies. Dealing with this idea Brown (2007) points out that the writing difficulties are not merely caused by the students themselves, but they can also be caused by the unvaried and uninteresting techniques the teachers used in teaching writing. The students at the research setting were found to be bored and had less motivation in learning writing. The researcher's experience showed that pre-writing strategies or process approach in teaching writing was used rarely which was usually accompanied with a problem of idea generation, language inaccuracy, and poor organization that had significant effects to students' writing proficiency. The problems that most students faced in generating ideas become effectual to the inadequacy of the contents of written texts and poor organization (Dyson, 2004). Improving ideas through employing different idea generating strategies are the footsteps in the process of writing to arrive at a well-organized and comprehendible text (Brooks, 2004).

The researcher's experience showed that the writing classes where this action research was conducted required the students to come up with their final texts after providing a topic to develop a text. This was done without giving students any guidance via the use of pre-writing strategies and without checking how the students developed their final work. Most of the learners were heard complaining about the difficulty of learning writing skills. It was also possible to further understand their problems with writing based on analysis of the texts they produced and the difficulty they encountered attempting to sufficiently use the time in class dedicated to developing short paragraphs. The approach of

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teaching writing being used could be a cause for the problems observed. Hayes (2004); Badger and White (2000) and Hyland (2003) have all emphasized the importance of pre-writing for easing the writing difficulty because it assists writers in laying out goals, generating ideas, organizing information, and building up the texts.

Thus, this action research was undertaken to enhance the students' idea generating skills introducing a variety of pre-writing strategies after having identified the problems that the students encountered during the writing process. The students' attitude towards using pre-writing strategies to improve their writing was evaluated. The roles of idea-generating strategies on improving the learners' writing skills were also assessed, and the dominantly used strategies among the students were identified.

METHODOLOGY

Method of the Study

This study employed an action research design because the researcher wanted to devise strategies to intervene based upon the problems identified. Buck & Cordes, (2005) states that in participatory action research practitioners make use of all available data (both qualitative and quantitative) in order to build a rigorous and cohesive set of conclusions. According to Buck and Cordes (2005), this design is important in establishing a scientific methodological framework for the study in helping to create new and more enhanced ways of learning about practical problems.

The participants of the Study and Data Collection Methods

The sampled respondents were selected from among first year computer science department students of 2017 G.C entry. The department was purposely selected because the researcher was offering the course 'Basic Writing Skills' to the students under this department, and these students were divided into two groups. The students in these two sections were 81 in number, and only one section with a total number of 41 students was selected randomly as both the students in these two sections were on the same academic status. To take one of these groups, a lottery method was used, so section "B" was found to be the group which was selected to conduct this research on. Though only nine students were sampled for the focus group discussion, everyone in this section was participant of the study.

Observation and focus-group discussion were the tools used to collect data during the pre-intervention phase. However, observation, questionnaires, and focus group discussion were used to evaluate the effects of the intervention. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed.

Classroom observation helped explore the strategies the students used in the classroom before coming up with their final written work. The researcher's colleague conducted the classroom observation over twelve sessions during an eight

week period in order to compile robust data on both the pre and post intervention phases. Each section consisted of one hour, so the observation was conducted for a total of twelve hours, six hours for the pre- intervention phase, and six hours for the post -intervention phase. It was possible to arrive at the data saturation stage by the sessions and the hours allotted to observe, so there was no need to conduct the observation for more hours.

It is argued that the focus group discussion approach produces a wealth of detailed information allowing the researchers to gain insight into the thinking of individuals (Ur, 2005). This means that this technique provides a means for the action research to be based on an in-depth understanding of the problems faced by students in terms of writing skills. The focus group discussion included nine students who were selected based on their academic performance; from the top, medium and low achievers in the class, based on their previous results. The reason for selecting only nine respondents was that by using more than ten students in a focus group discussion is more difficult to achieve an in-depth understanding of the data (Merriam, 2009).

Finally, in order to identify how the learners liked and used the pre-writing strategies implemented in the classroom, close-ended questionnaires were distributed among all of them. Thus, the attitude of the students towards the strategies employed, the usefulness of the strategies, and the most popular strategies among the students were identified via this tool.

Data Analysis Method

The data obtained through the focus group discussion and observations were analyzed together. First, the data obtained from both data gathering tools were assembled in a notebook. Then, in order to understand the obtained data, the notes were read thoroughly. Second, by creating a thematic framework, it was categorized under different themes. Third, the quotes of respondents were sorted by emphasizing key words and phrases, which were then compared both within and between the cases that were carried out. Fourth, the quotes were lifted from their original context and similar ideas were put together by re-arranging them under the newly developed thematic content. Furthermore, the ideas of the respondents were supported by relevant literature and theoretical frameworks.

After the data was collected using questionnaire, it was tallied, structured and tabulated under the respective categories so as to make them manageable, readable and understandable. The items were classified into different tables according to the similarity of issues raised in the questionnaires after the classification; each of the issues was analyzed and interpreted depending on the rationale of the basic questions. The collected data were analyzed using different descriptive statistical tools. This means, the appropriate statistical procedures were identified in line with the purpose of the study. Accordingly, percentage and frequency counts were employed to analyze the data obtained through questionnaires.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION STAGE

The experience of the researcher in the teaching of writing helped him diagnose the problems the students faced in composing a text. His experience has helped as a starting point by which a scientific study through observation and focus group discussions was conducted to identify the real problems in the setting. The preliminary assessment was carried out and the result was analyzed and depicted in the following way.

Problems of the Study

The result of the observation made during the teaching of the 'Basic Writing Skills' shows that the students did not tend towards any pre-writing techniques prior to composing a text. Sometimes, even when they were given an easy topic, it took them a long time to produce any text given that they could not properly generate ideas on what to come up with for an organized text (Rao, 2007). This problem was seen in more than half of the students 23 (56%) during the observation periods. One of the occasions was when the students were taught how to compose an argumentative paragraph. They were given a sample argumentative paragraph with a concise explanation about the format of the sample text. Eventually, about seven different controversial issues were written on the blackboard, and the students were asked to select one of them to develop a paragraph from. These topics were: Abortion should be ban or allowed in Ethiopia; Ethiopia needs aid to change its economy; Starting sexual relationship in university is important/not; Wealth is important than knowledge/or…; The quality of living today is better than 10 years back; It is good/bad to have many friend in university. The students as a result had the chance to select a manageable topic among the ones given. Indeed, 11 of them (26.8%) were found to develop the required paragraph according to the sample given. However, the majority 30 (73.1%) were found to be confused during the production of the paragraph and could not finish the task within the allotted time.

According to the observation and the discussions carried out with the students, a significant number of them could not argue either 'for' or 'against' the argument by providing evidence. Seven of the nine students (77.7%) who participated in the focus group discussion agreed that although they had something to say in their mind regarding the topic given, they could not thoroughly depict onto paper. Respondent 4 said that he faced difficulty in deciding where to start when composing a text. He also claimed that the basic problem with writing for him was failing to know how to begin. Supporting this idea, six (66.6%) of the respondents stated that ideas normally come to their minds when a topic given was familiar to them, but the problem remains how to start putting those ideas onto paper. Another respondent claimed that he preferred not to be given a writing task as classwork, as it could potentially present him with the difficulty of having to begin a composition (Student 5).

What was possible to understand from the classroom observation was that 26 (63.4%) of the students were seen staring at their blank sheets thinking about how to start the writing task. "A common problem facing many college writers is the challenge of getting ideas to flow" (Rao, 2007:12). Regarding starting writing a text, Clouse (2006, p. 35) says,

> Remember the initial stages of any piece of writing should be low-pressure and low-stakes. Don't get hung up on finding the perfect idea right away. This is the time to meditate upon what you want your writing to say, not the time to generate a perfect piece of writing.

However, the subjects of the study appeared confused as to how they should start their writing. This took much of their time and became a reason to get stuck thinking without putting down a single line of text on the paper. Thus, it is possible to deduce that the learners encountered problems when required to systematically start writing a text.

The second problem which emerged via the data gathering tools during the pre-intervention phase was that the students could not put their ideas on a paper in a logical way. During the observation, around nine (22%) of the students were seen cancelling what they had written on a paper to replace it with a better point which emerged in their mind as soon as they wrote few sentences.

One of the participants in the focus group discussion stated:

> I like leaning English, but I don't feel at ease when we are given topics to develop a paragraph on; the basic reason is that I usually cancel lots of lines after I have written a lot because better ideas usually come to my mind after I jotted some lines, so I want to replace those ideas with the better ones and I see this practice killing my time (Respondent 2).

Respondent 6 stated that the students' problem in writing was rearranging the jumbled ideas that flow in their head in an unpredictable order. Respondent 3, also strengthened this point saying "I am not usually happy with the paragraph I develop because I want to change the order of the sentences and ideas after each time I read it."

According to Richards (1990), coherence describes the way anything, such as an argument hangs together. He also states that if something has coherence, its parts are well-connected and all heading in the same direction. Without coherence, a discussion may not make sense or may be difficult for the audience to follow. Dyson (2004) also stated that coherence is an extremely important quality of writing which ensures it makes sense when it is read.

However, the reality for the respondents of this study is that what they produced as a text did not have coherence. The basic reason for this according to Clouse (2006) is that the learners do not start writing by listing down what they should do in order to write, and the variety of ideas that come to their mind cannot attain a proper foundation to be rigorously built upon a paper. That means these students faced problems organizing their ideas in a coherent and well organized manner.

The third problem manifested in the students' efforts during their writing lesson was a lack of adequate information or content to produce a text with sufficient ideas. This is what was actually identified and confirmed by the researcher in the beginning during his teaching practice

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based upon the data collected from the respondents in the pre-intervention phase. In line with this idea, one of the respondents claimed that it took her a longer time to develop a small paragraph because she had to think for a longer period of time in order to come up with an idea to develop her paragraph (Respondent 7). Respondent 8 also added that although he could develop some sort of text when he was asked to do so, it was after a lot of worries he underwent. Based on the result of the observation, 24 (59%) of the learners used to spend more than 15 munities to write a 45-55 word text. According to Dave (2011) for an adult population (age range 18–64), the average speed of composing is 68 letters per minute (approximately 13 words per minute), with the range from a minimum of 26 to a maximum of 113 letters per minute. Thus, according to Dave (2011) the students under study were found to be by far below the average speed they were expected to write. Many students 29 (70.7%) were seen writing their paragraphs with numerous pen pauses which could emanate from problems to do with the students' topical knowledge regarding the given task topic. Of course, the concept of 'pausing' during writing is complex in nature and cannot be considered without recognizing handwriting as a component of the writing process (Berninger & Graham, 1998; Matsuhashi, 1981) as there are many cognitive processes which occur before, during and after the pen is placed on the page.

However, the data from the focus group discussion confirmed that the pause observed was related to a lack of adequate information or ideas for the students to work with. The sampled students for the group discussion expressed that the shortage of ideas in writing was one of the reasons for the longer pause they experienced with writing. This was justified with the responses forwarded from two participants "….but we expound our ability to develop a better-organized text when instructors provide us ideas outlined" (Students 1 and 7). In the situation where the instructor simply gives only titles, the students' texts were totally flawed; no logical ideas were presented and the content of the text was found to be insufficient. They explicitly expressed that they could not develop their writing as they lacked ideas on some topics.

Finally, the respondents were asked if they were familiar with any idea-generating strategies. All of the selected respondents 9 (100%) stated that there were no educational levels where they tried to employ any of the idea generation strategies. They learned and used none of them in their current or previous educational levels.

From what was practically observed, and from the students' responses, the problems identified were summarized as follows:

- All the students used to start developing a paragraph without any plan, so it was difficult for them to come up with a well developed text.
- The students lack ideas about content which could help elaborate on their writing.
- The students were unfamiliar with various idea-generating strategies.
- The students consumed long period of time organizing and bringing their thoughts onto paper.

ACTION PLAN AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ACTION

In order to address the identified problems, the researcher planned to employ the following strategies (Brown, 2007; Seow, 2002; Baroudy, 2008) which could help students to improve their idea generating skills before starting their actual writing. These strategies were theorized by the scholars that they would have a profound importance in improving the students' idea generating abilities, so these techniques were selected to be practically implemented in the class to improve the problem of the students related to idea generating abilities. These were:

- Creating awareness among students on the importance of using idea-generating strategies before starting writing a text.
- Employing brainstorming, clustering, free writing and questioning as idea-generating strategies.

The practice of enhancing the students' abilities in generating ideas and equipping them with pre-writing strategies were found to be prominent. The idea of letting students work together as part of a pre-writing activity where they share the information they had was considered.

> As students learn, new concepts are linked and organized according to their relationship to pre-existing schema. A form of scaffolding is involved in helping make transitions from known to unknown knowledge.….Through scaffolding, teachers initiate interactive strategies that teach students how to learn writing (Palmer & Rowell, 2005, p. 97)

A few of the pre-writing strategies used in this study for generating ideas before starting the actual writing were brainstorming, free-writing, clustering, and questioning (Baroudy, 2008; Brown, 2007; Seow, 2002). In the explicit implementation of these strategies, teachers and students had their own activities, and the roles that each stakeholder was required to play were in line with the principles of each strategy. The time allotment for each task in the practical activities of idea generation was also based on common assumptions that the pre-writing phase could be accomplished.

Action Implementation

The implementation of the action lasted for eight consecutive weeks. Each practice of paragraph writing in the 'Basic Writing Skills' course was appropriate for the implementation of the proposed actions. Most of the activities were left free for the students to generate ideas using the strategies designed and to help them pass via different pre-writing processes before coming to a complete text. The package provided had four practical classroom tasks for each of the four strategies; one task was carried out in a one hour session, so the students practiced for a total of 16 hours/sessions.

The implementation of the action was carried out mostly in accordance with what had been initially planned. The only modification was the time allotment for each of the tasks and the responsibilities the students and instructors were required to shoulder. The students' lack of exposure to the strategies of idea generation led the teacher/researcher to make minor

modifications during implementation: like adding or reducing the time allotted to the teachers' and the students' activities in the class. The time allotted for each lesson was wasted in giving explanation about the pre-writing strategies being used because it was new for the students. The students, therefore, took more time to figure out and configure the strategies designed. This obstructed the instructor from moving stage by stage based upon the planned timeline as explicit discussion and examples were required to ensure the clarity in the minds of the students about the strategies they employed, irrespective of what was planned. Those amendments and the frequency with which the strategies were implemented ensured that the students were equipped to use the strategies for generating ideas and compose a text.

Eventually, the overall outcome of the actions taken was evaluated comparatively by the researcher, researcher's colleague, and the students. The same observation checklist was used to evaluate the actions implemented; questionnaires and focus group discussion were also used to assess the effect of the implemented actions. Therefore, the results from all the responses were analyzed, and appropriate conclusions were drawn as discussed below.

EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED

The strategies implemented were thoroughly assessed. The efficacy of the strategies in terms of how well the learners generated ideas, the importance of the strategies in building up their texts with adequate content/information, and the usefulness of the strategies in organizing the students' ideas were points for evaluation during the post intervention phase.

The Importance of Using Pre-writing Strategies

According to data from the pre-intervention phase, 100% of the students testified that they did not have experience of using any idea generation strategies. However, all of the nine students who participated in the focus group discussion claimed that four of the strategies implemented were very useful in helping them generate ideas for any text they produced. One of the respondents explained.

> *I used to directly jump into producing a paragraph on the topic given, but I did not have a flow, so I got stuck after writing one or two lines. These strategies are ideal for me to take my writing to a longer distance* (respondent 8).

In line with this student's response, respondent 1 stated that she understood why it took her a longer time to start developing paragraphs in class when she didn't use idea-generating strategies. She said, "My writing with a plan and my writing without a plan are different in terms of organization and time usage in producing a text." The observation results also showed that almost all the students in the class were interested in using the pre-writing strategies after the teacher showed them how to systematically kick off their writing. This result is in line with how the students responded the questionnaire.

As shown in Table 1, when asked to assess the usefulness of idea generation strategies, 30 (73%) of respondents said it was very useful, followed by those who said the strategies were useful 8 (10%). Only 3 (7%) claimed that the implemented pre-writing activities were only somewhat useful.

It is possible therefore to understand from the above results that the students' attitude toward the strategies implemented was positive. Out of the total number of students in the class, 38 (92%) of them responded that the strategies were important for generating ideas. Some researchers believe that good writing is indicative of good thinking (Rao, 2007), and others suggest that writing stimulates thinking (Mekheimer, 2005). Getting thoughts on paper allows students to evaluate, review, adjust, reorganize, or modify their ideas (Rao, 2007). Apparently, the writing processes of planning, thinking, and organizing are just as important as the final product. The respondents of this study did not exhibit a different understanding than that which is prominent in the relevant academic literature.

The Strategies used for Building Well-developed Paragraph

During the pre-intervention phase the respondents had stated that one of their problems was failing to come up with adequate ideas or information to help them develop a paragraph thoroughly. As a result, the effectiveness of the strategies implemented in fostering the students' ability to formulate adequate content was assessed in comparison with the students' performance in this respect. After the planned actions were implemented, the students who participated in the focus group discussion explained that all the strategies used for generating ideas helped them to produce a relatively well-developed paragraph. Respondent 5 said that he liked all the strategies implemented as some of them created opportunities to share ideas with his classmates. The other student also pointed out that her friends' ideas helped her to produce a coherent and complete text (respondent 7). Furthermore, one of the respondents added "giving time for yourself will help you to exhaustively generate ideas for the given topic and improve the content in the paragraph" (Respondent 1). He added that previously he used to automatically begin jotting words down before taking time to think rigorously on the topic, but after the strategies were implemented he believed that giving time for oneself was an important technique in

Table 1. Students' attitude towards the idea generation strategies employed

	Very useful		Useful		Somewhat useful		Not useful		Total (N)
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	
How useful are the idea generation strategies employed?	30	73	8	19	3	7	0	0	41

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writing to support the topic given with a variety of information. The result obtained via questionnaire was in line was the aforementioned finding.

As Table 2 shows, the results of the questionnaire were in line with what was found during the focus group discussion. 23 (56%) and 11 (26.8%) of the respondents stated that all the strategies employed were very useful or useful respectively in developing a text with adequate elaborations. 6 (14.6%) of the students said these strategies were to some extent useful in order to be able to generate ideas and develop a complete text. A relatively insignificant number of respondents - 1 (2.4%) - however found the strategies not useful in developing a well-discussed paragraph. Thus, it is possible to deduce from the findings that the implemented strategies were prominent in solving the learners' problems which were writing a text with lots of pen pauses owing to lack of thought-through ideas. Respondent 8 said, "I was very terrible in developing a well-supported paragraph, but after these strategies were employed my problem was totally solved; thank you teacher!"

According to select scholars in this field (Baroudy, 2008; Dyson, 2004; Hyland, 2003), students need to develop skills for getting what they know about a topic down on paper, and generating ideas or finding additional facts to produce a well discussed text. To do this, the students need to get time to pass through a pre-writing stage. The reality, according to this study, is that students who seemed unable to produce a paragraph with the information required managed to come up with a relatively complete and coherent paragraph after the implementation of the idea-generating strategies. Thus, to solve the unnecessary pen pause caused by a lack of ideas on the part of the students, using different idea generation strategies could be a remedy.

The Commonly used Strategies in the Class

According to the data from the observation checklist, 23(56%) of the students were found to be using brainstorming as their familiar strategy. The students who were observed using the clustering strategy were 15 (36.5%). However, an insignificant number of the students - 5 (l2.3%) - were using free writing and looping as a strategy for generating ideas, and about 3 (7%) of the students were seen implementing the questioning strategy.

The data obtained through the questionnaire fits with what could be understood from the observation results. The respondents justified that they employed brainstorming, clustering, questioning, and free writing strategies respectively, though some of them used the strategies in combination or in alternating turns (Table 3). It is also possible to determine from table 2 that 32 (78%) of the respondents preferred to use the brainstorming strategy. They responded that this strategy gave them ample chance to share ideas with peers so that the room for activating their schemata was opened (Respondent 9). Only 26 (63%) of them were interested in using clustering. The rest of the respondents (20, (49%) and 17, (41%)) were interested in using questioning and free writing strategies respectively. One of the respondents in the focus group discussion stated that he was comfortable in using all of the four strategies, but brainstorming was the best for him. He reasoned that the more he used brainstorming the more creative ideas were reflected back to him. Respondent 9 added that he liked brainstorming more than the other idea-generating strategies because it helped him to come up with new ideas which could rigorously support the topic given. In line with what the students stated, Rau (2007) said that a lack of ideas or interesting topics may make students feel like they are not able to write. Seow (2002) also pointed out that in order to improve students' writing performance, brainstorming strategies should be introduced in the writing process for English language learners.

During the pre-intervention phase, one of the students' complaints was the difficulty of starting to write a text, or "where to begin?" However, after the intervention this problem was tackled by using the pre-writing strategies introduced. Respondent 7 stated that she was confused as to how to start writing, but after having started using the brainstorming strategy she overcame the problem she previously faced. "I felt as if I wasted my time struggling to just write a final text all in one go, but the brainstorming technique

Table 2. The importance of the strategies to produce well-developed paragraph

	Very useful		Useful		Somewhat		Not useful		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
How important are the strategies in helping you to improve the completeness of your text?	23	56	11	26.8	6	14.6	1	2.4	41

Table 3. The strategies preferred to be used by the students

The dominant strategy in the class									
How much do you like to use the following strategies to generate ideas?	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Almost never		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Brainstorming	16	39	16	39	9	22	-	0	41
Free writing and looping	7	17	10	24	18	44	6	14	41
Clustering	11	27	15	36	10	24	7	17	41
Questioning	9	22	11	27	15	36	6	14	41

NB: a number of students expressed that they were using two or three strategies in combination

answered the question I had had for many years" (respondent 5). This idea was shared by all of the focus group discussion respondents.

> The purpose of brainstorming is to help student-writers free their thoughts, breakdown mental block; the feeling one gets when he/she does not know what to write about, opening students' mind to other possible ways to looking and evaluating things. (Baroudy, 2008, p. 8)

Before students write a paragraph, brainstorming clarifies their ideas at the beginning and prepares students to write further (Scott, 2006). It is possible to say brainstorming helped these students to know how to start writing a paragraph and come up with creative ideas concerning a topic given.

The data collected during the post intervention phase showed that the students were more interested in using the brainstorming technique for the fact that it helped them to generate ideas for their texts, and helped them to easily start developing a text. Thus, it is possible to deduce that the dominant strategy used by the students out of the ones introduced in the class was brainstorming.

REFLECTION

Based on the actions implemented the following points are drawn in the form of reflection.

In the pre-intervention period the students were not confident of how to start composing a text, but after the actions were taken, they found out that the strategies used helped them to first plan and then produce a text. The time they used to spend on the blank paper thinking about how to start composing a text was also minimized.

The students did not put their ideas on a paper in a coherent way for the fact that they did not have a plan to arrange and re-arrange points to be depicted in a logical way, but after the implementation of the actions, this problem was reduced. The reason for this was that the students developed a practice of listing down the points they ought to include in the text they produced a head of the actual writing process.

Lack of adequate information or content to produce a text was one of the challenges the learners used to face in the pre intervention period. However, the pre-writing strategies implemented helped them to take time to exhaustively think of the ideas to be included in the text before starting producing. It was also seen that the students produced well-developed texts when they shared ideas with their partners regarding the writing topics given.

It was possible to understand from the preliminary result that the students had been suffering in their writing due to lack of pre-writing strategies. However, after the implementation of the actions the students were found to be more interested in using the idea-generating strategies and felt better about attempts at writing tasks. Thought the students were not familiar with the pre-writing strategies after the implementation of the actions they were found to be interested in using the strategies too. From the four idea-generating strategies employed Brainstorming and clustering were the ones the students were interested at.

In general, the implementation of the actions in this study has brought about significant improvement among the students. This indicates that minimal extra effort, but meticulous planning among the students can foster their skills of idea generation in particular and those of composing a coherent and complete text in general because the students were found to testify that these strategies brought change in their writing practices.

CONCLUSION

As writing is a process, there should be a sequential step by step journey to come up with well-developed and coherent text. The practice of jumping into developing a text without any plan was causes for several challenges on the students' writing skills, so the pre-writing strategies employed were found to be important in helping the learners to generate ideas and improve their writing skills.

The intervention proved to bring out significant improvement in enhancing the idea generating ability and writing skills of the students via the use of pre-writing strategies. The research findings can be beneficial for the other researchers as well, especially those who face issues pertaining to teaching writing skills. This research also provides guidelines to the teachers as to which pedagogies should they adopt to improve their students' idea generating skills. It would be enjoyable and beneficial for those teachers who have direct contact with the students and they would be excited to witness a change. In general, the pre-writing stage of the writing process should be given due emphasis and demonstrated by both, teachers and the students in order to develop the writing abilities. The idea generating strategies used were also found to be vital in helping the learners to produce a well-developed text in a relatively short period of time. Thus, using idea generating strategies could be good scaffolding for teaching or improving writing skills.

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