UTILIZING THE WRITING PROCESS APPROACH WITH ENGLISH AS A SECOND

LANGUAGE WRITERS: A CASE STUDY OF FIVE FIFTH GRADE ESL ARAB

STUDENTS

by

NAJWA M. ALHOSANI

B.S., United Arab Emirates, 1998
M.S., Kansas State University, 2001

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

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Abstract

This qualitative case study sought to gain deeper understanding of the role the writing process approach played in developing the writing ability of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian students when writing in English as a second language. The study extended for five months in a Midwest elementary school serving a large ESL population. Participants of this study included four ESL teachers and five Saudi ESL students, four females and one male. Two main queries guided this study: 1) the roles of ESL teachers when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students; and 2) the role of the writing process approach in the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students. The researcher documented data through four sources: classroom observation, interviews with ESL teacher and ESL students, student think-aloud protocols, and student writing samples.

The data analysis of the ESL teachers revealed strong advocacy of utilizing the writing process as an effective method to improve ESL Saudi Arabian students' writing ability. They were successful in employing the writing process approach regardless of their students' English language proficiency level, using numerous writing strategies including collaborative writing activities, games, varying speed and voice tone, interest in students' cultures and languages, and social interaction with the students.

The data analysis of the study's student focus revealed that students writing was not a one step process, yet an ongoing cycle in which they prewrite, plan, draft, pause, read, revise, edit, and publish. Students demonstrated different attitudes and behaviors toward writing throughout this study. Four of the students valued their second language (L2); one, however, found English difficult and confusing. Some of the students' writing sample

scores, determined by the Six Traits Writing Rubric, differed by the end of the study while others' remained the same. This study provided rich data to better understand the importance of teachers utilizing effective writing process techniques and the impact of the writing process approach on Saudi Arabian students learning to write in English in an American school setting.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my father – may God place him in heaven. I wish he lived longer to see me holding the Ph.D. diploma. He was the one who poured as much of his love into the accomplishment of this dissertation. He always believed and dreamed of me having the highest degrees. My father, Mohammad Dawood Alhosani, who passed away May, 15, 2008, left me with amazing memories that will last with me as long as I live.

Nonetheless, I equally dedicate this work to my beloved mother, Zalekha Alhosani. Though minimally educated, she had been constantly inspiring to me and to my siblings to accomplish the highest academic degrees. To me, she is and will always be a distinguished educator and a highly learned lady in the realm of motherhood.

CHAPTER 1- Introduction

English is an international language that is spoken in many countries as both a first and second language. It has established itself in recent decades as the common language of international communication (Strevens, 1980). English language becomes the language of knowledge since most of the human innovations in research, science, medicine, literature, and all other fields are written and documented in English. The English language grows to be one's passport for a better career, better communication with others, and a means to obtaining better knowledge. Therefore, in countries all around the world, teaching English as a second or foreign language has become a significant indication for educational expansion and overall development. The Arab Gulf countries (United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain) have made remarkable movements in the field of education in general, as well as in teaching English in specific.

In this introduction, I discussed four main elements to provide the reader a wide overview of my research and the reasons behind choosing my research topic. First, I briefly discussed how teaching writing to second language learners in the United States is undertaken. Second, I discussed the history of the United Arab Emirates and its education system. Third, I discussed the importance of writing within the U.A.E. culture. Fourth, I described the Arabic language writing instruction in the U.A.E. elementary schools. Finally, I described the English language writing instruction in the U.A.E.

After placing my research in this context, I provided an introduction to the research itself through the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study, and definition of terms.

Teaching Writing to Second Language Learners in the United States

According to Silva and Matsuda (2005), the field of second language writing has grown tremendously over the last decade and a half. These researchers noted that, "Once a neglected topic, second language writing today is arguably one of the most viable fields of inquiry in both second language studies and composition studies" (p.xi). In the 12th annual survey of the International Reading Association, *English as a second language/English-language learners* was the second topic in the "very hot" topics list that have been chosen by classroom teachers, administrators, publishers, and college professors (Cassidy, J. & Cassidy, D., 2008). Generally, teaching writing is a complex and ongoing process, and teaching writing to ESL elementary students is no less complex.

One of the growing challenges that face teachers in the U.S. these days is how to bring ESL students to a level where understandable communication between both the teacher and the student can occur. Some ESL teachers in the U.S. are frustrated and discouraged. According to a qualitative study conducted by Markham (2000), the majority of teachers stated that working with limited English proficiency students (LEP) is stressful. Silva (1990) suggests that, "To be effective teachers of writing, English as a second language (ESL) composition professionals need an understanding of what is involved in second language (L2) writing" (p.11). The role that the first language (L1) plays in the

acquisition of a second language (L2) is undoubtedly a major concern in an ESL education system (Silva & Matsuda, 2005). Understanding the significance of that role will help researchers, teachers, and ESL students to reach their goals.

There are three significant components that distinguish teaching English to second language learners in the U.S.: building social interaction between teachers and students, applying cooperative learning activities, and utilizing the writing process approach. Researchers of second language acquisition such as Ellis (1994) and van Lier (1996) suggest that interaction plays a key role in language development. ESL students in the U.S. schools have great opportunities to listen to the English language from the language native speakers. Talking to the ESL students, and making them talk by asking them questions or having them elaborate on subject matter, help second language learners to develop their listening skills in order to apply them in their written materials. According to Gibbons (2002), "A classroom program that is supportive of second language learning must therefore create opportunities for more varied and dialogic inter- actional patterns to occur" (p.17). Language learners definitely need encouragement and exciting ways to engage them in talking activities. One of the techniques that can be used to have ESL students talk is by propelling them to "use language for their own *real* reasons" (Dragan, 2005, p.59). In this case, the ESL students are not worried about their mistakes and inaccurate pronunciation; rather, they are expressing themselves in a confident, risk free and exciting way.

Cooperative learning is another important technique that is undertaken in United States ESL classrooms. Farrell (2006) suggests that for ESL students, a cooperative learning approach can provide the students with more time and chances to practice their

English with " a focus on negotiating meaning rather than just talking about the weather"
(p.33). By involving ESL students in cooperative learning activities, they are more likely
to speak with their peers, share their stories, and become active learners in the classrooms.
Slavin (1995) points out that using cooperative learning with ESL students increases their
self-esteem and fosters their interpersonal relationships.

When the writing process approach was applied as a method of teaching writing in
the United States ESL classrooms, unlike the traditional product approach that still exists
in many countries, ESL students learn that the purpose of writing is to focus on content and
successful communication of the message over grammatical and mechanical perfection.
The basic assumption behind this approach is to enable ESL students to slowly develop
their thoughts and write in a process where they can plan, draft, revise, and edit their work
(Seow, 2002). Adapting this approach in teaching writing to ESL students helps them to
get as many ideas as they can about the topic they are writing about through prewriting
activities such as planning and brainstorming. Moreover, ESL students have a chance to
change their words, phrases, sentences, and the whole direction of their writing while they
are editing and revising. Having them write more than one draft is enough to take away
their fears, pressure, and frustration toward writing.

These are the three characteristics that make teaching writing to ESL students in the
U.S. special and different than the teaching of English as a foreign language in my country,
the United Arab Emirates. These characteristics provide the foundation of this research.

History of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) and Its Education System

The United Arab Emirates is a constitutional federation of seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Um-Alqaiwain, Ras-Alkhaimah and Fujairah. The federation was officially established in December, 1971. The United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) occupies an area of 83,600 sq km along the southeastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The education system in the U.A.E. was relatively new compared to other countries. Gender-segregated schools, separate schools for boys and girl, still largely exist until now in most public schools in the U.A.E. However, there are some private schools and universities that are of the co-ed format. Up to ninth grade, education at primary and secondary levels is obligatory by law. This " takes place in a four-tier process over 14 years: 4 to 5 year-olds attend kindergarten, 6 to 11 year-olds attend primary schools, the preparatory stage caters for children aged between 12 to 14 years, and 15 to 17 year-olds attend secondary schools (United Arab Emirates Year Book, 2008). The public schools are government-funded and the curriculum created and monitored by the Ministry of Education to match the United Arab Emirates developmental policies and to cope with the twenty first century challenges. Public schools in the country are free for citizens of the U.A.E., while the fees for private schools vary from one district to another. Higher education is monitored by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

An exceptional example of adopting a non- traditional vision of education, an approach that is becoming a key priority in the Ministry of Education agenda, is the ambitious project undertaken by the Ministry of Education called Al Ghad Schools,

translated to English as "Schools of The Future." In August, 2007, the first steps of implementing this program took place in fifty schools all around the country. A new curriculum in English will be introduced in grades 6-12 with science and mathematics. First grade classes will integrate the teaching of English language with mathematics and science also taught in English. The second part of this program intends to develop an Arabic language medium. Al-Ghad schools' goal is to bring to the society fully bilingual students, knowledgeable about their rich heritage and culture, skilled in using technology, grounded in mathematics and science, and prepared for higher education and successful careers, all within the global context (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education, 2008).

The Importance of Writing Within The U.A.E. Culture

Throughout history, Arabic language has been one of the most important languages in the world. Since the middle ages, "it has enjoyed a universality that makes it one of the world's greatest languages, along with Greek and Latin; English, French, Spanish, and Russian." (Chejne, 1969, p.3). There are more than 300 million people speaking Arabic. Arabic language is the largest living member of the Semitic language family in terms of speakers. The Arabic language is the language of the Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims. Because it is incumbent upon Muslims to read and learn Qur'an in its original tongue, Arabic language has spread with Islam, and Arabic script has been adopted by various, non-Arabic languages. Arabic script reads from right to left and its alphabet contains twenty eight characters. In term of richness, the Arabic language is wealthy in vocabulary. According to Chejne (1969), while most languages have one or a few words to describe a

concept, Arabic language has hundreds. For example, there are eight hundreds words for "sword", five hundred for "lion", two hundred for "snake", and so on.

According to Chejne (1969), as the Arab/Islamic Empire spread throughout Asia and parts of Europe, Arabic language furthered its spread and influence on those lands and within their peoples. Arabic has overwhelmingly interacted with other languages and civilizations such as the Greek, Persian, Roman, Indian, and Chinese, leaving its eternal marks. Beside the religion of Islam, another keystone that facilitated the spread of Arabic language is the great translation movement that occurred in Baghdad during the ninth and tenth centuries, in which thousands of books in the field of science and philosophy were translated from Greek and Roman to Arabic. During that interaction, many words from the Arabic language found their way to other languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, and English itself (i.e. algebra, giraffe, alcohol, safari, sandal, cane, borax, amber, orange, tariff, coffee, hazard, guitar, sugar, racket, ghoul, and lute).

Arabs have a strong relationship with their language for two reasons. First, because it is the language of the Qur'an, and second, because of its huge literary heritage with writings in poetry, prose, fiction and non-fiction works, plays, and philosophical essays.

Arabs, in general, view writing as a creative tool to communicate within the society. Writing takes place in every aspect of people's lives in the Arab world. Through their daily routines, written materials are always available to people to read from whether at home, work, or public venues. In the U.A.E., Arabic language is the official language to be used in all governmental offices. In schools, all over the Arab countries, including the U.A.E., there is a "composition" period in students' school schedule in all grade levels. Despite the way the writing is taught in schools, teaching writing is one of the components

that shapes the Arabic language curriculum. The Arab world has a tremendous number of writers in all fields - politics, economy, religion, literature, language, poetry, medicine, and science. These writers usually publish books, novels, plays, and newspaper columns. Numerous writers in the Arab world have gained fame and reader-respect and also occupy prestigious positions within their societies because of their remarkable and distinguished writings. One of the well-known contemporary writers in Egypt and the whole Arab world is Najeeb Mahfouz. The critical issue is that Najeeb Mahfouz and other Arabic writers who have their influences on the writing arena in the Arab world are not, by any means, a product of "teaching good writing" by their schools. The success they have achieved was not a reflection of the success of the teaching of writing in their schools.

The Arabic language style of writing differs from that of English. Unlike English, where writers write in an organized way and follow a linear pattern that prevents them from deviating from the main topic, writing in Arabic follows a curvilinear pattern where writers deviate from the main topic and focus on other ideas and then come back to the main ideas and so on. The writing pattern in Arabic is similar to that of Spanish. The richness of the Arabic language and its vocabulary gives the writer a wide space to express the topic being written on with no boundaries. Another writing feature that makes Arabic writing style different from English is a sense of awareness of audience. Conner & Kaplan (1987) point out that some classic Asian texts have a reader-responsible orientation, whereas English has a writer-responsible orientation. This means that when Asian students write a passage, they expect the reader to make sense of the text rather than "taking responsibility themselves for mapping out ideas in a clear, coherent, and linear manner" (Farrell, 2006) (p.58). This statement can apply to Arabic writing in which writer may

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write in a circular argument, never giving much attention to state a thesis statement or make it clear to the reader.

Arabic Writing Instruction in the U.A.E. Elementary Schools

To preserve its magnificent literary legacy, most, if not all, ministries of education in the Arab world, including the U.A.E., have built the Arabic language curriculum around their Arabic literature. In the U.A.E., low grade levels starting from first grade to third grades are usually taught by one teacher who is specialized in teaching science, mathematics, religion, and language. From fourth grade up, every subject has its own teacher. The U.A.E. Ministry of Education is responsible for authorizing and creating the Arabic language curriculum books which are written and revised by groups of language professors, or/and language book specialists. During each semester, students in elementary levels in the U.A.E. study two books, one for reading and one for grammar. With these two books, the students are taught reading, writing, spelling, and handwriting.

Unfortunately, writing in Arabic has been one of the widespread challenges among students at all grade levels in the United Arab Emirates. Writing instruction in Arabic that is utilized in schools in the U.A.E. in all grades merely focuses on grammar and vocabulary. Writing pedagogy is mostly neglected and limited to teaching stories and summaries. Aljomhoor (1996) examined a syllabus of Arabic composition and found that teaching writing is limited to teaching how to write short stories, poems, and summaries. Writing in Arabic follows the principles of traditional rhetoric pedagogy and mostly focuses on the written product.

In the U.A.E., there are three kinds of composition activities that are taught to students in all grade levels: composition, dictation, and handwriting. According to Aljelajel (2006), there are two kinds of compositions students should practice in the U.A.E. elementary public schools:

1. Formal (purposeful) composition. Students practice writing formal letters, reports, faxes, forms, etc. Since this kind of composition is formal, it cannot be considered an outlet for students' feelings and empathy. The language of this composition is academic.

2. Creative composition. Students express their feelings and ideas by writing stories, poems, and journals. The main goal of teaching writing in the U.A.E., and mostly in the Arab world, is to encourage school students to express themselves and their ideas as they learn about the language and the sentence structure (Rajab, 1995).

When writing in Arabic, students would be asked to write a paper on an assigned subject that has been read about in the reading class, or orally discussed with the teacher, or pre-described by the teacher (e.g., summer vacation, religious celebrations, or the national day). Usually, the teacher starts the composition class by writing the title on the blackboard and asking the students to copy it into their writing notebook. She/he describes and discusses the topic briefly with the students and may introduce a grammar or spelling rule during the discussion. After ten minutes or less, students start writing. The Arabic teacher would not give details in how to start or finish such a topic.

There is one writing approach the teacher may follow and apply in teaching writing - the product writing approach. In this approach, what is mostly of concern is the surface structure of the writing paper. Writing should be free of grammar and spelling errors to get

the highest mark and is often limited to a 35-40 minute writing period. The students receive no assistance from their teachers who also do not provide models of good writing to their students to follow.

After they finish, the students turn in their writing notebooks to the teacher to be checked. The teacher corrects the composition papers with a "red" pen and checks grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. Handwriting is also checked and graded. There is no standardized writing assessment tool or rubric for the teacher to follow in order to evaluate and assess their students' writing. The students' first draft is usually their last one. If students make mistakes, they do not realize why they made them and how to avoid making them in the future because their teachers are never concerned about teaching students the writing process - prewriting, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams, 1998). Writing techniques such as writing in groups, peer feedback, and teacher feedback are prohibited and considered cheating. Writing in Arabic in the U.A.E. and most Arab schools appears to be an isolated act.

English Writing Instruction in the U.A.E. Elementary Schools

Ever since I can remember, I have always enjoyed learning the English language. I was born and raised in the United Arab Emirates, a country of four million people in the Middle East. Although the English language had been introduced to me as a second language in fourth grade. Unlike many of my peers who felt threatened to learn a new language, I found it interesting and a worthy learning experience. For some of my peers, learning English was a very bad experience. They hated the English period and always hesitated to speak when they were asked to do so in class. Being embarrassed to pronounce

wrong words or making grammar mistakes kept most of the students away from participating in the English class. I learned English at school in the same way I learned other subjects - through a traditional method where students must comprehend the text they read and memorize its rules and information in order to get the highest test scores at the end of each semester. I never looked at the English I learned at school as lifelong skills that would enable me one day to communicate with native speakers of English. Therefore, when I came to the U.S. in August 1999 to study for my master's degree, I found myself struggling with the English language and with writing, in particular, which was the most difficult skill for me to master. Whatever the writing task that I had to accomplish in English homework, research papers, stories, or letters, I always felt uncomfortable and nervous because, as I was taught before, my main concern was with grammar and surface structure errors, not with composition itself.

Teaching English in U.A.E. elementary public schools starts from first grade up to sixth grade. Students during these six years learn vocabulary, language structure, reading, and writing. English teachers usually have a bachelor's degree in English from the Education Department at the U.A.E. University. Some of them are U.A.E. citizens and the majority come from other Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, North Africa, or Sudan. They speak English and many of them speak English with strong accents.

All elementary grade levels have two books for English language: *U.A.E. Parade Pupil's Book (2006),* and *U.A.E. Parade Work Book (2006).* The Pupil's Book contains nine units, each of which is centered on a theme of high interest to students. Each unit provides the students with a wide variety of pictures, stories, poems, songs, articles, exercises, games, and projects that encourage students to communicate in English and keep

their motivation high to learn English. At the end of each unit, there is an activity for oral assessment and a page of written assessment. The assessment feature (I Can Do This) in Books 1-3 and (My Journal) in Books 4-6, provide the students with great opportunity for self-assessment, which is considered a new trend in the education system in the U.A.E. Assessment was always connected to the teachers who are the only ones who can evaluate students' progress and achievement.

The last unit in Books 4-6 is a special project unit in which students need to work cooperatively with their peers to put on a show, either a puppet show, a TV show, or a talent show. The Workbook includes activities designed to reinforce each unit section in the Pupil's Book. Both structured practice and less-controlled activities are represented. Each workbook page contains the Picture Dictionary that corresponds to the Pupil's Book. In this way, the students have the necessary vocabulary accessible.

To teach these books, the U.A.E. Parade provides teachers with videos that surround the students with natural language. In each video, students can listen to real-life extensions of the Pupil's Book themes. There are also audio tapes/CDs which contain models for conversation, materials for the listening sections in both the Pupil's Book and the Work Book, and a variety of songs that students will enjoy listening to.

Teaching writing in the lower elementary grade levels, first, second, and third grade, is focused in making students capable of writing short, two or three-sentence paragraphs. Students are introduced to writing exercises such as unscrambling words, putting sentences into logical order, completing puzzles, or short dictations. However, in the higher elementary level, in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade, U.A.E. Parade builds upon the skills and understanding of the writing process acquired at the lower levels, culminating in

tasks that required several well-developed paragraphs. In these levels, the students are introduced to the different stages of the writing process, from prewriting activities such as brainstorming all the way to the editing of the final draft and presentation of the written work (U.A.E. Parade, Teacher's Book, 2006).

Although the appearance of the English curriculum represented in its U.A.E. Parade books may give a positive picture about the perfection of teaching English in the U.A.E. elementary public schools, the real outcomes of teaching English in general, and especially teaching writing, indicate that the students are still focusing on memorizing vocabulary, comprehending grammar rules, and understanding sentence structures. Connecting this knowledge with the daily realities and communicating with the world using the English language is far behind what the Ministry of Education strives.

From my own perspective, I think that in both languages, the purpose of writing heavily depends on practicing words, phrases, and sentence structures, and there is no attention whatever given to develop critical thinking as the process approach emphasizes. Therefore, writing is perceived as the correctness of the product. Because of the traditional approach, students come across numerous linguistic problems when writing whether in Arabic or in English including lack of ideas, low language proficiency, frequent use of the dictionary, lack of cohesion, and lack of independence.

In conclusion, U.A.E. elementary students, in general, have obtained some English proficiency to pass the English exams in order to move to the junior high levels. However, a fair number of those students are still having problems developing language acquisition skills in general and writing skills. Teaching elementary level English writing successfully in the U.A.E. can possibly occur by encouraging interactions between students' thoughts

and cultural contexts. A process writing curriculum enables children to improve upon their ability to express themselves and elaborate their use of English as a second/foreign language in appropriate situations. English teachers assume a key role in the success of applying process writing. They must develop an awareness of the importance of writing, in general, as well as writing process approach. Furthermore, teachers must develop a complete understanding of students' writing needs and potential to develop not only their language strategies and skills, but also their way of viewing themselves as effective language learners.

English education in the U.A.E. is putting a lot of effort into bringing students' English skills to the highest levels. In order to do so, policy makers need to employ well-educated and experienced ESL/EFL teachers to meet educational goals and to remove some of the anxiety students have when learning English. Teaching writing in English as a foreign language in the U.A.E. still suffers from a lack of effective process-oriented approaches. English teachers' efforts should focus on bringing the English language to life inside the classroom via more student-centered pedagogy.

The reason for mentioning U.A.E. education system and the teaching instruction for both main languages that are taught in the U.A.E. schools, Arabic and English, is to give the reader a view of the U.A.E. and how the education system is one of the most significant foundations in the rapid development the country is experiencing, and to show the reader that the U.A.E. government is aware of the importance of English as the world's first language and the best ways to teach this language successfully in our schools.

As a researcher, I want to know more about the teaching of English in the United States as a second language, the strategies the teachers use, the techniques they implement,

and the teaching environments that surround second language learners. The findings of my research will be discussed with the people charged with teaching English as a second language in the U.A.E. Ministry of Education, proposing to implement some of these techniques and strategies and applying them in the education system in the U.A.E. My purposeful goal from conducting this research will not be to merely observe how English is taught as a second language in the United States, but also at how the teaching of writing is undertaken. More specifically, I intend to explore the power of the writing process as a framework for enhancing written language development among English language learners. In this study I will examine the effectiveness of using a process-oriented writing approach with five fifth grade Arab ESL students.

Statement of the Problem

Limited research and data exists with regard to teaching literacy, reading, and writing to second language learners in spite of the increasing numbers of new immigrant families in the United States (Hones, 2002). Researchers such as Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998), noted in their reports for the National Research Council that although millions of non-English speaking children live in the US schools and millions of dollars have been spent on bilingual programs, many questions about the effectiveness of bilingual educational programs in promoting English language development are largely unanswered.

The number of immigrant students who entered the U.S. every year is on the rise. The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) reported that in 2004-2005 there were over five million English language learners (ELLs) in schools in the United States (NCELA, 2007). In the school year of 2004-2005, the ELL enrollment

increased 68.5%, and the diversity of those students continues to challenge teachers and

schools (NCELA, 2007). According to Nieto (2002), today's teachers, overwhelmingly

white monolingual females, are often not prepared to serve diverse K-12 students

effectively and their ill-preparedness can negatively affect the education these students

receive in public as well as private schools.

Teaching writing is no easy task. The complexities associated with teaching writing

come from two major factors: the nature of writing itself and the nature of classrooms as

educational settings (Dyson & Freedman, 2003). Unlike speaking and listening, writing in

a first or second language doesn't come naturally, and it must be learned. Generally,

students in their first and their second languages need someone to teach them how to write.

Students know how to speak and listen in order to communicate with each other more

easily and quickly rather than knowing how to write. Speaking and listening are

frustration-free activities. Nevertheless, writing is disliked and frustrating because it is

difficult and it requires higher thinking abilities. Emig (1977) suggests that there is a

biological base for writing located in the brain. Applebee (1980) states that writing is a

learning process in which writing finds its own meaning. Truth and meaning cannot exist

apart from language.

Writing as a skill is essential to ESL students' academic success. When ESL

students become capable of using writing as a method of communication with their

teachers, their peers, and the society as well, then educators can determine that teaching

writing to this group is fruitful. As a result of all the research studies that have been

conducted in the field of ESL education, including Silva and Matsuda (2001), Graves

(1984), Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981), and Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987), researchers

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and enthusiastic ESL specialists are constantly trying to find satisfactory answers to the hows and whys of teaching the writing process to ESL students. Ivanic (1994) argued that teaching writing to the ESL student "is not given much attention in current approaches to the teaching of writing" (p. 3).

There is also a notable deficiency in the number of research studies that have been conducted in the context of teaching writing to young, elementary school ESL learners. Consequently, my research may make a considerable contribution to our understanding of the impact of teaching writing as a process on the writing development in a second language. The main purpose of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of using a process-oriented approach with five Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL writers. It was aimed to determine the influence the process approach has on intermediate ESL students. This study provided a detailed description of how the process writing approach was undertaken in a fifth-grade ESL classroom and what role the ESL teachers played in applying such an approach.

Purpose of the Study

Recent trends in ESL writing research have increased the importance of applying the process writing approach in ESL writing classes (Silva & Matsuda, 2005). This current study investigated the effectiveness of using a process-oriented approach with five Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL writers. It aimed to explore the role of ESL teachers when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students and the strategies, techniques, and skills they incorporated when teaching this approach. This study also provided a detailed description to determine the influence the writing process approach had on fifth grade Saudi Arabian

ESL students. Moreover, documented changes on how the elementary ESL students wrote after being exposed to the process approach was also examined.

This qualitative case study made use of non-participant observations, interviews of five Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students and their ESL teachers, the collection and analysis of students' writing samples and student think-aloud protocols which were intended to capture the individual student's thoughts and emotions during the writing process in English. I conducted a qualitative case study approach because it gave me a deeper, fuller understanding of the phenomenon under study (Miller & Dingwall, 1997).

Research Questions

This study seeks to explore the writing process of five fifth grade Arab students when they write in English as their second language and the roles of their ESL teachers that support their writing development. This study is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the roles ESL teachers play when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

   a. What stages of the writing process approach do the ESL teachers incorporate when teaching writing?

   b. What writing strategies, techniques, and skills do the ESL teachers employ when teaching writing to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

2. What is the role of the writing process approach in the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

   a. What stages of the writing process, strategies and techniques do Saudi Arabian ESL students employ when composing in English as a second language (L2)?

b. What is the impact of utilizing the writing process on the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

Significance of the Study

Writing is an essential means for students to communicate and to develop their thinking skills to be successful academically and to be productive members of the society (Grabe & Kaplan ,1997). This study aimed to shed light on the effectiveness of teaching five Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students how to write in English as a second language using the writing process approach. Writing ability is one of the most important components for an English as a second language learner to achieve in order to succeed in academic and social settings. Grabe and Kaplan (1997) insist that "all second language learners need to attain some proficiency in writing and all second language teachers need to know how to teach a writing class in the L2" (p. 183). This study investigated the role of ESL teachers and what strategies and/or approaches they utilized to help their students to become life-long writers. Raimes (1985) pinpointed that ESL teachers must pay a great deal of attention to teach their students how to think in English rather than how to write. "We are not dealing with ESL but rather TSL, 'Thinking in a Second Language.' If we can get our students to do that we have surely taught them something." (p.92). Once ESL teachers believe in teaching writing as a "process- oriented and student centered pedagogy" (Matsuda, 2003, p.67), they will develop effective curricula that engage English language writers, develop their academic skills, and allow them to discover their own voices. In addition, ESL teachers and policy makers will be provided with genuine experiences to develop efficient ESL curriculum and instruction. It was hoped that this study may make a

significant contribution to the field of writing in a second language in general and the writing of Arab elementary ESL students in particular.

Limitations of the Study

This proposed study was limited to five Saudi Arabian ESL male and female students who were attending an elementary school in the central United States. Despite the small purposeful sample of the five fifth graders, this study was not intended for generalization, but for enlightening productive guidelines for future research. Not all the five fifth graders emerged into English literacy at the same time; some of them started school in the United States while others attended school with low proficiency English skills. Therefore, studying a larger population of ESL fifth grade students who started their first year school in the US may present different insights and outcomes. While this study examined the writing process of a specific group of ESL students by examining their writing samples, additional forms of data, including, interview transcripts, and think-aloud protocol transcripts added distinctive insights to the study results. This study was seeking U.A.E. elementary students with whom to conduct this research. Unfortunately, no U.A.E. elementary students reside in the area. Only Saudi Arabian whose education system is the closest to the U.A.E. were available.

Definition of Terms

For this study, the following terms are defined to clarify their use throughout this study.

2. <u>EFL</u>: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to situations in which English is taught to persons living in countries where English is not the medium of instruction in the schools or to international students in the U.S. who intend to return to their home countries. In EFL classes, English is taught as a subject, and exposure to English is typically limited to the classroom setting (Snow, 1986).

3. <u>ELL</u>: English Language Learners (ELL) are students whose first language is not English and who are in the process of learning English (Snow, 1986).

4. <u>ESL</u>: English as a second language (ESL) is an educational approach in which English language learners are instructed in the use of the English language. Their instruction is based on a special curriculum that typically involves little or no use of the native language, focuses on language (as opposed to content), and is usually taught during specific school periods. For the rest of the school day, students may be placed in mainstream classrooms, an immersion program, or a bilingual education program. Every bilingual education program has an ESL component (Snow, 1986).

5. <u>LEP</u>: Limited English proficient (LEP) is the term used by the federal government, most states and local school districts to identify those students who have insufficient English to succeed in English-only classrooms (Lessow-

Hurley, 1991). Increasingly, English language learner (ELL) or English learner (EL) are used in place of LEP.

6. <u>L1</u>: First Language.

7. <u>L2</u>: Second Language.

8. <u>Writing Process</u>: The sequence of steps that all effective writers go through (Graves, 1983). According to Williams (1998), the writing process include several stages of development: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Table 1.1).

9. <u>Writing Process Approach</u>: An approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models (Tribble, 1996).

Table 1.1: Stages of the Writing Process

Writing Process	Definition	Description
Prewriting	Generating ideas, strategies, and information for a given writing task.	Prewriting activities take place before starting on the first draft of a paper. They include *discussion, outlining, freewriting, journals, talk-write, and metaphor.*
Planning	Reflecting on the material produced during prewriting to develop a plan to achieve the aim of the paper.	Planning involves considering the rhetorical stance, rhetorical purpose, the aim of the text, how these factors are interrelated, and how they are connected to the information generated during prewriting. Planning also involves selecting support for a claim and blocking out at least a rough organizational structure.
Drafting	Producing words on a computer or on paper that match (more or less) the initial plan for the work.	Writing occurs over time. Good writers seldom try to produce an entire text in one sitting or even in one day.
Pausing	Moments when writing does not occur. Instead, writers are reflecting on what they have produced and how well it matches their plans. Usually includes reading.	Pausing occurs among good and poor writers, but they use it in different ways. Good writers consider *global* factors-how well the text matches the plan, how well it is meeting audience needs, and overall organization.
Reading	Moments during pausing when writers read what they have writing and compare it to their plans.	Reading and writing are interrelated activities. Good readers are good writers and vise versa. The reading that takes place during writing is crucial to the reflection process during pausing.

Revising	Literally "re-seeing" the text with the goal of making large-scale changes so that text and plan match.	Revising occurs after the first draft is finished. It involves making changes that enhance the match between plan and text. Factors to consider usually are the same as those considered during planning: rhetorical stance, rhetorical purpose, and so on. Serious revising almost always includes getting suggestions from friends or colleagues on how to improve the writing.
Editing	Focusing on sentence-level concerns, such as punctuation, sentence length, spelling, agreement between subjects and verb, and style.	Editing occurs after revising. The goal is to give the paper a professional appearance.
Publishing	Sharing the finished text with its intended audience.	Publishing is not limited to getting a text printed in a journal. It included turning a paper in to a teacher, a boss, or an agency.

(Williams, 1998, p. 55)

Summary

The overall review of second language research indicates that teaching writing to ESL students is a critical component in the U.S. educational system. The diversity of ESL students who are immigrant to the U.S. every year is continuingly challenging to both teachers and schools in terms of discovering the best way to teach them English literacy despite their backgrounds. It is crucial to consider how the ESL students are taught writing in the ESL classrooms and by whom. Barron & Menken (2002) and Kindler (2002) argue that the teachers who teach the majority of ELL students have little or no formal professional development in teaching such students.

It was the goal of this study to investigate the role that ESL teachers play in developing and supporting their ESL students English writing skills by utilizing the writing process approach. It also investigated the impact on using such a writing process approach on students' English writing ability. The findings of this study may stimulate ESL enthusiasts, teachers, and policymakers to better understand the principles of teaching

bilingual learners, and how and when to regulate programs that are effective for second language learners to succeed in their journey to acquire English for written communication.

In Chapter Two, I reviewed the literature as it related to the writing process and the importance of applying it to ESL students. The chapter discussed the theoretical framework of the study and includes the theories of second language acquisition and the research on second language writers and the writing process. Chapter Three discussed the research design, the research site, an overview of the ESL teachers and the participants, the role of the researcher, and the methods of data collection, and analysis. Chapter Four provided the results of determining the role of ESL teachers in developing and supporting five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL writers through the writing process approach. Chapter Five focuses on the writing progress of these second language writers. Chapter Six provides the responses to the research questions and implications for further research and practice.

CHAPTER 2 - Literature Review

Before investigating the role of ESL teacher in using the writing process approach and its impact on the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students, the reader needs to gain an understanding of the context of ESL teaching/learning, and ESL English writing. This chapter consisted of two major parts: the theoretical perspectives and a broad overview of related research associated with second language learners. The theoretical section reviewed: 1) Krashen's (1982) second language acquisition theory; 2) Chomsky's (1986) universal grammar theory; and 3) Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory.

The second portion of this chapter reviewed the research that have been conducted in the arena of second language learning including: 1) research on first language (L1) writing process; 2) research on second language (L2) writing process, 3) the ESL teachers' role in implementing the writing process; 4) models of teaching writing as a process; 5) similarities in the first language and second language writing process; 6) differences in the first language and second language writing process; and 7) research studies on the effectiveness of the writing process.

Theoretical Perspectives

This case study's framework integrated several learning theories. Over the last three decades, researchers working in disciplines such as sociology, psychology, linguistics and education have contributed a great deal in the field of second language acquisition research. Since the 1980's, there were a number of models used to ground the research on teaching writing to culturally diverse learners. According to Ball (2006), sociocultural,

sociocognitive, sociolinguistic, and social-constructivist frameworks have been "dominant in the literature" (p.295). Writing in English as a second language is drawing from social and linguistic theories.

Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory

Stephen Krashen, a highly acclaimed researcher, linguist and activist, is best known for his contributions to the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Krashen (1982) agrees that language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill. Krashen developed a widely acknowledged and well known second language acquisition theory consisting of five main hypotheses. Since the 1980s, this theory has a large impact in all perspectives of second language research and teaching. Krashen's input hypothesis consists of five main hypotheses: (1) the acquisition learning hypothesis; (2) the monitor hypothesis; (3) the natural order hypothesis; (4) the input hypothesis and the affective – filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). A brief discussion of each follows.

The Acquisition Learning Hypothesis

According to Ellis (1986), the acquisition learning hypothesis is the essential component to Krashen's theory. In this hypothesis Krashen distinguishes between the term "acquisition" and "learning." According to Krashen (1982), there are two independent systems of second language performance: 'the acquired system' and 'the learned system.' The term "acquisition" is the result of a subconscious process which is much the same as the process by which children undertake when they acquire their first language. It requires

meaningful contact and natural communication. The child hears the language from the environment he/she lives in (home, school, friends) and unconsciously produces correct grammatical structures. He/she doesn't deliberately learn the language; instead, it comes naturally. The second language learners in this hypothesis are not concentrated in their utterances, but in the communicative act. Therefore, acquisition, the effortless process, occurs in communicative situations in natural settings.

Learning, on the other hand, is a result of formal instruction and procedure employed in most traditional classroom. This formal training involves a conscious process in which "learners attend to form, figure out rules, and are generally aware of their own process." (Brown 2000, p. 278). Learning also involves efforts specifically aimed at examining the target language, for example learning of grammar rules.

 In the same vein, one can only be said to master a language when it has been acquired**.** Classroom learning may give us the rules of grammar, but it does not mean that we will use them correctly. Krashen (1982) points to the fact that students may score well on formal grammar tests. However, when they are concentrating on content rather than form, they make mistakes that they do not make in the tests. Krashen (1982) has argued that language cannot be learned and that fluency in a second or foreign language is due to what a language learner has acquired of the target language, not what she/he has learned. Nevertheless, learning monitors the grammatical use of acquiring a target language. According to Krashen (1982), "learning" is less important than "acquisition".

The distinction that Krashen (1981) makes between acquisition and learning in terms of a language seems to be problematic because it is not properly defined and the distinction cannot be empirically supported by research data. Krashen's (1981) explanation

of acquisition and learning in terms of subconscious and conscious processes needs more detailed information about what he really meant by subconscious and conscious. Another critique about this hypothesis is that there are learners who learn second languages in formal settings only without interacting with the people of the target language. Last, Krashen did not provide any evidences that learning and acquiring were two different systems (Gass & Selinker, 2001).

The Monitor Hypothesis

The Monitor Hypothesis of Krashen's (1982) theory suggests that there is a monitor which functions to help second language learner to filter his/her language. According to this hypothesis, the monitor acts when a person plans, edits, or corrects what he/she already learned, such as, which verb tense to use and what part of speech to use. The monitor is a result of the learned grammar. The Monitor Hypothesis states that the "learned system acts as a monitor, making minor changes and polishing what the acquired system has produced" (Lightbown and Spada, 1993, p.27). Krashen (1994) explains that in order to use a monitor, three factors must be met: (1) time, (2) focus on form, and (3) knowledge of the rules. Krashen (1994) proposes that not all second language learners use the monitor in the same way. There are those who use the monitor all the time and can be classified as "over-users." There are also learners who have not learned how to use the monitor or who prefer not to use their conscious knowledge and they are identified as "under-users." The people who use the monitor properly without being extremists are the "optimal users."

A criticism of this hypothesis is that it claims that the monitor only exists in the learned system. McLaughlin (1987) states that the monitor hypothesis is not falsifiable. It is impossible to determine how the monitor works or prove if it works at all. It is hard, if not impossible, for any one to prove if a learner produces a correct form in the target language, what caused those forms to produce, and what produces them - the acquired system or the learning system. This suggests that second language learners only monitor themselves when they produce language, but not when they are trying to understand it. Even though learners do monitor themselves, it is "not necessarily exclusive to learned knowledge." (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p.204).

The Natural Order Hypothesis

The Natural Order hypothesis is based on research findings (Dulay & Burt, 1972; Fathman, 1975; Makino, 1980). According to Krashen (1988, 1994), this hypothesis suggests that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a natural order which is predictable. This element of the theory states that "students acquire (not learn) grammatical structures in a predicable order with certain items being learned before others" (p. 52). This order seemed to be independent of the learner's age, the background of the first language (L1) background, and conditions of exposure to second language (L2). According to Krashen (1994), grammatical patterns of second language acquisition do not follow those of first language acquisition. Nonetheless, there are patterns to L2 development. However, the L2 acquisition patterns of a child are very similar to the L2 learning patterns of an adult. Krashen (1994) points out that "the existence of the natural order does not imply

that we should teach second languages along this order, focusing on earlier acquired items first and acquired items later" (p. 53).

There are two major critiques for this hypothesis. First, it oversimplifies the cognitive processes of learning, making a hard line distinction between acquisition and learning. Second, the main foundation of this hypothesis is merely an observation of learners acquiring an L2 that is generally used in the surrounding environment - that is immigrants to the US learning English.

The Input Hypothesis

In the Input hypothesis Krashen (1982) explains how the learner acquires a second language. In other words, this hypothesis is Krashen's explanation of how second language acquisition takes place. Therefore, Krashen (1982) argues that "the input hypothesis relates to acquisition, not learning" (p.21). The thrust of the input hypothesis is that in order for language acquisition to take place, the acquirer must receive comprehensible input through reading or hearing language structures that slightly exceed their current ability. According to this hypothesis, the learner improves and progresses along the *natural order* when he/she receives second language *input* that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i' then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to *Comprehensible Input* that belongs to level 'i + 1' which represents "the potential language development" (Richard-Amato,1996, p. 42). According to this hypothesis, the learner is unable to reach the 'i+1' stage without the assistance of others. And since not all second language learners can be at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, Krashen (1994) suggests that *natural communicative input* is

the keystone to design a syllabus that gives each learner an opportunity to receive some 'i + 1' that is suitable for his/her current stage of linguistic competence.

There are three key elements to this hypothesis. First, language is acquired, not learned, by the learner receiving comprehensible input that has arrangements or structures just beyond the learner's current level of mastery 'i+1'. Next, speech should be allowed to emerge on its own. There is usually a silent period and "speech will come when the acquirer feels ready. The readiness state arrives at different times for different people" (Krashen, 1994, p.55). The second language acquirer must not be forced to speak too early. He/she must build up a certain amount of comprehensible input (Brown, 2000). Finally, the input should not deliberately contain grammatically programmed structures. "If input is understood, and there is enough of it, i+1 is automatically provided" (Krashen, 1994, p. 57).

In this hypothesis, Krashen (1994) states that in order for language acquisition to take place, the second language learner should receive comprehensible input that is beyond his/her current ability. The problem with this view is that no one can determine learner's language level and the level above their level in order to give them the comprehensible input. Krashen (1994) uses the term "silent period" to support this hypothesis. McLaughlin (1987) argues that the phenomenon of silent period does not provide a sufficient explanation of how the language is acquired. The silent period may be a result of a learner's anxiety, low motivation, personality differences, and so on. Another weakness of this theory is that the comprehensible input cannot be defined, and it differs from learner to learner. Therefore, the hypothesis, in this regard, cannot be tested.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The affective-filter hypothesis states that a second language learner's emotions work as adjustable filters that permit or hinder input required for acquisition. These emotions include motivation, anxiety and self-confidence. Krashen (1994) claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are more likely to succeed in acquiring a second language. On the contrary, learners who have low motivation, low self-esteem, and high anxiety level will have a higher affective filter that does not provide the learner with as many "subconscious language acquisition" (Krashen, 1994, p. 58). Therefore, Krashen (1994) believes that periods of adolescence and puberty are the least productive in SLA because the affective filter arises out of self-conscious reluctance to reveal oneself and feelings of vulnerability. This hypothesis has been supported by many EFL/ESL instructors because it helps them to understand the appropriate environments in which second language learners acquire a second language and it also encourages EFL/ESL instructors to try to create a low-stress, relaxing, and anxiety free atmosphere where second language learners have no pressure and feel more comfortable to freely speak and communicate using their second language.

McLaughlin (1987) argues that there is no evidence how the affective filter hypothesis filter works. McLaughlin continues to argue that the affective filter hypothesis lacks an explanation of why a motivated learner, whose affective filter should be down, could still have trouble learning a language. Another problem with the Affective Filter Hypothesis is that there is "no explanation as to how this filter works" (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p.202). Another problematic factor with the idea is that this filter is present in adults but not children.

Chomsky's Universal Grammar Theory

Universal grammar is a theory based on Chomsky's claim that there are a limited set of principles/ rules that form the basis on which knowledge of language develops (Chomsky, 1965; 1980; 1986). These rules are assumed to be found and shared by all languages; therefore, this set of rules is known as universal grammar.

According to a Chomskian theory of language, language is primarily a product of the brain. Chomsky believed that there was only one part of the brain that controlled language learning, and that the other parts of the brain were not involved. According to his view, language grows, and is not learned. According to Chomsky (1986), people have an innate capacity for language built into their brains. Exposure to a target language and the environment in which this language is practiced, are essential parts in the acquisition equation. In other words, whenever learners are exposed to any particular linguistic environment, they tend to learn the grammatical rules of that language and a grammar for that particular language is built. However, this theory suggests that children are biologically born and equipped with some special built-in ability to acquire and learn a language. Chomsky suggests that children learn their first language in a similar way to how they learn to walk. Their built-in ability enables them to become competent language users regardless of their learning environment. Chomsky (1965) refers to this innate knowledge or "little black box" as the language acquisition device (LAD).

Blake (2008) states that Chomsky, " postulates that all children are innately predisposed, if not prewired, to learn language; the individual child only requires a sustained exposure (i.e., input) to one particular natural language in order to trigger the

formation of an internal grammar or mental representation of linguistic competence that, in turn, governs language production or performance" (p.15).

Chomsky (1986) suggests that humans have an innate device that is able to learn all languages. When children are put in a foreign language environment, they automatically set this device to work in the new language. Chomsky claims that there is a critical period for acquiring a first language. Thus, adolescents and adults would no longer have access to this device to enable them to acquire a second language. Nevertheless, critics of universal grammar argue that the device is still there; however, it functions in a different manner resulting in the inability to assist in the SLA without interference from the first language.

According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), once the LAD is activated, "the child is able to discover the structure of the language to be learned by matching the innate knowledge of basic grammatical relationships to the structures of the particular language in the environment" (p. 16). Originally, universal grammar theory held for a child's first language linguistic competence. It was used to provide explanations for the existence of developmental sequences in first language (Hilles, 1986). Later, evidence was provided that adult learners have some sort of access to knowledge of universal grammar, and this knowledge is used in the development of foreign language competence (Bley-Vroman, Felix, & Ioup, 1988).

Although Chomsky's theory and views of language acquisition did not address second language development, teaching, learning, or performance, they became mainstream, especially in the teaching of second language reading and writing (Kinginger, 2001; van Lier, 2004). Moreover, the universal grammar theory's principles were adopted

by second language researchers and were applied in the field of second language acquisition (Cook & Newson 1996; White 1989; 1996; 2000).

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Lev Vygotsky, a psychologist and social constructivist, laid the foundation for the interactionist view of language acquisition. Vygotsky's social-interactionist theory was proposed about 80 years ago, and until today it serves as a strong groundwork for the interactionists' perspective (Ariza & Hancock, 2003). Vygotsky's theory, unlike Piage's (1972) theory, where a child would just be influenced by society, sought to explain a child development through a transformative and collaborative practice which involved a holistic environment of cultural influences, cultural tools, and other individuals (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2006)

According to Vygotsky (1978), social interaction plays a key role in acquiring a language. Vygotsky concentrated on how a child interacts with his or her parents, siblings, and peers (Cohen, 2002). He believed that language is a social and a cognitive phenomenon rather than a private entity or series of operational sequences that occur solely in the head. Vygotsky stated that language learning is a life long process of development that is dependent on social interaction and that social learning actually leads to cognitive development. In the same vein, Vygotsky further asserts that learning is a complex process that derives its livelihood from a dynamically intricate triadic relationship among individuals, nature, and the social context, rather than an innate natural process that depends solely on the individual's endeavor in nature (Moll, 1994).

Vygotsky (1978) introduced a key concept in understanding how the social world affects one's thinking. This phenomenon is called the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky described it as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) has also been translated into English as the "zone of potential development" (Van der Veer &Valsiner, 1993, pp.35-36). In other words, the actual developmental level refers to all the functions and activities that a learner can perform alone, independently without the assistance of others. The zone of proximal development refers to all the functions and activities that a learner can perform only with the assistance of someone else. Vygotsky (1978) stated that "What children can do with the assistance of others is even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 85). The person in this scaffolding process could be a parent, teacher, caretaker, language instructor or another peer who has already mastered that particular function.

The zone of proximal development bridges that gap between what a student knows and what he/she will be coming to know with the help and guidance of others. Vygotsky (1978) claimed that learning occurred in this zone. Therefore, Vygotsky (1978) focused on the connections between people and the cultural context in which they act and interact in shared experiences (Crawford, 1996). According to Vygotsky (1978), humans use communication tools that develop from a culture, such as speech and writing, to mediate their social environments. Vygotsky (1978) also believed that the internalization of these

tools led to higher thinking skills. Vygotsky (1978) theorized that the child's thinking develops in the context of actions that child is engaged in and is internalized in social and cultural settings (Efland, 2002).

Researchers like Lantolf and Appel (1994) and Lantolf (2000), who adopted a socio-cultural framework created by Vygotsky (1978), believed that all learning was basically social and have explored the way in which second language learners learn through a process of co-construction between "experts" and "novices". According to Lantolf and Appel (1994) and Lantolf (2000), learners first need the help of experts in order to "scaffold"' them into the next developmental stages before they can appropriate the newly acquired knowledge.

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) establishes the foundations for many pedagogical practices in today's schooling. ZPD is defined as the learning that takes place when a novice is assisted by or collaborates with a more experienced person. This socio-cultural theory is not, in fact, new in relation to cognitive and linguistic development, but it is relatively new in its application to the analysis of second language acquisition (Schinke-Llano, 1995).

In relating Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development to second language acquisition, the most significant aspect of his theory is the shifting from assessing the student's performance to assessing the amount of help s/he needs. Therefore, instead of focusing on exams as tools to assess students' performance, second language teachers can employ a re-writing process that will provide students with additional help. Furthermore, while Vygotsky describes the manner in which each stage of the learning process includes the previous one, he also emphasizes the non-linear nature of learning, in which students

both progress and regress as they learn (Schinke-Llano, 1995). According to Schinke-Llano (1995), the zone of proximal development (ZPD) can be applied to second language acquisition when the classroom size is too large for the teacher to be the only expert or facilitator. Schinke-Llano (1995) suggests that peer teaching plays a key role in providing collaborative learning. In this way, the classroom becomes a place where the teacher is not the only source of knowledge and assistance, and where learners' inputs are valued.

Related Research

The second portion of this chapter reviewed the research that have been conducted in the arena of second language learning that included: 1) research on first language (L1) writing process; 2) research on second language writing process, 3) the ESL teachers' role in implementing the writing process; 4) models of teaching writing as a process; 5) similarities in first language and second language writing process; 6) differences in first language and second language writing process; and 7) research studies on the effectiveness of the writing process.

Research on First Language (L1) Writing Process

In the history of teaching the English language arts, there have been extensive approaches and strategies involving the teaching of writing. Although many innovative approaches have been developed through the years, teaching writing remains one of the most complicated areas engaged in by both teachers and learners of English (Silva & Matsuda, 2005). As a result of broad research on literacy acquisition for majority language learners, process-oriented approaches have flourished for over four decades. In the early

1960s, the National Council of Teachers of English commissioned a study to explore what was known about the teaching of composition. The now famous report entitled "Research in Written Composition" by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer (1963), commonly known as "The Braddock Report," was born. Inspired by this report, Gordon Rohman's (1965) model was a significant attempt to shift the emphasis in writing instruction from product to process. Rohman's model presented process writing as pre-writing, writing, and re-writing. One of the most valuable perspectives to come out of this model was the prewriting, the thinking period in which the writer "assimilates his subjects to himself as required for successful writing" (Rohman, 1965, p.106). From the early 1960's until now, the process-oriented approach has been one of the most controversial issues surrounding ESL education. However, this debate of "process versus product" (Murray, 1972) has been examined by a significant number of respected researchers.

While it remains true that writing is a complicated process, it has been documented that process approaches to teaching writing may improve students' attitudes toward writing and ultimately enable them to experience the ecstasy of planning their pieces, drafting, and then seeing their work published (Matsuda, 2003). Since the 1960s, researchers began to study the writing process of native English speakers. Process pedagogy occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s due to the supremacy of product-centered pedagogy (Matsuda, 2003). As opposed to the traditional perspective in which the writing evaluation focuses on merely the final product, the process approach focuses on the writer, giving special emphasis to the process involved in writing. The center of attention here is the writer who is encouraged to generate ideas through a cycle of writing activities consisting of planning,

drafting, revising and editing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Reid, 2001; Reppen, 2002; Snow, 2002; Tribble, 1996).

The shift from looking solely at the products of writing to the study of what writers do when they write is often cited as beginning in the United States with the publication of Janet Emig's (1971) landmark work *The Composing Practices of Twelfth Graders*. In this study, Emig pioneered a think-aloud protocol and the use of a case study methodology to observe her eight 12th grade students as they composed. By asking students to describe how they planned what to write, what they were thinking when they paused, and how and when they reread, revised, and edited, she determined that the writing process was considerably more complex than had been realized. Writing is not linear; it is recursive, where the writer writes, then plans or revises, and then writes again (Emig, 1971), thus shifting focus of writing from product to process, from ends to means. Emig identified five stages of the composing process as follows:

1. Prewriting (generation of ideas, mental rehearsal for writing)

2. Drafting (writing in progress)

3. Revision (re-see ideas)

4. Editing (cosmetics/error detection)

5. Publication (public sharing of product)

Emig (1971) noted that writers move back and forth among the first four stages as they recognize a need to rework their written thoughts.

Donald Graves (1975) conducted a research study over a five- month period to examine aspects of process writing of seven-year-old students. This study investigated two types of environments - formal and informal. Graves (1975) observed fifty-three writing

episodes. Every single episode was considered to consist of three phases of observation: prewriting, composing, and postwriting. He gathered data during five different phases.

First, he examined the writing folder of 94 students to find out what thematic choices they made about which they wrote, the frequency of their writing, and the types of their writing. Second, he observed fourteen different children while they were writing. Third, Graves interviewed nine boys and eight girls about their view of their writing and what they think of a good writer. Lastly, he carried out a case study of six boys and two girls who were purported to be representative of seven-year old children. Graves's study findings led to conclusions in different areas. First, Graves found out that informal environments give greater choice to students to write. Second, children do not need motivation or supervision when they write in the informal environment. Third, girls like to write more than boy in the formal environment. Fourth, unassigned writing is longer than assigned writing. Fifth, the writing development level of the child is the best predictor of writing process behavior and, therefore, transcends the importance of environment, materials and methodologies in influence on children's writing.

Peter Elbow (1973) based on his own experience with writing, has viewed the process of writing as a series of problem solving steps one goes through in order to discover what he or she knows and feel about a subject. Elbow (1973) has his influence on practices on process writing and his study was supported by empirical design.

Later, many researchers (Perl, 1979; Sommers 1978; 1980; Briddwell,1980; Matsuhashi,1981; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Graves, 1983; Calkins, 1986; 1991) have explored how writers write, looking most specifically at how students plan, draft, and revise their work.

Perl (1978; 1979) investigated the composing process of five unskilled college writers. She asked them to write in both the extensive and reflexive modes. The findings revealed that subjects spent a very short time on pre-writing. Nevertheless, Perl's subjects wrote with greater fluency and commitment because they were involved in writing personalized tasks. Perl's study showed that writing is a complex process. The subjects were going back and forth checking their writing and predicting what would be next. Perl documented that even unskilled writers employed constant and stable composing strategies while writing. Perl (1979) also found that unskilled writers' revising is mostly editing; the changes they make "focus on form rather than content," and they are "overly and prematurely concerned with accuracy" (p.230). She believes that whenever they write the ideas, they rarely revise them.

Pianko's (1979) study of seventeen college freshmen composing writing was more eclectic, encompassing three categories; that is, class status (remedial versus traditional) age, (typical college entrance versus adult, over 21 years versus under 21 years) , and gender (male versus female). She was the first to look at differences between groups of writers. Similar to Perl's (1979) study, Pianko (1979) found that her subjects spent a very short time on pre-writing. They also had no complete vision of what they were going to write when they started writing. However, they regularly paused after what they had already written in order to determine what was coming next. Pianko's group of traditional writers spent more time planning before and during composing and more often checked what they had written to establish a basis for the next idea.

Sommers (1980) was one of the first to address that writing is recursive rather than linear. She found that basic writers typically solved problems simply by rewriting, without

analyzing the problems with their text. Sommers (1980) states that unskilled L1 writers re-scan large segments of their work less often than skilled writers do, and when they revise their work, it's usually "more for the purpose of correcting surface-level errors than for assessing the fit between their plans and the product" (Raimes, 1985, p.230).

Raimes (1985) points out the essential features of experienced L1 college level writers' composing process: "They consider purpose and audience. They consult their own background knowledge. They let ideas incubate. They plan as they write, they read back over what they have written to keep in touch with their 'conceptual blueprint'" (p.229). The whole process as Raimes (1985) mentioned is "recursive" in that "writers inevitably discover new ideas as they write and then change their plans and goals accordingly" (p.230).

Research on Second Language (L2) Writing Process

Writing in a second language is a distinct area among the other basic skills of language learning, (Leki, 1996; Silva, 1993; 1997). The field of second language writing has grown rapidly over the last decade and a half (Matsuda & Silva, 2005). From being once a neglected area of interest, second language writing today is "arguably one of the most viable fields of inquiry in both second language studies and composition studies." (Matsuda & Silva, 2005, p.xi). In recent decades L2 writing pedagogies have evolved significantly. Both aspects of the discipline of process writing, practice and theory, have gone through many changes. Today, the process approach and the genre approach appear to be the most widely practiced L2 composition approaches. Freedman and Dyson (1987) published a report about research in writing. They noted that " the past twenty years have brought about dramatic changes in writing research, in the questions asked, the approaches

used to answer those questions, and the kinds of implication drawn for teaching and learning" (p.1). Since the fundamental shift of the teaching of writing from being a product-oriented approach in the 1970's to a process-oriented approach in the 1980's, researchers were beginning to focus on two major aspects: how uses of writing differed on academic and nonacademic tasks, and how language and writing differ among subcultures (Ball, 2006).

Recent research in the field of ESL writing have drawn two major conclusions regarding the differences and the similarities between first language and second language learners. First, the composing process in the first language (L1) is different from the composing process in the second language (L2) (Silva, 1993). Second, writers transfer their writing strategies from their first to their second language, provided they possess second language grammatical proficiency (Berman, 1994). In line with this, Matsumoto (1995) suggests that L2 writing strategies are similar to L1 writing strategies. Moreover, a study conducted by Beare (2000) indicated that proficient bilingual (English/Spanish) writers use similar writing strategies in L1 and L2. The views explained above, are highly supported by Cummins (1989). He states that as proficiency in the language improves, the writer "becomes better able to perform in writing in his/her second language, producing more effective texts" (p.118).

The ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments. Writing skills must be practiced and learned through experience. Writing also involves composing, which implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description, or to transform information into new

texts, as in expository or argumentative writing. Perhaps it is best viewed as a continuum of activities that range from the more mechanical or formal aspects of "writing down" on the one end, to the more complex act of composing on the other end (Omaggio Hadley, 1993).

Learning to write in one's first language requires explicit instruction and modeling with extensive practices. Furthermore, writing in a second language is a more challenging task because it requires not only the mastery of oral communication, vocabulary, syntax, and grammar, but also the mastery of the logical system of a new language (Kaplan, 1966; 1987). According to Kaplan (1966), the logical system of any language describes the way through which people process information and use rhetorical devices to communicate in oral and written formats. The logical system of a language is influenced by cultural and social factors combined and passed from generation to generation. Kaplan's (1966) pioneer study in examining the organization and writing styles has widely opened the field for contrastive rhetoric and its influence in the writing performance of second language learners. In his study, he examined over 600 English compositions written by students from different language backgrounds. The results indicate that in English, the expository paragraphs followed a linear pattern that kept writers focusing on the main topic. On the other hand, the expository paragraphs in Spanish followed a curvilinear pattern that allowed the writers to move away from the topic and introduce new ideas. Therefore, when teaching ESL students, it is extremely important to be aware of the rhetorical patterns in the ESL writer's native languages which often negatively affect their development in writing in a new language. Kaplan (1966) concluded that ESL teachers should be conscious of the differences in writing styles and suggested that contrastive

rhetoric should be explicitly taught to the ESL students in order for them to understand and master the logic of a target language.

In the same vein, another study conducted by Montano-Harmon (1991) investigated the discourse patterns of Mexican Spanish and how these patterns influence the development of writing in English. She found that in Spanish, the composition passages were longer and contained fewer but longer sentences. Spanish students are more likely to use "and" and "because" to connect ideas. In addition, the use of synonyms to explain the ideas and to reinstate them made the compositions repetitive. The writing style of these Spanish students, in which they deviate from the topic to another point, made the composition incoherent.

Raimes (1991) outlined four approaches that dominated the teaching of writing at different times. These approaches have focused in four main areas: form, the writer, content, and the reader. In the same vein, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) gave a detailed discussion of teaching approaches at beginning, intermediate and advanced ESL levels of proficiency. At beginning levels, repeated and short writing activities help second language learners to build familiarity and develop a useful, productive vocabulary. The writing activities for intermediate levels can be extended and made variable to help students develop complex themes and effective writing strategies. Advanced level writers need to develop a greater sense of the various genres they are expected to be able to perceive and produce in addition to the place of writing in particular discourse communities. Skilled L2 writers also need to develop their strategies and establish their own voice in the second language.

The first study conducted to identify the benefits of a process-oriented approach for college ESL students was conducted by Diaz (1985). She observed her students in her process-oriented classroom environment. Diaz (1985) noted that "not only are process strategies and techniques strongly indicated and recommended for ESL students, but also when used in secure, student-centered context, the benefits to these students can go beyond their development as writers" (p.163).

Along the same line, other researchers (Adipattaranun, 1992; Villalobos,1996) investigated the variables in the writing process of college ESL students in a process-oriented writing course. Adipattaranun's (1992) study indicated that all nine of his college ESL students improved their writing skills after having experienced the process writing approach. Villalobos (1996) also conducted an ethnographic study to explore how writing was taught, perceived, and defined by three college ESL students and the teacher in a one semester process- oriented writing course. The findings indicated that the perceptions about writing of the students were changed after they were taught in a process-oriented writing course.

Other studies conducted by Ora'a, (1995), Jouhari (1996), and Tyson (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000) have also supported the findings of previous research in the area of the process writing. Ora'a (1995) examined the effect of a process writing approach in a freshman English class at a Philippine university. The twenty - three participants were divided into two groups - an experimental group that was taught by the traditional writing approach, and a control group that taught by a process-oriented approach. The results showed that the process approach group was more beneficial to students' writing than the

traditional approach. Moreover, the students found the peer discussions and peer response useful in terms of the revision process.

Jouhari (1996) investigated the effect of the process writing approach on the writing development of Saudi college freshman students. The findings indicated that students became more talented in generating ideas, drafting, processing feedback, and revising. He also noted that the students' attitudes toward writing were positive.

Tyson (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000) has also carried out studies regarding the effects of process writing. He conducted an action research study with Korean college students in writing class over four years. Tyson found out that some of the techniques used in the writing class promoted students to produce longer and better-developed writing. The students' confidence and motivation toward writing had increased as well.

Writing instruction, being an effective approach to teaching writing, has been supported by a number of studies. Connor and Farmer (1990) found that teaching second language writers the concept of topical structure analysis to use as a revision strategy had a positive effect where the final texts were concise, coherent and had clarity of focus. Tsang and Wong (2000) studied the effects of explicit grammar teaching on students' writing. Their study indicated that the students were able to write with greater readiness and use more mature syntax. Likewise, Sengupta (2000) conducted a study about the effects of giving instruction in revision strategies to secondary school student writers of English as a second language. He found that explicit teaching of these strategies had a measurable effect on the quality of the students' final draft. Cresswell (2000) reported on the positive effects of students learning to self-monitor their writing when more attention is paid to the process and the organization of their writing. Furthermore, Cresswell (2000) reported

additional improvement in the students' ability to pay attention to the content and subsequently to the organization of their writing.

Ferris (1997) has studied the direct effects of different types of feedback on college student writing. He found that student changes in response to teacher comments impact overall quality in their papers. Like Ferris's (1997) study, Villamil and de Guerrero (1998) examined the impact of peer revision on second language writing. They found that it had a positive effect on the quality of the final draft. In the same vein, Berg (1999) has trained her students in how to give effective peer response to writing. She noted that peer response training had a positive effect on the students' revision types and on the quality of their writing.

Escamilla and Coady (2001), in their research assessing the writing of Spanish speakers in K to 5th grade students, discovered that Spanish writers and ESL writers write quite differently than their native English peers. These essential differences were noted in the following areas:

1. Spanish speaking students writing in Spanish and English often did not use English linear logic.

2. Spanish speaking students, overall, wrote stories that were as complex and interesting as English speaking students, however, they had more problems with spelling, punctuation, and use of other conventions such as accents than English speaking did.

3. Because it was taken directly from English, the rubric used to score writing samples did not provide good feedback to teachers in how to improve writing in Spanish. In this case, assessment could not help to drive instruction (p. 47).

Another study conducted by Escamilla (2005) concluded that Spanish speaking students' writing problems were often caused by their interference from their first language. Other studies (Carter, 2006; Escamilla, 2005; Escamilla & Coady, 2001; Kaplan, 1966, 1983, 2005; Montano-Harmon, 1991) have also supported this critical point that Spanish speaking students who have knowledge of first language literacy can use this knowledge to build understanding of literacy in a second language.

The findings of Escamilla and Coady (2001) and Escamilla (2005) can be strongly related to Kaplan's (1966) and Montano-Harmon (1991) studies in which they found that Spanish students' writing style followed a curvilinear pattern that allows them to deviate from the subject and go back and forth in terms of adding new materials.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of models of learning to write in the second language arena. Therefore, researchers have made an assumption that instruction in writing does have an effect in teaching writing and that the knowledge required of a writer is learnable and the skills trainable. It is stated that through the writing instruction, writers make progress as a direct result of the instruction they receive. In a general second language learning context, a student's progress in writing is often assumed to be simply a normal result of the overall improvement in their language proficiency. While it is clear that students' ability to write clearly and accurately depends to a great extent on their overall level of proficiency in the target language (Bardovi-Harlig 1995; Cumming 1989), there are aspects of proficiency that are either specific to students' writing or that may be specifically seen to develop through writing (Weissberg 2000).

The ESL Teachers Role in Implementing the Writing Process

Language teachers across the United States have different views of language and language learning. These views profoundly influence the daily practice of their language teaching in school settings, and eventually make differences to their learners' learning development. Second language teachers' perceptions of what second language learning is, and what can be done to achieve the ultimate success in this field, will affect their beliefs and practices about teaching ESL students. Tillema (2000) agrees that there is now an overall realization within general education studies that teaching is a cognitive activity and that teachers' beliefs greatly impact their instructional decisions in the classroom.

Teaching in second language education is now viewed as a complex cognitive activity (Borg, 2003). According to Borg (2003), "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (p.81).

Over the last quarter of a century, researchers have been conducting a tremendous number of studies to improve our understanding of the teaching of second language writing. The findings from these researchers provide ESL teachers with rich foundations to choose the appropriate approaches to second language learning and teaching. For example, there are psycholinguistically-oriented approaches, sociolinguistically-oriented approaches, and pedagogically-oriented approaches. Undoubtedly, increasing ESL teachers' understanding of these approaches is necessary and important. Brown (1994) states that different aspects of language are better treated by different psychological approaches. In addition, it is well acknowledged in writing research that cognitive and contextual methods shape the teaching and learning of writing (Flower, 1989; Silva, 1993).

In spite of the number of research studies conducted in second language learning, some researchers are concerned about the relationship between research and teaching. For example, Donald Freeman (1996) expressed a concern about the relationship between teacher's knowledge of classroom practice and how research can express that knowledge. He also pointed out that teachers know the story of the classroom, but "usually do not know how to tell it because they are not often called upon to do so, nor do they usually have opportunities" (p. 90). Freeman's (1996) crucial principle for promoting teachers to tell their story follows a jazz maxim: "You have to know the story in order to tell the story" (p. 89).

Researchers such as Raimes (1987, 1991), Zamel (1985, 1987), and Silva (1993, 1997) have greatly contributed to the understanding of L2 writing by demonstrating to L2 writing researchers and teachers the kinds of difficulties that writers usually endure and maneuver, and the strategies they must orchestrate and master to a certain extent to produce an effective text. As Zamel (1987) comments, "It seems that ESL writing teachers view themselves primarily as language teachers, that they attend to surface-level features of writing, and that they seem to read and re-act to text as a series of separate pieces at the sentence level or even clause level, rather than as a whole unit of discourse" (p. 700).

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2006) has published a position paper that is designed to address the knowledge and skills mainstream teachers need to have in order to develop effective curricula that engage English language learners, develop their academic skills, and help them negotiate their identities as bilingual learners. This paper has addressed two critical factors: first, the language and literacy needs of English language learners (ELL) as they participate and learn in English-medium classes,

and second, the ways through which teachers can assist these students to develop their English as well as ways they can support their students' bilingualism.

In the United States, bilingual learners, more commonly referred to as English language learners (ELL), are defined as students who speak a language other than English and are learning English (NCTE, 2006). Students' abilities vary from being non-English speakers to being fully proficient. The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) reported that in 2003-04 there were over five million English language learners (ELLs) in schools in the United States (NCELA, 2004). In the last decade, the ELL population has grown by 65%. What is more challenging than the statistics themselves is the fact that the diversity of those students continues to expand, demanding more efforts from teachers and schools. Although 82% of ELLs in the United States are native Spanish speakers, the school districts identified over 350 different first languages for their second language learners, which in turn require, in some cases, tailored attention.

According to Barron & Menken (2002) and Kindler (2002), the majority of English language learners find themselves in mainstream classrooms taught by teachers who have little or no formal professional development in teaching such students. Along with this view, other researchers (Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003; Nieto, 2003), found that many teachers in the United States are not adequately prepared to work with linguistically diverse students. This lack of knowledge in terms of finding the best approach/program to teach ELLs, has urged federal, state, and local policies to address the education of bilingual learners by implementing

different types of programs such as different models of bilingual education, English as a second language, English immersion, and integration into mainstream classes.

When it comes to writing, many English language learners are constantly concerned and pretty much preoccupied by the tasks of acquiring vocabulary and syntactic competence. English language learners' acquisition abilities differ from one another as well as the degree of difficulties and challenges they encounter along the acquisition process. As a result, teachers' essential role in the learning environment is to fully understand the English language learners and their perceptions of terminology and routine associated with writing instruction in the United States, including writing process, drafting, revision, editing, workshop, conference, audience, purpose, or genre (NCTE, 2006). The following tips are suggested by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Position Paper on the Role of English Teachers in Educating English Language Learners (ELLs) for teachers to provide instruction support for English language learners in their writing:

- Providing a nurturing environment for writing;

- Introducing cooperative, collaborative writing activities which promote discussion;

- Encouraging contributions from all students, and promoting peer interaction to support learning;

- Replacing drills and single-response exercises with time for writing practice;

- Providing frequent meaningful opportunities for students to generate their own texts;

- Designing writing assignments for a variety of audiences, purposes, and genres, and scaffolding the writing instruction;

- Providing models of well-organized papers for the class. Teachers should consider glossing sample papers with comments that point to the specific aspects of the paper that make it well written;

- Offering comments on the strength of the paper, in order to indicate areas where the student is meeting expectations;

- Making comments explicit and clear (both in written response and in oral responses). Teachers should consider beginning feedback with global comments (content and ideas, organization, thesis) and then move on to more local concerns (or mechanical errors) when student writers are more confident with the content of their draft;

- Giving more than one suggestion for change -- so that students still maintain control of their writing;

- Not assuming that every learner understands how to cite sources or what plagiarism is. Teachers should consider talking openly about citation and plagiarism in class, exploring the cultural values that are implicit in the rules of plagiarism and textual borrowing, and noting that not all cultures ascribe to the same rules and guidelines. Students should be provided with strategies for avoiding plagiarism.

  http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/div/124545.htm

Models of Teaching Writing as a Process

By 1980, findings from composing studies have extensively opened the door for researchers to create effective models for the writing process. Educators, including researchers, believe that good teaching requires effective modeling, and teaching writing is no exception. They agree that writing is a process that involves planning, translating, and reviewing of the text. Donald M. Murray's (1980*) Writing as Process: How Writing Finds Its Own Meaning* argues that writing is a process of discovery. "The writer is constantly learning from the writing what it intends to say" (Murray, 1980, p. 7). Murray views composing as a process of connected steps rather than sequence steps. Murray's premise is that a piece of writing has something to say that its writer does not discover until he or she has done the writing—has done, in fact, multiple drafts. According to Murray, writing is a three part process of rehearsing, drafting, and revising. Through composing and writing multiple drafts, Murray suggests that the writer moves from exploration and discovering to meaning of the text, to the clarification and explanation of the ideas, both to the writer and the reader. During this stage (writing multiple drafts), four major forces, as Murray calls them, evolve: reading, writing, collecting and connecting. In this model, Murray argues that while composing, the writer usually retrieves his previous knowledge and ideas and connects it to the current ideas he/she collected through reading and recorded in writing.

Flower and Hayes (1981) model focuses on what writers do when they compose. Flower and Hayes suggested that there are basically three cognitive writing processes: planning (deciding what to say and how to say it), text generation (turning plans into written text), and revision (improving existing text). The model divides the composing processes of a writer into three major components: the composing processor, the task

environment and the writer's long term memory. Further, Hayes and Flower (1986) view

mature writing as a problem - solving activity in which planning, sentence generation, and

revision are the main operations in achieving writing goals. From the beginning, their

writing process model was criticized by many researchers like Cooper and Holzman (1989)

who argued that the model did not account for the various activities that writers engaged in

as they compose. Another criticism was proposed by North (1987) who argued that the

Flower and Hayes model was too vague for sufficient understanding and stems from

uncontrolled experimentation.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) also proposed models that take into account

reasons for differences in writing ability between expert and novice writers (skilled and

less-skilled writers). They described two versions of the composing process: the

knowledge-telling model and the knowledge-transforming model of writing. The

knowledge-telling model is basically a "think-say" technique in writing, in which the

novice writer simple retrieves ideas of writing spontaneously from memory and translates

them directly to the text. The knowledge-transforming model is a problem-solving method

of composition, where expert writers develop a highly structured set of goals and generate

ideas to accomplish these goals. Bereiter's and Scardamalia's (1987) observation of

college students indicates that the students "generated goals for their compositions and

engaged in problem solving involving structure and gist as well as verbatim

representations" (p.354). The essential difference between the two models is that the

knowledge-transforming model involves a set of goals to be achieved through the writing

process, whereas the knowledge-telling model depends profoundly on retrieving ideas

from memory and welcoming external assistance (teacher) for instructions.

Similarities in First Language and Second Language Writing Process

In the 1980s, studies of the ESL composing process advocated the similarities between composing in L1 and L2. Researchers like Gaskill (1986), Hall (1987), Jones &Tetroe, (1987) and Zamel (1982, 1983) have supported the assumption that first language writing and second language writing are naturally similar. Zamel (1982, 1983) made a significant contribution to the field of process writing through her studies. She found that her second language students were like those of the subjects described in first language studies. Another study of six advanced second language students conducted by Zamel (1983) indicated that there were no differences in the writing of second language unskilled students and the writing of first language unskilled students. She also found that the students, who showed lack of composing competence in the first language, have also shown that lack in second language writing. Raimes (1985) found that unskilled ESL writers were "not to revise efficiently and to focus on local concerns in their texts" (p.231).

Gaskill (1986) conducted a comparison study between the first language and second language composing process for four undergraduate subjects by having them write in both languages, Spanish and English. The results of his study indicated that students implied the same revising processes in Spanish and English. Hall's (1987) study also concluded that same technique used among students when revising in both languages. Jones and Tetroe (1987) examined a group of Venezuelan students and found that the ESL students have directly transferred the skills of their L1 composing to their L2 composing.

Another researcher who focused on the similarities in L1 and L2 was Beare (2000). Beare examined eight proficient writers in both English and Spanish. Four subjects were Spanish native speakers whose English was a second language and the other four

subjects were English native speakers whose Spanish was a second language. All subjects did their primary and secondary education in their first language and started learning their L2 in secondary school. All subjects did all or some of their university education in their second language. Also, they worked and lived in bilingual environments where English and Spanish were used. They were asked to write two essays, one in their first and one in their second language. They were given a two-hour writing session. Think-aloud protocols were used during the writing sessions. The finding of this study supports Matsumoto's (1995) results that proficient bilingual writers use the same strategies in L2 as in L1 writing. So too, Beare's (2000) outcomes confirm Berman's (1994) findings that writers transfer their skills from L1 to L2.

Berman (1994) studied 129 secondary school students' writing skills in Iceland. He found that "many learners transfer their writing skills between language, and their success in doing so is assisted by the grammatical proficiency in the target language" (p.29). Berman used an experimental approach where he divided his subjects into three groups and each group either received L1 essay writing instruction or L2 essay writing instruction or no instruction at all. The study's outcomes revealed that students transfer writing skills from their first language (Icelandic) to their second language (English) and the transfer depends on their English grammatical proficiency. Another researcher, Matsumoto (1995) has interviewed four Japanese university professors on their processes and strategies for writing a research paper in English as a foreign language (EFL). The subjects were researchers (all males) who held degrees in the humanities from American universities and had published articles in both English and Japanese. They started learning EFL at the age

of 13. Results of her study indicated that these writers followed the same process and used the same strategies across L1 and L2 writing.

Differences in First Language and Second Language
Writing Process

Much of the research on second language writing has been heavily dependent on first language research. Although L2 writing is linguistically, strategically, and rhetorically different in many ways from L1 writing (Silva, 1993), L1 models have a tremendous impact on L2 writing instruction. A number of current studies have addressed the fact that the processes of L2 writing are in many ways different from those of L1 writing. Tony Silva (1993), a renowned researcher in ESL writing, evaluated 72 studies comparing L1 writing with L2 writing and found a number of significant differences between L1 and L2 writing with regard to both composing processes and subprocesses (planning, transcribing, and reviewing) and features of written texts (fluency, accuracy, quality, and structure).

Silva (1993) himself conducted empirical research to examine L1 and L2 writing. The 27 different L1 subjects involved in his research came from a variety of backgrounds including Arab, Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish. They were undergraduate college students in the U.S. who had advanced levels of English proficiency and exhibited a wide range of levels of writing ability. Silva reports that his research results indicated that writers asked to perform in L1 and L2 paid more attention to generating material in L2 than in L1 and found content generation in L2 more difficult and less successful. Silva also found that much of the material generated in the L2 were not used in the student written text. In addition, Silva points out that L2 writers did less planning at the global and local levels.

Global level means the writer is dealing with the topic area from a variety of perspectives. Local level means the writer is dealing with syntactic and lexical options in the context of his/her own written text. According to Silva (1993), L2 writers did less goal setting and had more difficulty organizing generated material (the same writers did not have this problem in L1). In general, adult L2 writing was less effective than L1 writing. In terms of lower level concerns, L2 writing was stylistically different and simpler in structure. Silva claims that there are no current theories that sufficiently explain how students write in L2. He suggests that ESL learners must be provided with ample opportunities to write, revise, and rewrite their work.

Other sources of differences between first and second language writing are the writer's relative proficiency in the target language (Bardovi-Harlig 1995; Cumming 1989), the writer's knowledge of the target language genres, and associated sociocultural expectations (Cope & Kalantzis 1993; Leki & Carson 1997; Silva 1997; Swales 1990), and the interaction between the writer's first language experiences and the meaning of literacy in the target language culture (Bell 1995; Connor 1996; Cope & Kalantzis 1993, 2000; Mohan & Lo 1985; Pennycook 1996).

Researchers like Manchón, Roca de Larios, & Murphy (2000) and Zimmerman (2000) agree that these differences clearly exist between writers writing in their L1 and in L2. They are rather obvious with writers with low levels of proficiency in their L2, often relying heavily on their first language resources. However, there is considerable variation among L2 writers. Weissberg (2000) suggests that literacy in L1 plays an important role in an adult's ability to write in a second language, not only in the development of accuracy but also in the emergence of new structures. The writing experiences which such

individuals utilize in their L2 are likely to be quite different from their colleagues for whom writing in their L1 plays a lesser role.

Raimes (1985) examined the writing processes of eight unskilled ESL writers at college from different countries and at various proficiency levels in English. The subjects were asked to verbalize their thoughts using think-aloud protocol analysis while they wrote about two topics. The results of protocol analysis were congruent with Zamel's (1982, 1983) studies, who found that there were no differences in the writing of second language unskilled students and the writing of first language unskilled students. She also found that the students, who showed lack of composing competence in the first language, have also shown that lack in second language writing- although Raimes's subjects were low proficient ESL learners. In other words, Raimes's outcomes revealed that the writing processes of non-native English speakers are similar to those of native speakers of English regardless of the proficiency level of ESL writers.

In attempts to replicate her work, Raimes (1987) conducted another study examining the writing processes of eight ESL college students. She used protocol analysis as a main method of data collection. Her subjects were at different levels of English proficiency and were enrolled in different levels of composition classes. The findings of this study also showed similar results, as L2 writers "did not appear inhibited by attempts to edit and correct their work" (p.458), in contrast to L1 writers. Raimes believed that differences between L1 and L2 certainly existed; nonetheless, similarities existed as well.

Arndt (1987) conducted a protocol-based study examining the writing of six Chinese college students who studied English as a foreign language (EFL) in China. In this study, the subjects composed in both Chinese and English, talking aloud their thinking

processes while writing. Using protocol analysis, Arndt found that although writers employed the same strategies while writing in English or in Chinese, not all of them shared the same writing processes with other writers. Arndt's proficient Chinese writers showed similar strategies for writing across languages, but they differed as a group in their degree of planning, revising, and writing. Whereas expert writers showed efficient use of strategies in both L1 and L2 composing, novice writers spent more time focusing on making word-level changes instead of evaluating how successful they were in achieving their purpose for writing.

Carson, Carroll, Silberstein, Kroll, and Kuehn (1990) have also studied the relationship between L1 and L2 writing and language proficiency. Their study indicated that students at lower proficiency level showed differences in L1 and L2 writing skills. In addition, students at higher proficiency levels did not show any correlation between L1 and L2 writing skills as well. These studies were conducted with college level students.

Wolfersberger (2003) conducted a study to examine the writing of three native Japanese-speaking college students who were studying in an intensive English program in the U.S. They were chosen for their beginning English proficiency, their wider experience with writing in Japanese, and their limited experience with writing in English. They were asked to compose essays in Japanese and then in English. Each subject individually participated in two composing sessions in which the subject wrote an essay while thinking aloud. In the first session subjects wrote a Japanese essay and in the second session they wrote an English essay. The sessions were video and audio taped for subsequent transcription, analysis, and comparison. Two protocols for each of the three subjects were collected, transcribed, and then reviewed and analyzed for composing processes and

strategies. Wolfersberger (2003) found that L2 writers faced with writing tasks requiring

an L2 proficiency level above that of the writer do not transfer L1 strategies to the L2

writing process, even though the writer may have a multiplicity of strategies available

when completing the same task in the L1.

Research Studies on the Effectiveness of the Writing Process

Even though the process approach to writing has become an established practice

during the past 30 years, research has advanced into new areas. Writing is now

encompassing operations beyond the mere process taking place inside an author's head, but

as a collaborative act influenced by complex and interrelated social factors (Atkinson,

2003; Sperling & Freedman, 2001). Since that initial research in the 1970's and 80's,

process-oriented instruction has been used in many classrooms across the country with

different types of learners and implemented by different types of interpretations and

teaching styles (Reyes ,1991). Commenting on the 1992 NAEP assessment, officials

asserted that "teaching the cluster of writing techniques known collectively as 'writing

process' is associated with higher average writing proficiency among students" (Goldstein

& Carr, 1996, p.1). Their analysis depends on the self reports of 29,500 students in 1,500

schools, which show that students whose teachers employ writing process approach

techniques constantly obtain the highest average writing scores on the NAEP writing

assessment (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006). On the same line, Greenwald, Persky,

Campbell, & Mazzeo, (1999) point out that the 1998 NAEP writing assessment of 17,286

fourth-grade teachers and 14,435 eighth-grade teachers indicated that, across the United

States, considerable time is devoted each week to teach student writing through the process writing approach.

Although researchers agree that the mental strategies involved in the process writing are non-linear and connected, the "vast majority of the research has investigated specific components of the writing process, especially prewriting and revising" (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006, p.281). According Pritchard & Honeycutt (2006), before the process model was conceptualized and brought into practice, prewriting was not usually more than a brief instruction by the teacher of the topic the students were supposed to write on and the assignment's due date. However, now prewriting is widely and explicitly implemented by a teacher in order to develop students' writing content and to help them to create structured and organized texts. Evidence from the 1992 NAEP assessment in writing supports research in the field that several process writing techniques are related with higher writing proficiency skills. Students of teachers who emphasize more than one process writing strategy have higher writing ability. The 1992 NAEP assessment offered direct evidence that use of pre-writing activities is associated with the highest average proficiency scores.

Like prewriting, revision instruction, an essential part to the writing assignment, was largely neglected in composition classes until the process approach. Before this, revision was usually demanded as a mandate to students to improve their writing papers made after the paper was complete and had been turned into the teacher. In most instances, revision took care of the 'surface structure.' Both teacher and student sought a text that was spelling and grammar error-free. Students often see revision not as an opportunity to develop and improve a piece of writing, but as an indication that they have failed to do it

right the first time. To these students, revision means correction. In line with Sommers (1982), revision is often defined as the act of "cleaning up" or "polishing" prose. In reality, such instructional practices treat revision as cosmetic changes rather than as rethinking one's work. Moreover, Applebee (1986) states that for the novice writer, revision is more likely seen as editing or proofreading. He suggests that students seldom made any infrastructure, or global changes, such as starting over, rewriting most of a paper, adding or deleting parts of the paper, or adding or deleting ideas.

Studies investigating the effect of the process-oriented approach to teaching writing have shown many positive effects of the process writing approach. Nevertheless, these studies are "based on uneven implementations of the writing process" (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006, p.282). When Dyson and Freedman (2003) reviewed the research on process writing, they found that even though the 1998 NAEP found a strong relationship between the application of the writing process and students attaining higher scores, it is not easy to "evaluate the degree to which the approach in the United States as a whole has improved student writing" (p.976).

Summary

Writing in a second language is a sophisticated task. It is complicated with issues of proficiency in first language, the target language, and differences in culture and rhetorical approaches to the text. Current theories of second language acquisition are based on years of research in a wide variety of fields, including linguistics, psychology, sociology, and anthropology (Freeman & Freeman, 2001). Writing is not, by any means, the act of merely putting words to paper, but also the resulting product of a more comprehensive process. This process and product are also conditioned by the purpose and place of writing.

Theory, research and practice have found that instruction of writing can effectively improve student proficiency in a number of key areas. Different approaches to the instruction of writing have variously targeted process, product and purpose. More recent approaches, both to the teaching and the assessment of writing, recognize the need to integrate all aspects of this skill. An understanding of second language acquisition can improve the ability of mainstream teachers to serve the culturally and linguistically diverse students in their classrooms (Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Hamayan, 1990). The science of the writing process for second language learners is relatively novice. A great deal of extensive research is still needed in this field, especially for elementary second language writers.

CHAPTER 3 – Methodology

Research has been described as a systematic investigation (Burns, 1997) or inquiry whereby data are collected, analyzed and interpreted in some way in an effort to "understand, describe, predict or control an educational or psychological phenomenon or to empower individuals in such contexts" (Mertens, 2005, p.2). This chapter presents a description of the methodology to be used throughout this study. The research approach for this study was a qualitative case study (Merriam, 1988). The purpose of this study was to explore the role of ESL teachers in developing five Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students' writing ability when using the writing process approach in teaching writing. The research also investigated the role of this approach on students' writing development. This chapter is organized in the following sections: 1) research design; 2) selection of the research site; 3) research site; 4) ESL teachers; 5) ESL students; 6) the role of the researcher; 7) data collection; 8) data analysis; and 9) establishing trustworthiness.

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the roles ESL teachers play when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

> **a.** What stages of the writing process approach do the ESL teachers incorporate when teaching writing?
>
> **b.** What writing strategies, techniques, and skills do the ESL teachers employ when teaching writing to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

2. What is the role of the writing process approach in the writing development of

five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

       a. What stages of the writing process, strategies and techniques do Saudi

       Arabian ESL students employ when composing in English as a second

       language (L2)?

       b. What is the impact of utilizing the writing process approach on the

       writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

Research Design

This study was designed to examine the roles ESL teachers play when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students. It also was designed to investigate the role of the writing process approach in the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students writing processes when they compose in English as a second language. In order to achieve these goals, I utilized a qualitative design methodology. According to Draper (2004), qualitative research can be described as a naturalistic and interpretive approach to understand social phenomena in their natural settings to produce "thick description" (p.643). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) point out that qualitative research is "a multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter" (p.2). This methodology is an inquiry process of understanding based on traditions that explore a social or human problem within a natural setting (Creswell, 1998). The qualitative approach is useful to help the researcher to explore social or human problems and then build a complex picture, analyze words, report detailed information and conduct the study in a natural setting.

In this study, I intended to adopt a case study methodology. Case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). Although there are numerous definitions of case study, Yin (2002) defined it as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) defined case study as a detailed examination of a single setting, a single subject, or a particular even. The case study approach provided an intensive description of the writing process of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students, and how their writing skills developed as a result of the process approach their teachers practiced in writing class. This study took into consideration four data collection sources: classroom observations, interviews with participants and the ESL teachers, student think-aloud protocols, and samples of students' writing.

Observing an ESL writing classes provided rich data about the interactions between the ESL students and their teachers in terms of developing their writing skills. Analyzing students' writing drafts provided comprehensive data about the students' progress in writing in English as a second language over the semester. In addition, interviewing ESL students developed insights on how they interpreted the process-oriented approach when they wrote, and how they reacted to the writing process (i.e. prewriting, composing, revising, editing, and publishing (Grave, 1983). Interviewing the ESL teachers provided information about their own experiences with teaching writing, their evaluations of the students' performance throughout the semester, and the kinds of writing methods they find to be the best to be taught to ESL students. The student think-aloud protocol provided detailed description of the writers' cognitive processes as they went through the different

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stages of the writing process. Qualitative methods were employed to draw an in-depth view of how the ESL students wrote and the daily writing practices their teacher presented in writing class.

Selection of the Research Site

In spring 2007, I made ten visits to an elementary school that enrolled ESL students in Kansas. This elementary school integrated an ESL program into its mainstream daily classes, and it was the only school that provided such service to ESL students in the area. I met with the principal to discuss my study and my reasons behind asking her permission to do visitation observations. She showed a high interest in my topic and she offered her and the school's full support to my intended study. She believed that ESL teachers and students need research-based programs in order to succeed in their academic lives. She also believed that the way to do so was by conducting research about this specific group to find out what techniques and strategies could work most effectively for them.

I visited the sixth grade ESL classroom the day after my meeting with the principal. The visits lasted three weeks between February 5th and 23rd, 2007. The writing classes were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:45am to 9:30am. The ESL teacher, Mrs. Cook (pseudonym), was welcoming and supportive. She introduced me to her sixth grade students as a doctoral student from Kansas State University. I sat in the corner of the classroom and started my non-participant observations.

The room was full of international posters that showed different countries, people, and cultures. The room also had posters and cards about the importance of writing and its different stages. The room had 30 chairs for students and a rectangular shaped desk for the

teacher. On the teacher's desk, there was a computer and a full stack of papers and folders. I had not seen the teacher sitting at the desk. Throughout the classes, the teacher always stood by the whiteboard or among her students, explaining or encouraging. The students sat facing the instructor in three rows. Although the students were not required to sit in a set arrangement, most students preferred to sit in the same spot at each session. Each Tuesday and Thursday, the teacher used the whiteboard for writing new words, messages, instructions, or reminders to the students regarding their assignments.

The ESL teacher was teaching writing, besides other subjects, and she was an advocate of the writing process approach. She taught the students in a manner that was gentle and encouraging. She was conscious that ESL students need a comfortable and anxiety-free environment. She used a clear, soft, and slow voice during her teaching. She was flexible about negotiating with the students. During my observations, I found out that she always gave options and alternatives for her students in terms of choosing their writing topics so that the students became more engaged with their writing. Moreover, she also was flexible about the paper submission of the students. She encouraged collaboration and acceptance of her students' ideas. She tried to help everybody in the classroom, and she did not hesitate to move from one desk to another in order to put everyone on track.

She used the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and (a couple of times a year) publishing (Graves, 1983). Her approach to writing and her expectations about students' learning reflect a discovery process and her feedback to the students' work was collaborative instead of critical and evaluative. She usually wrote positive feedback and she did not correct her students' paper with a red pen. Each student had a folder where he/she kept journals and writing papers. The ESL teacher spent a lot of time explaining to

her students the importance of writing and how they could be good writers in the future. Her teaching style and practices demonstrated her own beliefs on teaching in general and teaching ESL students in particular.

The students effectively engaged in the writing activities. They were discussing their ideas and thoughts with their teacher. Whenever they have questions they would immediately ask their teacher for help. The teacher would not hesitate to stop her instruction and come to them to solve whatever problems they had. The teaching environment was a fear-free one.

Moreover, the students participated in the writing process the teacher was implementing in her class. I observed many students planning and preparing themselves before they went through the writing task. Some of them were drawing lines, webs, and charts about the topic they were assigned. Others were talking to their peer to discuss the ideas and find more information about the topic. In addition, the teacher always encouraged her students to use the books on the shelves they had in the classroom or the school library to find information and pictures about the topic being studied.

The students were comfortable dealing with writing as a subject. I did not observe bad or negative attitudes about writing. However, there were some Spanish and Arab students who were confused about some writing instructions because of the language hurdle. Nevertheless, they did not hesitate to ask the teacher to clarify unclear points.

After visiting this classroom, I determined that this school would be the appropriate site for my research. The teacher was skilled and professional in teaching ESL students and the principal of the school was encouraging.

The Role of the Researcher

In language and literacy studies, researchers are particularly interested in social activities as organized by language use; that is, in speech and literacy events, practices, and performances (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). Qualitative researchers are also especially interested in using naturalistic settings, so that they may view literacy holistically (Kucer, 2005).

My interest in this study had developed through first-hand experience as an Arabic composition writing teacher for an elementary level class in the United Arab Emirates for six months. I have learned that producing a sound, concise, and informative piece of composition is not one of the stronger skills of Arab elementary students in the U.A.E. Moreover, being an international student in the U.S. and studying English throughout the Master's and Ph.D. degrees, I have experienced the struggle with the discipline of writing. I am inspired by my own perspectives on the strategies, techniques and skills ESL teachers utilize when teaching writing to ESL Arab students. These students may dramatically develop their ESL writing skills through an emphasis on the writing process.

My primary goal as a researcher was to collect data from multiple sources such as classroom observations, interviews, think-aloud protocols, and collection of writing artifacts. My interaction with the students was strictly social by greeting them and asking about their families. Neither instructional nor personal class interference were made on my part. I had prior acquaintance with some of the students involved in the study as I met them with their families in Arab gatherings at the mosque or Arab community events.

When I conducted my classroom observation, all teachers introduced me to their students as a Ph.D. student from Kansas State University who was conducting research on

writing. The students welcomed me and became accustomed to my presence every day of the week. I would sit at the same place in each classroom in every writing session. While students were engaged in using the writing process approach stages, I managed to observe ESL teachers and their Saudi Arabian students at the same time by taking fieldnotes and using teacher observation guidelines (Appendix A) and student observation guidelines (Appendix B). Teacher observation guidelines helped to cover teachers' teaching writing strategies, techniques, and skills. While students' observation guidelines covered students' attitudes, behaviors, and reactions toward the different stages of the writing process approach.

In this study, I interviewed the ESL teachers once at the beginning of the spring semester, and I interviewed the five Saudi Arabian students twice, at the beginning and the end of the study. I also conducted a student think-aloud protocol with each one of the five Saudi students in the school library. I also collected student's writing samples that included their first and final drafts. During the five month period of this study, I went to the Central Elementary School four days a week, not missing any writing class unless there was school staff development, reading assessment, or principal meetings.

Being a non-participant observer allowed the teacher to relax and not become stressed about the flow of their daily teaching practices. I was respected and treated like a member of the class due to the strong rapport I established with the ESL teachers. They would provide me with copies of all teaching materials they distributed to their students. They also provided me with access to the school copy machine to make copies of students' writing samples.

Gaining entry

To gain access to the school, I called the school secretary to take an appointment with the school principal as soon as I received the Kansas State University IRB approval letter (Appendix C). I met with the principal the day following my phone call bringing with me the IRB letter and letter to the study site principal (Appendix D). She welcomed me in her office and was able to recognize me from my visits the previous year, Spring 2007, when I visited one of the ESL classes. I reminded her of my research topic and the importance of understanding the ESL teaching practices and students' attitudes toward writing in English. She was excited as she listened to me and immediately approved my entry to her school. However, she informed me that she needed to contact the school district and ask for their approval before conducting the research. The district approval took a whole month to be issued.

On that same day, I met with Mrs. Cook, the teacher I observed previously, who acted as the "gatekeeper" in helping me visit with the other three teachers. Mrs. Cook talked to the other teachers about my research and assisted me to have access to their classrooms. All four teachers approved my research and signed the teacher informed consent form (Appendix E). The goal of informed consent is "to insure that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether to participate." (Guest & MacQueen, 2008, p. 29). At the end of that week, I was prepared to conduct my research in a supportive and trustworthy environment.

Research Site Demographics

The classroom setting for this study were four fifth grade classrooms in one northeastern Kansas public school district. Central Elementary School (pseudonym) was well-known among international families in the area because it served melting pot cultures. The school was built in 1954 and it is located in a university community. Approximately 57 percent of this school's students were part of the English as a Second Language, or ESL, program. All elementary-age children in the district requiring ESL instruction were transferred to this school. Central Elementary School had a building enrollment of 434 students including 47.5% of the students who were female and 52.5% of the students who were male. Of those males and females, 52.37% were categorized to be non-economically disadvantaged and 47.63 % were categorized to be economically disadvantaged. Of the school building staff, 35.99% were white, 5.39% were African American, 19.40% were Hispanic, and 39.22% were of other ethnicity. According to the State Department of Education, 46.1% of the students were categorized to be economically disadvantaged and 53.9% of the students were categorized to be non-economically disadvantaged. Of these students, 41.5% were White, 6.9% were African American, 17.7% were Hispanic, and 33.9% were of other ethnicities. Of these students, 239 out of 434 (55.07%) were identified as limited English proficient (LEP). Non-LEP students were 195 out of 434 (44.93%).This school met the state Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criterion in reading and math for the 2005-2006 school years. The AYP is a method of determining if schools, districts, and the state have made adequate progress in improving student achievement (NCLB, 2002). Of the staff, 87% of Central Elementary School's teachers are fully licensed, while 13% are not. The school's staff included a total of 49 teachers and support staff.

The ESL Teachers

Four teachers participated in this study - Mrs.Cook, Mrs. Zimmerman, Mrs. Phipps, and Mrs. McCain (pseudonyms). Background information about each teacher is provided below.

Mrs. Cook had 20 years of teaching experience. She held a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on teaching English as a Second Language from the University of Kansas. She was certified in 5-12 Social Studies, 5-9 General Science, K-12 ESL, and K-6 Elementary Education. She had taught seventh grade world history and study skills, ninth grade physical science, tenth-twelfth grade world geography (for 2 years), then moved to teaching strictly ESL as a paraprofessional to grades K-6 (meaning teaching only English, separated from curriculum appropriate to the student's level). The last few years, she had taught fifth and sixth grade only. Depending on the year, she had taught mathematics, and she was teaching fifth and sixth grade ELL students in the areas of writing, reading, social studies and science. She held certification in all of these areas.

Mrs. Cook enjoyed teaching writing. She also enjoyed teaching figurative language and poetry, and she also liked teaching reading, grammar, etymology, helping the students understand the connections between words, prefixes and suffixes, and cognates and false cognates. She used a wide variety of techniques. She used the writing process: prewriting, draftng, revising, editing and (two times a year) publishing (Graves, 1983). She also used the Six-Trait method (Spandel, 1997) as part of instruction, as well as for scoring and assessment. She modified everything and gave lots of examples, played games with her students to help them understand different forms of figurative language (similes,

metaphors, idioms, onomatopoeia, etc, all of which are on the state reading assessment they must take), and she also incorporated a lot of what ESL students need to learn in reading into their writing class. She spoke professionally fluent Spanish. She could say *hello* and *goodbye* in about 12 languages and *thank you* in 7 languages. As a writing teacher, she evaluated her students' writing performance using the rubric that is normally used for scoring the Six-Trait model. She also was required to score their English language proficiency with a rubric she considers significantly problematic.

Mrs. Zimmerman had a bachelor's degree from Washburn University in Topeka. She had a master's degree as a reading specialist from the University of Kansas. She was certified as an ESL teacher. Throughout her teaching years, she taught all grades: kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth. She started teaching ESL about four years ago when she came to Central Elementary School. For the past two years, she had been teaching ESL students with a lower level of English proficiency. She had 20 years of teaching experience.

Mrs. Zimmerman enjoyed being with children. Her educational philosophy was that the children have to learn basically by doing. She believed that in order for the students to be good writers or good readers, they need to practice over and over. When she first came to the Central Elementary School, she realized that she wanted to become an ESL teacher. She admired ESL students because they were hard workers and had a great desire to learn English. She found teaching ESL exciting and interesting because she learned about different cultures, religions, and languages.

Mrs. Zimmerman used numerous teaching strategies when teaching ESL students. When teaching vocabulary, for example, she had her students draw pictures, acting words

out, or sometimes gave the students the words and asked them to say them in their languages. In her writing class, she employed the writing process approach: prewriting, writing, editing, and publishing. She found this method extremely powerful because it allowed the students to brainstorm, wrote down their ideas, and edit their work. Mrs. Zimmerman believed that through the writing process, the students were not afraid of making spelling or grammar mistakes. She stated in her interview that this method gave the ESL student positive attitudes toward writing.

In order to establish a strong relationship with her students, Mrs. Zimmerman tried to learn her students' first languages. She knew how to say *period* in Arabic, Spanish, and in Korean. She also can say *Hello* in different languages. When her students encountered difficult words, she used gestures, hand action, facial features, expressions, and body language to illustrate them. She believed that English was difficult to learn because of the phonics system and the different sounds the vowels make.

Mrs. Phipps had a bachelor's degree from Pittsburgh State University in Kansas. She graduated in 2002. She taught fifth grade for four years. She taught all subjects, but last year she was just teaching reading and science. She started teaching English in 2003. Her teaching philosophy was that she believed all children can learn and her job was to help them reach their goals. She started taking classes in teaching ESL in 2005, and she finished her last training class in fall 2007.

Mrs. Phipps found teaching ESL students no different than teaching other English-native students because most of the ESL students that she had taught were of an advanced, high proficiency level of English. Through the ESL training class, she had acquired effective teaching methods and techniques that helped the teacher with ESL students, in

particular, and with all students, in general. Her experience with teaching ESL had been

positive. She found her class diversity interesting and forthcoming especially that she came

from a small town in the Midwest. Her interaction with the ESL students, who in fact come

from different cultural backgrounds, had given her a rich knowledge about other countries.

She used the writing process approach that the district had set up for the school, which

included prewriting, writing, editing, and publishing. She used the Six Trait model

(Spandel, 1997) to evaluate her students' writing because it covered so many things and

helped the students to focus their writing instead of randomly putting down their words.

She encouraged her ESL students to write by not assigning them a specific topic,

but allowing them to choose their own topic. Mrs. Phipps believed in making the

classroom a comfortable environment for learning, avoiding criticism of the ESL learners'

writing, and helping them to develop their writing skills. These were, as she stated in her

interview, the foundations for building good rapport with ESL learners. She utilized

different techniques to communicate with her ESL writers, such as gestures, pictures, and

speaking slowly. The most challenging thing that Mrs. Phipps identified in teaching ESL

students was the language barrier where ESL teachers must be aware to speak more slowly

and teach the concepts at a slower rate.

Mrs. McCain was born and raised in Wichita, Kansas. She went through Catholic

school education, and she earned her undergraduate degree in elementary education from

Kansas State University. She had six years of teaching experience. She taught her first

three years in Topeka. She taught science, language arts, and reading to sixth graders. The

2007/2008 academic year was her third year in teaching in this district's public school. She

had taught social studies in fifth and sixth grade these three years and language arts in the

year of 2007. Mrs. McCain had never taught writing before and this was her first year of teaching writing. She gained certification to teach ESL in 2007.

Mrs. McCain appreciated being with children. Her educational philosophy was to help the students to learn and to do whatever it took to help them to learn and to try different approaches to get connected with the students. She believed that teaching ESL students was not different from teaching mainstream children except for applying and coming up with various ways to present the materials to them, such as visualizing. Mrs. McCain was determined to be successful and for the children she was working with to be successful, too. For Mrs. McCain, teaching ESL was a good experience to learn about different people and their different cultures.

Mrs. McCain employed the process writing approach in her writing class: prewriting, writing, editing, and publishing. In the prewriting stage, she had her students do graphics, organizers, timeline, and diagrams. She encouraged her ESL students to write by having them write down what they were thinking about, and told them not to worry about spelling and punctuation, and to expand on these ideas later. She used the Six Trait model (Spandel, 1997) to evaluate her students' writing. She found that the most challenging factor in teaching ESL students was finding creative ways to get information and ideas across to the students; ways that were accessible and easy to grasp, especially when the material dealt with abstract thoughts.

The ESL Students

The participants of this study were purposefully selected. They were divided into four groups due to their English proficiency level. Nasser (pseudonym) was taught by Mrs. Phipps, Naseema (pseudonym) was taught by Mrs. McCain, Noof and Najah (pseudonyms) were taught by Mrs. Cook, and Nadia (pseudonym) was taught by Mrs. Zimmerman. Before starting the research, all participants of the study received parent informed consents (Appendix F). All consents were returned to me signed the next day.

The participants of this study were five fifth grade Saudi Arabian students; four females, Nadia, Noof, Najah, and Naseema and one male, Nasser. All the students were originally from Saudi Arabia. The Saudi students were enrolled full time in the ESL program in this elementary school. All the students were in the United States with their parents who were pursuing their M.S. or Ph.D. degrees in one of the state universities. The students' tenure in this elementary school was controlled by their parents' stay in the U.S. Whenever their parents finished their degrees, the students would leave the school and go back home with their families and attend Arabic schools in Saudi Arabia. All students' home language was Arabic. Students usually used both languages, Arabic and English, to communicate with their Arab peers in school and with their parents, siblings, and friends outside the school. Below are biographical sketches of the five selected representative students.

Nasser was an active, well-behaved 10 year old Saudi boy. He had brown hair and brown eyes. He came to school everyday dressed up like any typical fifth grader, with a T-shirt, pair of pants, and wearing a pair of sneakers. He looked clean and well-dressed. He had a black backpack he usually hung on the wall. Three boys from the class were his close

friends with whom he talked and visited during the class. He respected everybody in his class and never made any problems of any kind with the teacher nor the classmates. He had been living in the U.S. for nine years. He moved to the U.S. with his family when he was one year old. He was the second child in his family. He had one older brother and two younger sisters. During his stay in the U.S., he traveled with his family to several states and cities during vacations. He had been to Colorado, Utah, Minnesota, Florida, Salt Lake city, Chicago, San Francisco, and Las Vegas. His hobbies were playing soccer, playing computer games, and reading. He attended his kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grade at Central Elementary School. Nasser did not like to write in either language, Arabic or English. He found writing a boring activity. He was a lively, fast-learner, and he was capable of using the computer programs such as PowerPoint efficiently. His friends relied on him to help them when they used the computer. His teacher admired him and always asked him to help out his peers whenever they had PowerPoint presentations.

Naseema was a tan, slim 10 years old Saudi girl. She had black, curly, short hair and black eyes. She usually wore colorful tops with a pair of sport pants. She wore sandals and sometimes a pair of sneakers. She wore her hair differently every week using bright hair clips, bands, pins, combs, and claws. She also liked to wear bracelets, necklaces, and rings. She had two close American and two Arab friends at school whom she sat together with in the cafeteria or talked with during the recess. She came to school with clean and fine looking clothes. She was the second child in her family; she had two sisters and one younger brother. Her hobbies were reading, watching TV, and collecting things. Her mother was a house wife and her father was pursuing a Ph.D. degree in education. She had been living in the U.S. for five years. Her family traveled a lot during their stay in the U.S.

They have been to many states such as Illinois, Florida, Nevada, and California. She spoke English with her friends in school, at home with her siblings who are attending schools too, or with Arab girls in any gathering events in the mosque or the community. She preferred to write in English as well. She used English to write at school because her friends helped her out with writing as she stated in her interview. However, she found that Arabic was difficult for her to learn. Her parents hired an Arabic teacher who tutored Naseema and her sisters Arabic language at their home on weekends. Although Naseema could write a few words in Arabic, she found Arabic confusing especially when connecting nouns with verbs. She did not learn English before she came to the U.S. but she learned how to write a few Arabic words when she was in Saudi Arabia in kindergarten.

Noof was a tall, hushed, 10 year old Saudi girl. She had a light skin with dark brown long hair and brown eyes. Her hair was straight and often pulled back in a ponytail. She usually wore light colored tops with a pair of jeans. She would meet with Arab girls in recess to talk or eat. She came from a big family; she had four sisters and three brothers. All her siblings were attending schools. Her mother stayed home while her father pursued his Ph.D. degree in psychics. She has been living in the U.S. for six years. She traveled a lot with her family on vacations. Her hobbies were watching TV, reading, and writing. She spoke with her siblings at home and with her friends and teachers in school. She liked to write stories about her family, friends, or school in English in a diary she kept in her room. She also knew how to write in Arabic. Her mother taught her Arabic at home and helped her with Arabic spelling. She did not learn English before she came to the U.S. because teaching English in Saudi Arabia started at seventh grade and she left the country when she was in first grade. She moved to the U.S. with her family and started her second grade in

the ESL program at Central Elementary School. Noof had a strong desire to learn English by interacting with her teacher in different ways. She often participated in classroom discussion by answering her teacher's questions, or asking her own. She was energetic and a fast learner in her class. She was taught by Mrs. Cook.

Najah was a ten year old Saudi girl. She had fuzzy black long braided hair. She was slim and had caramel colored skin. She wore tops or T-shirts and a pair of pants and sneakers. Her clothes were clean and neat. She was a shy, quiet, inactive girl that rarely participated in class. She would not talk or initiate conversation with the teacher until she was called on. She had two brothers and three sisters. She lived with her family in a two floor duplex house. She had been living in the U.S. for two years. She liked to watch TV, read and write stories. She spoke English in school and spoke Arabic with her siblings at home. She liked to write stories in English and found writing in Arabic difficult. Her mother and older sister taught her Arabic at home on weekends. She came to the U.S. without a prior knowledge of English. She attended her kindergarten, first, second, and third in Saudi Arabia. Then she moved to the U.S. with her family and started her fourth grade in the ESL program at Central Elementary School. She was taught by Mrs. Cook.

Nadia was an 11 year old active, talkative Saudi girl. She had brown eyes and short curly hair. Her height and weight was that of the average fifth grader. She often wore colorful tops with sparkling images, a pair of pants or jeans and a pair of sneakers. She had three sisters and two brothers. She had some health problems last year, but she looked healthier this year as her teacher Mrs. Zimmerman assured me. She had been living in the U.S. with her mother and siblings for a year and a half with her family. Her mother pursued a master's degree in education. Her father could not come to the U.S. because of

his job. Due to the short time Nadia spent in the U.S., she did not like English because she found it difficult and confusing, especially the English vowels. However, she found writing in English fun and enjoyable. Nadia preferred using Arabic language to write and communicate. She came to the U.S. with limited English in which she only knew a few words, such as dog, cat, happy, and how to write her name. Her sister took English classes when she was in seventh grade in Saudi Arabia and taught Nadia these few words. She started her fourth grade in the ESL program at Central Elementary School.

Data Collection

Data collection is a series of interrelated activities to gather quality information to answer emerging research questions (Creswell, 1998). This study depended on four paths of inquiry: classroom observation, student think-aloud protocols, interviews with the ESL teachers and the ESL Saudi Arabian students, and student writing samples. The data produced from the four inquiries helped in exploring the role of the ESL teachers in developing the students' ability to write in English as a second language through the process-oriented approach.

In order to gain an overview of the process of data collection and data analysis methods I created Table 3.1 This table aligns the two main questions of my study with their data collection and data analysis methods. The study took place over a five month timeframe with thirty minutes spent in varying classroom four days a week, thus resulting in in-depth data for each teacher and each student.

Table 3.1: Research Overview

Research Questions	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods
1. What is the role ESL teachers play when using the writing process approach in teaching writing as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?		
a. What stages of the writing process do the ESL teachers incorporate when teaching writing?	• Student observation • Teacher observation • Student interviews • Student writing samples	• Observational guidelines • Descriptive records of keywords, terms, themes • Descriptive records of keywords, terms, phrases, themes, activities. • Teacher observation guidelines • Looking for positive or negative reactions, coding themes, phrases, terms, keywords. • Six trait rubric • The writing process stages guide (see Table 3.3)
b. What writing strategies, techniques, and skills, do the ESL teachers employ when teaching writing to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?	• Student observation • Student interview • Student writing samples • Think-Aloud protocol	• Observational guidelines • Descriptive records of keywords, terms, themes • Looking for positive or negative reactions, coding themes, phrases, terms, keywords • Six trait rubric • The writing process stages guide (see Table 3.3) • Perl's (1981) coding scheme (see Table 3.2)
2. What is the role of the writing process approach in the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students??		
a. What stages of the writing process approach, strategies and techniques do Saudi Arabian ESL students employ when composing in English as a second language (L2)?	• Teacher observation • Teacher interview	• Descriptive records of keywords, terms, phrases, themes, activities. • Teacher observation guidelines • Looking for positive or negative reactions, coding themes, phrases, terms
b. What is the impact of utilizing the writing process approach on the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?	• Teacher observation • Teacher interview	• Descriptive records of keywords, terms, phrases, themes, activities. • Teacher observation guidelines • Looking for positive or negative reactions, coding themes, phrases, terms

The following sections covered each type of data collection in detailed explanations.

Observations

ESL classroom observation are very important and may lead to changes in best practices in writing instruction. Van Lier (1988) suggests that observation for second language acquisition research is important because the L2 classroom is the place where second language development occurs.

The purpose behind conducting observations was to capture a realistic atmosphere of events, reactions, and behaviors that take place in the classroom. Marshall and Rossman (2006) state that observation "entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors and artifacts (objects) in the social setting chosen for study" (p.98). They also point out that the rationale of observations is to determine the persistent patterns of behaviors and relationships among the participating students. Observations provided valuable data about the students' behaviors toward writing in English.

ESL Teacher Observations

In the classroom, I kept observational fieldnotes focusing on two elements: 1) the stages of the writing process which were taught by the teachers, i.e. prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams, 1998); and 2) the strategies and techniques the teachers employed while using this approach. In addition, I took into consideration the relationship between classroom climate and students' learning development.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), field notes are not "scribbles". I used two forms of observing the ESL teachers. First, I took handwritten notes of everything I saw, heard, and thought of during each writing session. These fieldnotes were written on note pads. I also used the teacher observation guidelines (Appendix A). At the beginning of the study, observing both teachers and students at the same time was quite challenging. Filling up the two observational guidelines and the fieldnote taking, I was in danger of missing words, behaviors, or any actions from the teachers. Therefore, as the study moved on, I managed to organize my way of taking notes by occupying two tables to sit at, with two guideline sheets and a note pad in front of me. As the session started, I would first fill up the guideline with the date of the observation, number of students in the class, length of class, and so on. Then every action from the teacher would be recorded. I wrote my field notes in an organized format where descriptive notes were written in a column on the left while reserving a second column on the right for the researcher comments and thoughts. Notes were taken on what strategies, techniques, and skills the teachers employed while teaching. Two main questions directed me in designing the teacher observation guideline questions:

-What stages of the writing process are introduced by the ESL teacher?

-What strategies and skills does the ESL teacher employ when teaching writing?

I designed the teacher observation guidelines inspired by the areas suggested by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2006) Position Paper on the Role of English Teacher in Educating English Language Learners (ELLs) to be guidelines to observe the ESL teacher:

- Is the ESL teacher introducing cooperative, collaborative writing activities

which promote discussion?

- Is the ESL teacher encouraging contributions from all students and promoting peer interaction to support learning?

- Is the ESL teacher designing writing assignments for a variety of audiences, purposes, and genres, and scaffolding the writing instruction?

- Is the ESL teacher offering comments on the strength of the paper, in order to indicate areas where the student is meeting expectations?

- Is the ESL teacher making comments explicit and clear (both in written response and in oral responses)?

- Is the ESL teacher giving more than one suggestion for change so that students still maintain control of their writing?

- Is the ESL teacher not assuming that every learner understands how to cite sources or what plagiarism is?

    http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/div/124545.htm

Student Observations

For this study, I conducted a series of non-participatory classroom observations to examine the impact of using the writing process approach on Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students' writing ability when they write in English as a second language. Students' reaction, behaviors, and attitudes about the process-oriented approach were investigated. I observed five Saudi Arabian ESL students who were attending four different classes. All the four writing classes started at the same time from 9:30 to 10:00. I observed each class once a week for half an hour for five months, starting from December 2007 to the end of

April 2008. In effort to have comprehensive, detailed, and in depth observational data

about the impact of utilizing the writing process on the writing development of the five

Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students, how they responded to such an approach, and

what stages of the writing process, strategies, and skills they employed when they

composed in their second language, I designed guidelines that guided me through each

writing session (Appendix B). These guidelines were used to observe each participant in

the study.

Think-Aloud Protocol

The think-aloud protocol method has its roots in psychological research.

According to Van Someren, Barnard, and Sandberg (1994), the think-aloud method was

developed from the older introspection method which is based on "the idea that one can

observe events that take place in consciousness, more or less as one can observe events in

the outside world" (p. 29). A think-aloud protocol involves participants thinking aloud as

they are performing a set of specified tasks (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). The users are asked

to voice their thoughts, feelings, and opinions until they complete the task. This method

was originally applied for cognitive psychologists to obtain data about the way in which

humans cognitively process information (Ericsson & Simon, 1980). The collection and

analysis of think-aloud protocols are popular methods for writing process approach

research (Van den Bergh & Rijalaarsdam, 1999; 2001; 2006). According to Flower and

Hayes (1980), the think-aloud protocol is a technique that provides insight into the

cognitive processes, such as planning, formulating and revising which play a role during

text production. I chose this method to collect data because the composing process of

writing is complex and challenging to investigate since much of it happens subconsciously.

In this study, I conducted a think-aloud protocol with each of the five Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students in spring 2008 in their school library. I chose the library because it was a quiet, relaxing, and convenient place to tape record students' think-aloud protocol. During one week, I conducted the protocol with one student at a time individually. I sought to determine three main points from conducting the protocol: 1) What languages (L1) or (L2) did Saudi student use during the protocol; 2) What stages of the writing process approach did each student utilize; 3) What impact did the protocol have on each student's writing when he/she talks and writes at the same time. Each student was given 30 minutes in length to compose.

Before starting the think aloud protocol with the students, I instructed and trained them in using a think aloud procedure. In order for these students to grasp the conceptual task of verbalizing what thinking was going through their minds at the moment, I illustrated the process by giving a concrete example. I asked them, for instance, to describe to me verbally how they would go about building a house out of legos. Another example would be to ask them to describe how they would put together a puzzle.

Students were asked to think aloud into a tape recorder as they composed, so that the resulting protocols could be analyzed. Students were given two topics to choose from: Topic A was *Write About Your Mother and Why You Love Her;* Topic B was *What Is Your Favorite Sport?* I observed each student and made notes while they wrote. I asked them to verbalize what they were thinking before, during, and after writing. For example, I asked them to plan aloud, to say the words as they wrote them, to read aloud, and to make revisions and editing aloud (Raimes, 1985). All recorded protocols were later transcribed for analysis.

Interviews

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), interviewing is a significant method to understand a person's perspective of how he or she constructs meaning and also a means to arrive at thick description (Geertz, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using interviews to collect data assisted in developing an insight of how the Saudi Arabian ESL students reviewed writing in English and Arabic, their feelings and attitudes toward writing, and the processes, strategies, and skills they use when writing in English as a second language. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) state that interviews can be conducted as "the dominant strategy for data collection, or they may be employed in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or other techniques" (p.94). In qualitative research, where it is difficult to observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions, the purpose of interviewing is to allow the researcher to enter into another perspective (Patton, 1990).

ESL Teacher Interviews

I conducted interviews with the ESL teachers. I asked them open-ended questions about their educational background, their teaching experience, their ESL teaching philosophy, their perception of writing using the process approach, and what instructional methods they perceived were the best to employ when teaching ESL Arab students (Appendix G). All teachers scheduled the interviews to be conducted in their classroom. The interviews were audio-tape recorded and later transcribed.

Student Interviews

I conducted two interviews with each of the five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students. At the beginning of the study, I conducted an initial interview with the students in December 2007 where I asked them a few introductory questions about their names, ages, countries, number of years they stayed in the U.S., and their feelings about writing in English and Arabic (Appendix H). In April 2008, a follow up interview was conducted. (Appendix H). The questions in this interview shed more light on their feelings and attitudes toward writing, and their relationships with their ESL teacher, the steps/stages they utilized when writing English, and their reactions to their teacher's writing activities. Both interviews were conducted in the school library.

All the interviews were audio tape-recorded and transcribed. The initial and follow-up interview questions were based on the interview categories developed by Patton (1990) and adapted somewhat after having been used in this study.

Students Writing Samples

From December 2007 to the end of April 2008, I collected five ESL Saudi Arabian fifth grader's compositions. The topic of the writing samples were varied and differed every month according to different genre introduced during this study. During these months I collected a total of 45 samples. Nasser wrote six pieces, Naseema wrote seven peieces, Noof wrote seven pieces, Najah wrote seven pieces, and Nadia wrote 10 pieces. All the artifacts were copied and kept in folders for analyzing at the end of the study. I collected the prewriting, first and final drafts. However, I analyzed the final drafts. I did not choose or participate in the topics in which the students were writing. I examined the

stages the students went through to finish their writing and any growth that occurred in

their writing abilities. I had all the writing sample filed in folders, one for each student. By

collecting these samples throughout the study, I explored what stages of the writing

process, strategies and skills the ESL Saudi Arabian elementary students used when they

wrote in English as a second language. I also calculated a score comparing each student

between the writing he/she produced at the beginning and the end of the study.

Data Analysis

A qualitative approach was undertaken to analyze data for this study. This study

aimed to focus on the instructional methods the ESL teachers used when teaching writing

in English as a second language. It also sought to explore the effectiveness of using a

process-oriented approach on five fifth Saudi Arabian ESL students' writing ability. The

data launched from the four data collection inquiry was thoroughly arranged, transcribed,

organized, coded, searched for patterns, terms, and phrases and analyzed in order to create

and produce rich descriptive analysis.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) define qualitative data analysis as "working with data,

organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns,

discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell

others" (p.145). Data analysis can be seen as a process through which a researcher

searches and arranges the interview transcripts, think aloud protocol analysis, field notes,

and other materials gradually (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This section is organized to cover

to following analyses: 1) ESL teacher observational data analysis; 2) student observational

data analysis; 3) think-aloud protocol analysis; 4) ESL teacher interviews data analysis; 5)

student interviews data analysis; and 6) students' writing sample data analysis.

ESL Teacher Observational Data Analysis

I observed the stages of the writing process the ESL teachers utilized during writing

sessions including prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and

publishing (Williams, 1998). I also observed each teacher's teaching strategies, techniques,

and skills in teaching writing (including what stages of the writing process approach they

used, how they applied each stage, what writing activities they introduced in classrooms,

and what techniques were used to encourage students to write. I wrote descriptive and

detailed records of events, activities, key words, terms, behaviors, teaching strategies,

techniques, and skills of the ESL teachers. The guidelines I designed and the areas I

adapted from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2006), as an analytic

tool helped me to organize my data. After each writing session, I would read my

observation notes carefully and I would search through the data for patterns as well as for

topics, and then I would write down words and phrases to represent these patterns and

activities.

For each teacher, I determined the eight stages of the writing process stages she

employed in her writing class and I described each using rich and detailed examples. By

filling up the teacher observational guidelines, in addition to the fieldnotes I took, I

identified several strategies and techniques each teacher practiced in her classroom. Each

strategy was described and provided with examples. At the end of each teacher case study,

I created a table that included teachers' communication, leadership, interpersonal, and organizational skills I observed during this study.

Students Observational Data Analysis

My field notes of observing the five Saudi Arabian students took two forms: descriptive record of (attitudes, feelings, behaviors, activities, key words, terms, how they react to the writing process activities, how they think of the writing process, and what stages they utilized in their writing) and my own comments on these activities. From the student observational guideline I created a writing process stages table (Table 5.1, Chapter Five) which displays different genres students were required to write about. For each student, I checked with an x mark when he/she applied the writing process stages for each genre. The student guidelines helped me to determine strategies and techniques students use in their writing classes. I read my fieldnotes and the guidelines, while frequently searching for reoccurring and reemerging behaviors, terms, and reactions. By the end of the study, I highlighted the most frequent behaviors and put them into categories. To be specific in terms of how I planned to code and analyze my data, I: 1) observed and wrote fieldnotes during the writing class; 2) filled out the guidelines form; 3) transcribed the writing discussions into written transcriptions of students' reactions and responses to the writing process stages; 4) read the written transcriptions multiple times; 5) underlined or highlighted evidence of characteristics of the students' responses; 6) underlined evidence of characteristics of how the students interacted and engaged in the writing process stages; 7) reread the transcriptions; and 8) repeated this process with each set of collected data (Krathwohl, 1998).

Think-Aloud Protocol Analysis

Each student think-aloud protocol tape was coded, minute by minute, as soon as the protocol was completed. All the recorded tapes were transcribed/translated as soon as possible for each student's think-aloud protocol analysis (see Appendix I for Naseema's transcript). I searched for the stages of the writing process the students used and the strategies and the skills they utilized to finish their writing task. I used an adapted version of Perl's (1981) coding scheme (Table 3.2). I also looked for strengths, frustration and positive or negative attitudes displayed during the think aloud protocol procedure. For more understanding of this coding, see Naseema's think-aloud protocol coding (Appendix J). After coding each student protocol, I determined what stages of the writing process they used and what cognitive process they practiced while speaking of their thoughts and ideas. Reliability checked with another coder, a doctoral student from a Kansas university who was working with me, indicated 85% rate of agreement across five think-aloud protocol tapes. The coding sheets were analyzed for duration, frequency, applying the writing process stages, and various writing behaviors. The final product of students' writing was evaluated by using the Six Traits Writing Rubric (Appendix O). Students' writing samples were evaluated on these six traits: Idea & Content, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Convention. Each trait was given 5 points. So the total of the scores for each writing sample was 30 points.

Table 3.2: Think-Aloud Protocol Coding Categories

A	Assessing (+ =positive, - = negative)	**Rh**	Rehearsing (developing content, trying out ideas)
C	Commenting	**RI**	Researcher intervention
E	Editing	**RT**	Reading the assigned topic
PI	Planning structure or strategy	**RV**	Revising
Q	Questioning	**RW**	Reading the whole draft (after sentence 4)
R	Reading sentence or part of sentence (followed by number of sentence)	S	Silence
RE	Repeating a word, phrase, or part of sentence	U	Unintelligible remark
		W	Writing

Surface-level Editing Changes (Indicated as Subscripts of E and Rh)		Revision Changes Affecting Meaning (Indicated as subscripts of RV)	
a	Addition	**a**	addition
d	Deletion	**d**	deletion
gr	Grammar	**sub**	substitution
p	Pronunciation	**wc**	word choice
sp	Spelling		
ss	sentence structure		
v	verb form or tense		
wf	word form		

Adapted from Perl (1981)

ESL Teacher Interviews Data Analysis

I analyzed the ESL teacher interview by transcribing the audio tapes as soon as I finished the interview (Appendix K.) I studied the interview transcript carefully and coded the responses to the interview questions into categories. I looked at repeated use of words, phrases, and sentences. I also searched for positive or negative reactions to the interview questions or any frustrating aspects of teaching the ESL students. I focused my analysis to look at teachers' responses to each question. I organized the data by question to look

across the answers in order to identify consistencies and differences. In this analysis, I put all the data from each question together (Appendix L) and put them into categories.

Student Interviews Data Analysis

I transcribed/ translated the audio-tapes as soon as I finished interviewing the students (Appendix M). Each transcribed interview was reviewed and studied by itself to establish holistically the interpretive framework for each interviewee regarding his/her attitudes about and practices of the process writing approach. I totaled and recorded themes, repeated words, patterns, and positive or negative attitudes toward writing for each interviewee, centering on the outlines in the interview questions. Recurring themes identified when an interviewee was repeated the same words, phrases, or sentences several times as well as negative or positive reactions to each aspect of the writing process. Then the recurring themes for each interviewee compared with those of the other interviews. I categorized the recurring themes that ran across the interviews questions (Appendix N).

Students Writing Samples Data Analysis

Students' writing samples were collected throughout the five month period starting from December 2007 till the end of April 2008. Each of the five students in this study completed a number of writing samples in different genres: expository, biography, autobiography, persuasive, and in Mrs. Cook's writing class, poetry was introduced for the entire month of April. The analysis of the writing samples conducted using the Six Traits Writing Rubric, adapted for Regina Public Schools from Spandel (1990) (Appendix O). Final drafts of each writing topic were assessed and evaluated. The first layer of analysis

involved a thorough review of all the writing samples from all participants of this study. I

read the writing samples and made handwritten notes on a separate sheet of paper

describing initial observations (e.g., "Some participants did not revise their papers"). I

searched for the writing process stages and investigated if the participants had used them in

their writing. I used the participant writing samples data analysis (Table 3.3) to help me

analyze the writing process stages being used by each student. Each student case study will

be provided through the Table 3.3 format.

Table 3.3: Participants' Writing Samples Data Analysis

Month	Topic	Pre-writing	Planning	Drafting	Pausing	Reading	Revising	Editing	Publishing
December	Expository								
January	Biography								
February	Autobiography								
March	Persuasive								
April	Poetry/ Narrative								

Moreover, each writing sample was assessed by using the Six Traits Writing Rubric

(Spandel, 1997) and determining how it fit its categories. Each sample ranked in categories

ranging from Exemplary (6), Strong (5), Proficient (4), Developing (3), Emerging (2), to

Beginning (1). Each student's writing sample fell into a different category according to the

Six Traits model being used to evaluate the sample: Idea & Content, Organization, Voice,

Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Convention. Each writing sample was read and

received final scores based on the six traits my assessments were compared with the other

assessments (an ESL teacher and two graduate doctoral students from a Kansas university)

to obtain feedback on the writing process stages and the Six Trait categories.

Three interraters were involved in the writing sample analysis, an ESL teacher and

the two doctoral students. Each interrater was asked to read and grade every student's final

draft by searching for the six traits upon which writing samples were evaluated. The grade

of each writing sample was a total of 30 points, 5 point for each trait. According to the final score, writing sample received a number from 6-1. with (6) representing the **Exemplary** category, and (1) representing the **Beginning** category.

Trustworthiness

In discussing the verification of the research findings, Guba (1981) used the term "trustworthiness." It refers to the criteria in a qualitative study that increases the probability that credible findings are produced (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the critical question addressed by the notion of trustworthiness is simple: "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue?" (p. 290). The different methods which were used to enhance the trustworthiness of the results of this study are presented below.

Triangulation

As a result of the paradigm shift from one-dimensional to multidimensional theories and the appropriateness of multiple assessment accommodations for ESL students, researchers such as Cummins (1999), Danielson & Abrytn (1997), Gonzalez (1999), and Hurley & Tinajero (2001) suggest that triangulation is the most appropriate approach in terms of studying the ESL writing experience. According to Denzin (1978), triangulation means that researchers use different types of analysis, different researchers, and/or different theoretical perspectives to study one particular phenomenon. Triangulation of

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qualitative data allows for multiple perspectives (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The term, triangulation, comes from sailors and surveyors who determine locations by studying the intersection of three points (Chenail, 1997). In this study, I collected data from four sources: classroom observation, interviews with participants and with their ESL teachers, student think-aloud protocols and samples of students' writing.

Prolonged Engagement

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define prolonged engagement as "the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes; learning the culture of the participants, testing for misinformation introduced by distortions either of the self or of the respondents, and building trust with the participants" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). Prolonged engagement helped me to build strong rapport with the ESL teachers and the Saudi students who felt comfortable with my presence in their classroom. It also allowed the participants' perspectives to emerge and the time spent in the engagement developed a greater understanding of their writing development. I observed each student and each teacher for half an hour a day (writing class period), for five months starting from December 2007 to the end of April 2008. During this prolonged engagement, I focused on observation of the role the ESL teachers played when using the writing process approach in teaching writing to five Saudi Arabian students in English as a second language. I also focused my observation on these students to identify the impact of using such an approach on their writing development. Prolonged engagement incorporated in this case study added credibility and helped to establish trustworthiness.

Persistent Observation

While prolonged engagement serves to temper distortion caused by the researcher's presence, persistent observation accentuates that presence by actively seeking out sources of data identified by the researcher's own emergent design (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, Allen, 1993). According to Tashakkori and Teddie (1998), the purpose of persistent observation is "to provide depth for researchers by helping them to identify the characteristics or aspects of the social scene that are the most relevant to the particular question being asked" (p. 90). Tashakkori and Teddie (1998) also suggest that this method might be more relevant to the quality of information than the quality of inferences/conclusion. Lightfoot (1983) refers to persistent observation as dependent on the researcher's ability to seize the moment and take personal risks.

The persistent observations that I conducted for both the ESL teachers and their ESL Saudi students from December 2007 to the end of April 2008 gave me a genuine opportunity to identify what writing teaching strategies, techniques, and skills the ESL teachers employed when teaching the writing process approach to their students. It also helped to clarify the stages of the writing process approach the Saudi students utilized when writing in English as a second language. Moreover, the persistent observation specified Saudi students' learning characteristics, strategies, techniques, behaviors toward writing, and how they interact with the writing process approach.

Peer Review

Peer debriefing occurs when researchers discuss findings, analyses, concerns, and conclusions with objective peers (Mertens, 1998). I conferred with my major advisor to

ensure the data gathered in the five month period through observations, interviews, student think-aloud protocol, and student writing samples were represented in precise and accurate manner. An ESL teacher with whom I worked, Mrs. Cook, and one doctoral student from a Kansas university served as an external member and checked the methods of data collection and data analysis. Despite her health issues and school busy schedule, Mrs. Cook fully understood my request to her to further involve herself in this study by becoming a second analyst. Both reviewers received a set of two month classroom observation guidelines, teachers and students interview transcripts, student think-aloud protocol transcripts and all the writing samples the students wrote in the study for a total of 45 pieces. The ESL teacher and my colleague helped me to analyze the students' writing samples by scoring and categorizing the samples. The peer review was achieved through four meetings held on a weekly base in October 2008 in a coffee shop for three hours for each meeting with the ESL teacher and the doctoral student to discuss the research progress. Their suggestions and advice was taken into consideration in order to establish trustworthiness for this study.

Member Check

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this procedure is the most important in establishing credibility. This technique accomplished by sharing the collected data from the classroom observations, think-aloud protocols, ESL students' interviews, ESL teacher interviews, and participants' writing samples, with the ESL teachers. Participating teachers had access to review student audio-taped interviews and written transcripts. They were also allowed to review my classroom observation guidelines and fieldnotes. The most important

effort of creating credibility was involving one of the ESL teachers to assess me in evaluating the students' writing samples by using the Six Trait Writing Rubric with which she was familiar and proficient.

Thick Description

Think description is another element to establish trustworthiness in this study. Thick description is found when the researcher "collects sufficiently detailed descriptions of data in context and reports them with sufficient detail and precision to allow judgments about transferability" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p.33). This element of thick description is essential because it brings the reader into the environment under investigation and helps him to understand the findings of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that "the description must specify everything that a reader may need to know in order to understand the findings. Although the findings are NOT part of the thick description, they must be interpreted in the terms of the factors thickly described'" (p.125). It is necessary for the researcher when writing thick description to use all of his/her senses (Erlandson et al., 1993) so the reader will be able to visualize the surroundings and get a feel for what it is like to be in the context being studied. In this study, I provided the reader with a thick description of the environment in which the ESL teachers taught their Saudi students. Throughout the data collection methods that I conducted in this study, I was able to bring thick description of each element that was relevant to my study: classroom observations, student think-aloud protocols, ESL teachers interviews, students' interviews, and students' writing samples. Using multiple data collection methods gave me a genuine chance to

describe every aspect of the research and visualize the context that I was dealing with in an accurate and truthful manner.

Summary

A qualitative research design was implemented to collect and analyze data for this study. The qualitative design helped to provide rich and deep data about the role the ESL teachers played in developing Saudi Arabians' writing skills by using the writing process approach. It also explored the writing process those students employed when writing in English as a second language. I chose the Central Elementary School (pseudonym) to be my study site because it served international students, including Saudi Arabians, with whom I worked. The ESL teachers, who were teaching the Saudi students, were advocates of the writing process approach. I collected data from four main paths: classroom observation, student think-aloud protocols, student writing samples, and interviews with the ESL teachers and their Saudi students. To analyze the four sources of data, l used observational guidelines to record key words, terms, activities, and themes for the classroom observation. I used Perl's (1981) coding scheme to analyze the think aloud protocol. I utilized the Six Trait Writing Rubric and the writing process stages guide to analyze the student writing samples. I searched and identified positive and negative reactions, coding themes, phrases, keywords, and terms to analyze the student interviews and their ESL teacher interviews. Trustworthiness was positively established through six areas: triangulation, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer review, member check, and thick description.

CHAPTER 4 - Teacher Case Studies

This study had two major purposes: 1) to explore the role of ESL teachers when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students and the strategies, techniques, skills they incorporate when teaching this approach; and 2) to identify the impact of using the writing process approach on five fifth grade Saudi Arabian's writing development.

Qualitative methods, including observations, interviews with the students and the teachers, student think-aloud protocols and students' writing samples were used to collect data during the study. Notes from observations and transcribed interviews and student think-aloud protocols were analyzed to obtain an in depth description and understanding of the influence of the writing process in developing Saudi Arabian elementary ESL students' writing skills.

In Chapter Four, I described how the four ESL teachers, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Zimmerman, Mrs. Phipps, and Mrs. McCain, who participated in this study, employed the writing process approach in their writing classrooms and what writing techniques, strategies, and skills they utilized when teaching writing to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students. This description was obtained from the classroom observations I made and the teacher interviews I conducted. I designed guidelines to assist me to have comprehensive and in-depth observational data (Appendix A). This chapter discussed four main elements for each of the participant teachers: classroom climate; stages of the writing process incorporated when teaching writing; specific writing strategies and techniques; and ESL teachers' skills and structure they employ when teaching writing to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students.

Mrs. Cook

Mrs. Cook was an ESL teacher who held a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Kansas with an emphasis on teaching English as a second language. She had twenty years of teaching experience, including teaching fifth, sixth, seventh, ninth, tenth, and twelfth grades. She was teaching fifth and sixth grade ESL students writing, reading, social studies and science. Mrs. Cook had a passion for teaching in general, and she particularly enjoyed teaching ESL. She showed an appreciation for her students' native languages and cultures. Although Mrs. Cook was not Hispanic, she spoke fluent Spanish, and she had used Spanish sometimes to clear up misunderstanding of vocabulary with Hispanic students. She received a Fullbright grant to study in Costa Rica for five weeks and has been able to travel to several other countries. She also was familiar with a few Arabic words: *Marhaba* (Hello), *Maalslamah* (Good-Bye), and *Shokran* (Thank you). More information about Mrs. Cook was previously provided in Chapter Three. I observed Noof and Najah in Mrs. Cook's writing classroom, from 9:30-10:00 once a week, from December 2007 to the end of April 2008.

Classroom Climate

For this study, classroom climate was defined as the type of environment that was created by the school, teachers, and students that contributed to the effective delivery of writing process instruction and student writing products. Classroom atmosphere is a wide spectrum that encompasses variables ranging from the physical setting, the teacher-student interaction, to the rules and formal setting of this environment (Creemers & Reezigt, 1999, Freiberg, 1999). Borich (1996) identified three different classroom types that a teacher can

create: competitive, co-operative and individualistic. Students in competitive classrooms are encouraged to compete with one another. In such a classroom, the teacher is usually in control with little independency by students. Competition is naturally motivating to students, and teacher-led classrooms can enhance achievement. In co-operative classrooms, the students and the interactions among them are the main focus. In this context, the teacher intervenes to guide and direct students towards learning goals. The effectiveness of cooperative classrooms is in their ability to develop students' learning skills which in turn will enhance their achievement. In an individualistic type of classrooms, the emphasis is on individual student work with minimum teacher intervention. Such a classroom may help in development of independent learning skills. Overall, an effective teacher balances and correlates classroom climates with his or her preset goals. Mrs. Cook created a competitive and co-operative classroom.

When I walked through the classroom's door, I immediately perceived the tone of the classroom environment that had been established. Mrs. Cook's classroom was inviting and warm. The way she physically arranged the students' desks and tables encouraged her students to participate with her and with their peers. She decorated her classroom by displaying students' work, educational posters, maps, and pictures of different countries. She organized her room so that materials were easily accessible and labeled shelves and containers so students could easily return things to their proper places. Mrs. Cook also had book shelves where she kept books of different genres.

Mrs. Cook was continually striving to make her classroom a positive place where student learning was maximized. In her classroom the students felt safe to express their ideas and opinions, and students were nurtured and intellectually stimulated to learn to

their full potential. Mrs. Cook had a small ESL classroom of five students. During my

observation period in her classroom, she was always calling her students by their names,

which signified a positive relationship between her and the students. She also encouraged

her students to call each other using their names and to make sure to pronounce them

correctly. When someone mispronounced a name, laughter would fill the room. Mrs.

Cook's classroom established an unthreatening environment where students could share

their stories and freely talk about subject matter. Mrs. Cook believed that her attitudes in

the classroom definitely impacted her students. Despite her unstable health condition, she

always tried to be enthusiastic and cheerful.

     Mrs. Cook was concerned to learn as much as possible about her students including

their home language, religion, culture, and social life. She did not hesitate to speak in other

languages or to learn new vocabulary from her students. Before she started her class each

day, the first thing she usually did was to greet the students and ask about the way they felt

that morning and how they were after they went home. Whenever she noticed any illness in

her students, she would send them immediately to the school nurse. One day, one of her

students was sick with a cough, and she was sneezing and coughing everywhere. Mrs.

Cook told her in a nice way to sneeze appropriately by sneezing into her arm instead of

spreading the germs into the class and among her peers. All other students liked this

technique, and I observed them afterward doing the same thing when they sneezed.

Advising her students with positive attitudes and behaviors was one of her admirable

characteristics.

     Mrs. Cook was also concerned with establishing a foundation through which

students fulfilled their emotional needs. Throughout my observations, I found that she

liked to teach her students four basic elements: relationship, enjoyment, freedom, and control. She taught them how to admire themselves and others. She believed that having fun during the lessons was an excellent strategy to engage students in learning. The final two elements she believed to be effective in creating a positive classroom were that Mrs. Cook gave her students freedom and control by allowing them to make choices about assignments and other lesson planning. She liked to engage her students in the learning process and make them feel the responsibility and the accountability of their choices.

The relationship between classroom environment and the development of writing is an intimate one. The classroom climate influences students' achievement, self-confidence, self esteem, freedom of speech, and academic success. Establishing a positive and sound rapport between teacher and students was of great significance for the creation of an effective environment. In Mrs. Cook's classroom, a positive classroom climate was successfully built. She showed interest in students' backgrounds, home languages, cultures, and emotions. The way she physically arranged her classroom reflected her teaching philosophy and accommodated her learning activities.

Stages of the Writing Process

There are eight writing process stages that were observed to determine if they were employed by the teacher: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams, 1998). In this section, I define and describe each stage and how the teacher employed it in her classroom.

- *Prewriting.* This stage involves generating ideas, strategies, and information for a given writing task. Prewriting activities take place before starting on the first draft of a paper. They include *discussion, outlining, freewriting, journals, talk-write, and metaphor.*

  In Mrs. Cook's class, prewriting activities could be observed in her writing lessons. In this stage, Mrs. Cook brainstormed with her students to have them come with as many ideas and as much information as they could. She usually asked them questions or asked for their opinions on a specific topic to stimulate their thinking. When students finished their discussion about a subject matter, Mrs. Cook helped them to categorize these ideas and put them in units so they could use them later as guidelines when they wrote. In order to do so, she encouraged them to draw diagrams, charts, pictures, webs, or maps.

- *Planning.* This stage involves reflecting on the material produced during prewriting to develop a plan to achieve the aim of the paper. Planning involves considering the rhetorical stance, the rhetorical purpose, the aim of the text, how these factors are interrelated, and how they are connected to the information generated during prewriting. Planning also involves selecting support for a claim and blocking out at least a rough organizational structure.

  Planning as described above was employed by Mrs. Cook. In her fifth grade classroom, students were taught that writing was not about producing a text. It was rather a matter of following specific stages through which students organize their ideas, write them down, and return to them from time to time for polishing and editing. They comprehended that before they started writing they had to brainstorm and draw a diagram or a web to help them generate, gather, and write down their ideas. Therefore, planning was considerably

embedded within the first stage of writing. Mrs. Cook used the planning stage when she asked her students to plan for their task and set a purpose or an aim for it.

- *Drafting.* This stage involves producing words on a computer or on paper that more or less match the initial plan for the work. Writing occurs over time. Good writers seldom try to produce an entire text in one sitting or even in one day.

This stage could be observed in Mrs. Cook's classroom every day. In her writing class, students were required to do some writing each day, even if it was only a few words or sentences. Sometimes the thirty minute class period was not enough to apply the prewriting and planning stages in one writing session. Therefore, students would practice the drafting stage the following day by writing their first drafts. Students in Mrs. Cook's class were writing their final drafts on computers or papers. She made sure she used the computer to follow along with the latest writing teaching techniques. When students typed their pieces on the computers, Mrs. Cook always encouraged them not to use the spell check feature and to try to use dictionaries or ask her in person to help with misspelled words. Besides asking her students to just type the writing assignment, she liked to help them use other features of the Microsoft Word program so they could become more familiar with the writing process by using different fonts, font sizes, or adding pictures. This opportunity gave the students access to learn more about technology, and it helped to produce their writing pieces in a neat and efficient way.

- *Pausing.* This stage involves moments when writing does not occur. Instead, writers are reflecting on what they have produced and how well it matches their plans. This process usually includes reading. Pausing occurs among good and poor writers, but

they use it in different ways. Good writers consider *global* factors-how well the text matches the plan, how well it is meeting audience needs, and overall organization.

Mrs. Cook used the pausing stage in her writing period. When her students finished writing, she would ask them to read what they had written. She gave them two to three minutes to do so. Sometimes she would ask them to read their papers aloud to the class and ask everybody to focus on the ideas and thoughts of the writers.

- *Reading.* This stage involves moments during pausing when writers read what they have written and compare it to their plans. Reading and writing are interrelated activities. Effective readers are effective writers and vise versa. The reading that takes place during writing is crucial to the reflection process during pausing.

Mrs. Cook usually asked her students to revisit their first draft and read it. The pausing and reading stages were usually completed at the same time; there was no separation between the two stages. During the pause the students would read their writing and check if they had covered all the ideas and thoughts that came up with in their planning stage.

- *Revising*. This stage involves literally re-seeing the text with the goal of making large-scale changes so that text and plan match. Revising occurs after the first draft is finished. It involves making changes that enhance the match between plan and text. Factors to consider usually are the same as those considered during planning: rhetorical stance, rhetorical purpose, and so on. Serious revising almost always includes acquiring suggestions from friends or colleagues on how to improve the writing.

In Mrs. Cook's writing period, two phases of revision were usually employed: peer conference and teacher conference. These conferences would last five and sometimes ten

minutes depending on students' length of written texts and accuracy level. In a peer conference, two students would exchange their papers, read them, and write comments and suggestions. Mrs. Cook participated in this phase by offering some questions for the students to ask themselves during writing. These questions were not written in a check list or a paper, she simply offered them orally. The questions included 1) Is the writing interesting? 2) Are there enough details? and 3) Are there any unfamiliar terms or words?

In peer conferences, students had opportunities to engage in a variety of writing roles. They became idea generators, knowledge providers, and questioners. This engagement helped them to develop their personalities as writers and built their self-confidence. Mrs. Cook also held short and informed teacher conferences with her students to talk about their writing or to help them solve a problem related to their writing. These conferences helped the students to develop their writing by generating ideas, focusing on the subject, and learning sentence correctness, including spelling and grammar.

- *Editing*. This stage involves focusing on sentence-level concerns, such as punctuation, sentence length, spelling, agreement between subjects and verb, and style. Editing occurs after revising. The goal is to give the paper a professional appearance.

After students finished their peer/teacher conferences, editing was the following step in Mrs. Cook's writing class. Students would proofread for the mechanics of writing, such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. In this stage, Mrs. Cook always asked her students to use a pencil--not a pen--to go over and correct the paper. She herself never used a red pen to correct her students' papers. She also provided them with directions such as *Underline the word if you are not sure of its spelling* or *Find the sentences that have an*

unmatched verb and noun. These directions were also provided orally. There was no editing checklist.

- *Publishing.* This stage involves sharing the finished text with its intended audience. Publishing is not limited to getting a text printed in a journal. It includes turning a paper in to a teacher, peers, or the school.

Publishing always occurred in Mrs. Cook's writing class. It was executed in a variety of ways: sharing the final writing products with classmates, turning the papers in to Mrs. Cook, displaying the final product on classroom bulletin board or wall, or displaying the finished tasks in school hallways or on bulletin boards. If the published item would be displayed, whether in the classroom or in a school hallway, students were encouraged to recopy their finished work to a clean piece of paper and to decorate it with colors and pictures. As an example, Mrs. Cook published the "Snow Flakes" posters her students had created in the technical writing period on a classroom bulletin board. Her students were proud of their work.

Strategies and Techniques

Teaching writing is not an easy task. Creating writers and developing their writing skills required well-designed writing instructions and employment of supportive writing strategies and techniques. ESL teachers should be knowledgeable about how writing can be taught in class, not only as a required activity, but also as a lifetime process. Writing instruction must include generous opportunities for students to write, and students should also be taught to write for different purposes and audiences. In this section, I discuss and

describe the strategies and techniques this ESL teacher employed when teaching writing to two fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students.

Throughout my observation in Mrs. Cook's classroom, I observed a variety of strategies she used when teaching writing to her ESL students. I address each strategy and provide examples below.

- *Providing collaborative and cooperative activities.* According to Gerlach (1994), collaborative learning is based on the idea that learning is a naturally social act in which the participants talk among themselves; it is through the talk that learning occurs. Collaborative and cooperative activities have been used in Mrs. Cook's classroom when students worked with each other through peer conferences. They read each other's papers, wrote their suggestions and comments, and received each other's feedback. In these conferences they learned and retained more than when they worked independently.

- *Providing students with examples to explain unfamiliar terms and words.* In Mrs. Cook's classroom, students encountered new words and unfamiliar terms when they read, during discussions with their teacher, and when they talked to each other. They also did not understand some subject matter concepts. In these cases, Mrs. Cook helped them to clarify and define these words by giving them examples. One day they encountered the word *abstract* and did not understand it. Mrs. Cook dropped a pencil in the floor and asked the students, *Why did the pencil fall down and didn't stay in the air?* Her students answered, *Because of gravity.* She replied, *Can you see gravity, or feel it, or touch it?* They answered, *No.* With this example, Mrs. Cook demonstrated what abstract means: a concept you can understand in your mind, though you can't see it. She always liked to visualize any term for her students so that they could easily grasp it.

- *Sharing life experiences and stories to promote writing.* Mrs. Cook exhibited a social and friendly personality. She liked to share her life stories and experiences with her students to encourage their writing. In the technical writing section, she shared her own technical piece about making toast when she was in college. In poetry class, her students found it difficult to write poems, so she brought a poem written by her daughter and read it for them to give them confidence of themselves. She said, *If my daughter can write a poem, you certainly can*. On another occasion, one student commented on her new hair color and said, *Did you color your hair?* Mrs. Cook replied, *I didn't color my hair, I dyed it*. She took three minutes to elaborate on this discussion by explaining how the verb *dye* is different in different languages. She gave an example that in Spanish people say *color* and *paint* for dying hair. She then wrote each verb on the blackboard so the students would know how to distinguish the verb *dye* and not mistake it with the verb *die*.

- *Encouraging students to write.* In Mrs. Cook's classroom ESL students liked to write. However, sometimes they dreaded writing and hesitated to put down their thoughts. One day, Mrs. Cook asked her students to write a letter to their mothers. Najah started to write and afterward she ended up writing just two lines. Mrs. Cook came to her desk and looked at her paper and said, I *am sure you have lots to say about your mom. Why don't you try again?* Najah read her letter and took some time thinking and started writing more sentences and more details. She was happy that she wrote more than two lines. She showed her letter to her teacher in a teacher conference and received some suggestions and comments from her.

Mrs. Cook never left students without help even if it took more time than she planned. She encouraged her students to write in many ways. She liked to talk with them in

person about their stories and how they could add more details. She liked to praise them and honor their work. She also encouraged them physically by hugging them or saying *Give me five*, whenever they tried to improve their writing.

- *Providing feedback and comments.* As much as students need opportunities and encouragement to write, they need their teacher responses and feedback on their writing. Students need to know that their work will be evaluated and assessed. Otherwise, they will feel that their writing is neglected and ignored. Mrs. Cook not only provided oral feedback on her students writing products, but also responded to their work on all stages of the writing process with written feedback, from prewriting to final drafts. She directed her students and offered suggestions whenever needed.

- *Helping students to spell words independently.* Throughout my observations in Mrs. Cook's class, I determined that she always promoted her students to spell words correctly by themselves. The students would come and ask her about a word's spelling. Mrs. Cook would not give them an answer. However, she would direct them to use the dictionary and look for the word, its meaning and its parts. This technique gave the students the opportunity to take responsibility for solving their problems. Providing help was her role whenever her students encountered a problem, but did not really mean solving the problem for them. And when they used the computers to word process their papers, she also insisted on not using the *spell check* feature, but to go and ask for help from the teacher or other students or use the dictionary or any other resources.

Skills

Teachers play key roles in the English learning process. They have their influence on every aspect they can be related to, from the classroom atmosphere to students' learning development. ESL teachers have even more burden on their shoulders when teaching English to ESL students. They must have special characteristics and skills to achieve desired result in teaching English. Table 4.1 is divided into four categories: communication, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, and organizational skills. These four categories are essential to give the reader a wide image of how the ESL teachers should be characterized and what distinguishes them from other teachers. Table 4.1 displays the characteristics and skills of Mrs. Cook demonstrated during classroom observations.

Table 4.1: Mrs. Cook's Skill Chart

Communication Skills	Leadership Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Organizational Skills
Clear and effective speaker	Member of teaching team	Have temperament for students	Daily lesson plans
Proficient in communicating with other cultures and learning their languages	Member of school activities	Integrate humor into lesson and explanations to help student learn	Good manager of time
Researching for ESL teaching, techniques, and strategies	Able to solve problems in fair and rational manner	Fair critic of herself	Able to handle single or group learning
Editing students' writing and provide positive comments and suggestion for improvement	Good listener	Open-minded personality	Creative in re-using learning materials
Providing various methods and techniques when teaching writing	Providing feedback for students: written and orally	Developing excellent rapport with her students	Detail oriented in her professional and teaching duties

Adapted from http://www.tefl.net/esl-jobs/transferable-skills-teachers.htm

Mrs. Cook can be considered an experienced ESL teacher according to her skill chart. She possesses most of the characteristics that are required for an ESL teacher. These skills qualify Mrs. Cook to be successful in teaching and establishing an environment in

which students not only practice a second language and learn its grammar and spelling rules, but also feel safe, encouraged, and satisfied.

Interview Analysis

I interviewed Mrs. Cook in December 2007 in her classroom. We sat together at her desk where we faced each other. She seemed relaxed and excited about the interview. I prepared the tape recorder and made sure it was working. I took my question sheet out of the bag and started interviewing Mrs. Cook. See Appendix K for Mrs. Cook's interview transcription and Appendix L for coding categories.

After coding Mrs. Cook's responses to the interview questions, I created ten categories: appreciation of learning/teaching ESL, problems in teaching ESL, personal strengths and weakness, teaching ESL experiences, writing activities/methods, students' responses to writing activities, encouragement to write, rapport with ESL students, writing assessment, challenges/difficulties, and philosophy/beliefs. I describe each category separately and provide each with documented interview words, terms, phrases, and sentences.

- *Appreciation of learning/ teaching ESL.* Mrs. Cook loved teaching. She found it interesting and fun. Mrs. Cook said the following in the interview:

> *This is the response you're never supposed to give during an*
>
> *interview, but it's true: I loved learning, but I had some terrible*
>
> *(and terribly cruel) teachers as a child. I knew education didn't*
>
> *have to be that way—that it was possible to make learning*

> *interesting, engaging and fun. My teachers were Catholic nuns,*
>
> *who are often notoriously mean.*

From her response, I noted that because Mrs. Cook had negative learning experiences, she became a positive teacher. Her background helped her to strengthen her beliefs about teaching and to shape her class activities to accommodate her philosophy. When teachers comprehend their goal of teaching and their philosophy of teaching, then they can identify and choose the approaches they find to be sufficient. In response to why she became an ESL teacher, Mrs. Cook replied:

> *For me, it was the perfect combination of my interest in other*
>
> *cultures, teaching, and the love of and curiosity about other*
>
> *languages and different ways of viewing the world. The mission of*
>
> *which I spoke is the idea, however lofty, that I can effect a change*
>
> *in the way students feel about each other and people from other*
>
> *countries.*

As a result of Mrs. Cook's interest in other cultures and other languages, she found teaching ESL an opportunity to fulfill her desire. Her job as an ESL teacher became a window open to explore other worlds.

- *Problems in teaching ESL.* Mrs. Cook did not face any problems teaching ESL students. She found them interested in learning, motivated, curious, and enjoyable. She also found them more respectful to teachers than the American students. She responded to a related question:

> *I have the best students in the world. With very few exceptions,*
>
> *they are interested in learning, motivated, curious and fun. They*

are also much more respectful of teachers than many American

students, so this makes my class both easy to teach and fun. Since

there are so few discipline problems, we can spend a lot of time

learning in interesting ways.

The only problem Mrs. Cook had regarding her ESL teaching was not actually with the students, but the other teachers with whom she struggled to explain that all teachers were responsible for the ESL students' learning, not only the ESL teacher. She stated:

Many teachers are not willing to adapt curriculum to make it

comprehensible, and it's not that difficult to do. The same

approaches that help ESL students are also approaches that

help all students, since everyone has different learning

styles. The only other issues have been teachers and parents

with unrealistic expectations of how long it takes to learn a

language and be successful in a regular classroom without

adapted curriculum. If so, what are they?

She also responded to a question mentioning her frustration about those teachers. She said:

I do get very frustrated when trying to explain the language

acquisition process to a classroom teacher in an attempt to help

him/her understand why the student can't perform at the level they

expect and the distinct response I receive is that I'm "making

excuses" for the student, rather than explaining a valid reason for

the inability to comprehend or perform at the expected level.

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- *Personal strengths and weakness.* Mrs. Cook's strengths were concentrated in her being empathetic, and curious about other cultures. Her weakness though was being tangential in her thought process that took students from one subject to another. Another weakness she identified in herself was her inability to learn another language and to travel to other places.

- *Teaching ESL experience.* Mrs. Cook had positive experiences teaching ESL students. She showed her strength in her experiences as follows: *There's been nothing but good to say. I've loved my experiences doing my job. As one student put it, 'I'm in my happy place.*

- *Writing activities/strategies/approaches.* Mrs. Cook used a wide variety of writing techniques by using the writing process approach, Six Traits model, and teaching figurative languages. She said:

> *I use a wide variety of techniques. We all use the writing process: Prewriting, First Draft, Revising Proofreading/Editing and (a couple of times a year) Publishing. We also teach using the Six Traits method as part of instruction, as well as scoring. Some of our students who may struggle greatly with Conventions or Sentence Fluency may really shine through in their Voice. This gives them a chance to see how writing can be broken apart into different aspects and makes it easier for them to compartmentalize a certain aspect on which to work.*

Mrs. Cook's students enjoyed her writing activities and responded to them positively. Although they did not care to take notes, especially if she provided them with

written materials with the information included, they generally appreciated that these distributed materials were helpful. Her students liked to experiment with the new approaches and styles of writing. The ESL students in Mrs. Cook's classroom seemed to gain satisfaction from the numerous writing activities provided although they had problems in specific areas such as Conventions, Word Choice, and Sentences Fluency.

- *Encouragement to write*. Mrs. Cook encouraged her students by making writing as enjoyable as possible. She gave them chances to choose their topics and pick something important to them when they wrote. In addition, she practiced lots of brainstorming when it was needed to generate ideas and information that helped them to write:

> *I try to make it as fun as possible, as well as having them write about things they know and/or care about. Our persuasive writing pieces are usually lots of fun, because they must pick something important to them. This really shows in how invested they are. We often start with a lot of brainstorming to develop ideas. When kids are really stuck, I'll have them tell me answers, and then explain that they need to just pretend they're telling me again; use the same words, only this time write them on paper. Don't fret about spelling at first, just do your best to guess.*

- *Rapport with ESL students.* Mrs. Cook had established a safe and comfortable environment in her classroom. The great personality and a sense of humor both attracted students to her. She treated her students fairly and listened to them all the time:

> *I believe it is absolutely crucial to build a good rapport with my students. Even when they can't understand what I'm saying, they*

can tell if I care about them. If they don't feel comfortable,

welcomed and appreciated, they won't be open to listening to my

instruction.

- *Writing assessment.* Two main phases of assessment Mrs. Cook used to evaluate her students' writing included the Six Traits Writing Rubric and KELPA (Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment). She responded to a related question by saying, *Personally, as a writing teacher, I evaluate their writing performance using the rubric that is normally used for scoring the Six Traits model. I am also required to score their KELPA (Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment) with a rubric I consider significantly problematic.*

- *Challenges/difficulties, philosophy/beliefs.* Mrs. Cook faced challenges when she was not given adequate help in her classroom when she required it, especially when she taught a large group of ESL students last year in a room where another teacher was teaching her students another subject at the same time. The room itself was too small to accommodate just one class, let alone containing two large classes. Mrs. Cook and her students had difficulties keeping focused because of so many distractions from the other group.

On the whole, Mrs. Cook had special characteristics that distinguished her from the other ESL teachers. These characteristics were: 1) appreciation of teaching ESL students with twenty years of experience; 2) using various writing activities and strategies that meet every student's needs; and 3) being respectful to other languages and cultures.

Mrs. Zimmerman

Mrs. Zimmerman earned a master's degree as a reading specialist from the University of Kansas. She was certified as an ESL teacher. Throughout her teaching years, she taught all grades: kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth. She started teaching ESL about four years ago when she came to Central Elementary School. For the past two years, she had been teaching ESL students with a lower level of English proficiency. She had 20 years of teaching experience. More information about Mrs. Zimmerman was provided in Chapter Three. I observed Nadia in Mrs. Zimmerman's writing classroom from 9:30 to 10:00 once a week, from December 2007 to the end of April 2008.

Classroom Climate

While the other three teachers' classrooms were inside the school building, Mrs. Zimmerman's class was outside in a mobile unit. Her classroom was considered small and had only five students. When you entered her classroom, you found the teacher's desk to the left and only one table to your right where students sat together in a front of the black board. There was a hanging chair next to the students' table and throw pillows on the floor students sat on to read or do their homework. Colorful artwork and posters were hanging on the wall. There was also a small book shelf where Mrs. Zimmerman kept many stories from different genres for different grades. The students were free to borrow those stories and get them back to Mrs. Zimmerman whenever they finished reading them. The classroom size prevented students from moving around because everything was close to their reach.

Mrs. Zimmerman had the benefit of having this small group to teach. Since she taught ESL students with a lower level of English proficiency, this format helped her to improve her students learning skills by focusing on their strengths and weakness. The students in Mrs. Zimmerman's class were willing to learn, enjoy, and be engaged in learning activities. She liked to greet her students with a warm smile and an encouraging hug every morning. She always called her students by their names and liked to hear from them at the beginning of each class. She always wrote on the blackboard and defined terms with which students were unfamiliar. Although her students were usually quiet, she created an atmosphere to encourage them to engage and freely talk about subject matter. Whenever she felt that her students were mixed up, or off task, she would bring them back to the subject in a polite way. Mrs. Zimmerman provided her students with the same opportunities to ask questions, meet with her, and ask for help in reading and writing.

Mrs. Zimmerman created a co-operative classroom. She also succeeded in establishing a strong relationship with her students. Her patience to listen to their difficult accent and incorrect vocabulary and her persistence to understand what they meant was a key in this rapport. She always understood her students' academic, emotional, and social needs and tried hard to provide them with the support they required from her. Her students felt free to talk with her and asked for her help without fear or hesitation. She acted many times like a mother to those students and as a friend as well. Her caring and truthfulness made her classroom a home-like environment.

Stages of the Writing Process

There are eight writing process stages that were observed if they were employed by the teacher: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams,1998). In this section, I describe how the teacher employed each stage in her classroom.

- *Prewriting.* Mrs. Zimmerman applied this stage in a professional way. First, she started her writing class asking her students questions to promote their participation. One day she asked her students *What is text structure?* and waited for their answers. There was no answer from her five students. She went to the black board and grabbed a poster about text structure. She started reading it to the students. She explained two parts of text structure: description and compare/contrast. And then she wrote on the blackboard "text= book/story" and "structure=how." Afterward they started brainstorming. Mrs. Zimmerman told her students that brainstorming was the first stage in the writing process approach. She wrote on the blackboard all the stages of the writing process and told the students that these were what writing should be about. She told them that brainstorming was conducted when their mind *goes tornado* to generate ideas and thoughts. She said, *When we brainstorm, we help ourself to write in a more organized way.* She asked her students to draw a diagram to put down the ideas.

- *Planning.* When students finished their prewriting where they generated and recorded ideas, planning came next. In planning students went over their diagrams or webs and linked them to the subject. In this stage, students could add more ideas, reject others, or change what they created in the prewriting stage. Mrs. Zimmerman helped her students in this stage by reading their charts and checking out the ideas and how close

they were to the subject. Sometimes she would ask her students to delete an idea or add more ideas and create headlines.

- *Drafting.* Writing took place during every writing period. Mrs. Zimmerman liked her students to practice what she was explaining during the period. So after students were finished jotting down their ideas and planning them, writing their rough drafts came next. Mrs. Zimmerman encouraged them to keep their web page in front of them when they composed. Students in Mrs. Zimmerman class wrote on papers. Throughout my observations for the entire semester, I did not observe them using the computers compared to the other classes I observed.

- *Pausing.* This stage was employed in Mrs. Zimmerman's writing class. When students finished writing their first draft, Mrs. Zimmerman would ask them to take one to two minutes to read what they wrote. In this stage, too, she would ask her student to exchange their papers with each other to share their stories. No comments or corrections happened in this stage, just a quiet silent reading.

- *Reading.* In this stage which constantly occurred in the pausing stage, students read their first draft and checked out if they covered their plan. Reading was completed in a quite and silent atmosphere. Mrs. Zimmerman would sit at the table and observe her students while they were reading and she would be ready to offer any help.

- *Revising.* Three phases of revising were completed in Mrs. Zimmerman's writing class: self, peer and teacher conferences. She would ask her students to read their stories and check if they covered all the ideas they wrote in their prewriting stage. Students would read their stories with the prewriting page in front of them. They would be asked to locate any errors dealing with the connections between their ideas, or any functional

writing errors such as spelling and grammar. Sometimes, Mrs. Zimmerman would put them in pairs and have them read each other's papers. The students were asked to provide each other with feedback about ideas, examples, and details. They would also be asked to determine the surface level spelling, grammar, punctuation, and paragraphing errors. Because of their low English proficiency, students on many occasions would not be able to spot those errors. Then, Mrs. Zimmerman intervention would take place. She would welcome them to a teacher conference where they would work as a team to revise the work and have it ready for the next stage.

Sometimes she would ask her students to read their stories aloud for themselves. She said, *You may need to read it aloud for yourself and that will help you to fix your writing*. When they found an error and tried to fix it, she would say to them, *That's why we need to read our work aloud.* On one occasion, one of her ESL students wanted to write the correct spelling word and erase the wrong word. Mrs. Zimmerman told her not to erase it but to circle it and write the correct spelling above the circle. So in the future, when she read her story, she found how she wrote that word and the correct spelling for it.

- *Editing.* After the students finished revising their papers with their peers and teacher, they would write error-free-spelling and grammar papers. One day Mrs. Zimmerman asked her student what editing meant. The students answered the question by saying, *Editing means correcting.* She replied, *Yes, editing means checking your spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and agreement between nouns and verbs.*

- *Publishing*. Publishing in Mrs. Zimmerman's writing class was established by sharing students' papers with the teacher, with their peers, and by allowing me to make copies of

them. It also occurred when the teacher displayed their persuasive writing papers on the wall.

Mrs. Zimmerman had employed the eight stages of the writing process approach (Williams, 1998) when she was teaching writing to her Saudi Arabian student. During my observation of her classroom, I experienced Mrs. Zimmerman professionalism and deep experience in teaching ESL students. Her organized teaching practices and her knowledge of transferring from one activity to another according to her students' needs, showed high qualified ESL teaching characteristics.

Strategies and Techniques

Throughout my observation in Mrs. Zimmerman's classroom, she employed a variety of strategies when teaching writing to her ESL students. I described each strategy and its evidence in order.

- *Providing collaborative and cooperative activities.* Mrs. Zimmerman's writing class was the place where collaborative learning such as reading aloud together, sharing stories, and reading each others writings often occurred. Although the English level of those students was lower than their peers in other classes, Mrs. Zimmerman always tried to provide such activities that stimulated their potential to learn and promote their motivation to write. Sometimes, students in Mrs. Zimmerman's class needed direct instruction and guidance from her in order to cope with the English language. Because of their lack of English, sometimes it was difficult for them to understand each other due to their different accents. Therefore, Mrs. Zimmerman designed her collaborative activities to meet their needs. Because her students came from different countries, she allowed these

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different backgrounds, experiences, lifestyles, and aspirations to be brought to the classroom in order for her students to immerse themselves in collaborative activities.

- *Increasing students' participation.* In Mrs. Zimmerman's class each student had an opportunity to talk. She prioritized that every student in her class talked and shared anything during the class. Mrs. Zimmerman believed that the longer the student went without talking in the class, the more difficult for him/her to contribute to class activities. To encourage their participation, Mrs. Zimmerman used nonverbal cues. For example, she smiled expectantly and nodded as students talked. She looked relaxed and interested while she was listening to her students and maintained eye contact with them. During her listening, she also involved more students talking by asking them whether they agreed with what others said. She would ask them, *Can you give me more examples about this?*, *How do you feel about this*? and *Does anyone want to say anything about this?* These questions inspired students to participate and hear each other's voices in a nonthreatening atmosphere.

- *Teaching phonics to improve students' reading and writing.* During my observation in Mrs. Zimmerman's class, I found her a strong proponent for using phonics. She believed that teaching phonics to the students with low English level was crucial in the learning process. When students could not read or spell a word, she would immediately ask them to sound it out. In this technique, she taught her students the various English sounds, then the letters that corresponded to them. I found that her students were familiar with phonics and they enjoyed using the relationship between sounds and letters. Mrs. Zimmerman used phonics to improve her ESL students' spelling ability. She believed that the advantage of this besides teaching the alphabet was that once they had mastered the

main sounds, they could read and write many words in English. She always told her students that they needed to work on spelling to become better readers and better writers. One day she differentiated to her students the difference between the words *there* and *their*. After she finished, she asked them to write each word in a complete sentence. Also, she found one of her students misspelled the word *hand*. She asked them all to sound it out and write it down on their papers. Then she told them, *If you can write hand, you can write sand, band, stand*.

- *Playing games.* One of the techniques Mrs. Zimmerman used to add more engagement in the classroom was playing games with her students. She believed that playing games in the ESL classroom helped students to sustain their interest and encouraged them to experience the language in an enjoyable and meaningful setting. One of the games I observed that Mrs. Zimmerman executed was a phonics game. She asked each student to get a pencil. She distributed a sheet of paper to each student. Then she wrote on the black board *a e c l s t*. She asked the students to write these letters on a piece of paper and by using scissors she asked them to cut out each letter. Once they had all the six letter pieces, she asked each student to put these letters together and make a word out of them. They came up with different words, for example, *at, cat, stand, tale, steal, scat, east, scale, castle, sale, seat, let, set*, and *eat*. The students enjoyed this game. When they finished, Mrs. Zimmerman asked them to put each word they derived in a sentence.

Skills

During my observation of Mrs. Zimmerman, I found that she possessed multiple skills to which I could relate her success in teaching ESL students. Some of these skills

were personality and others were professional. Table 4.2 displays these skills according to

four categories: communication, leadership, interpersonal, and organizational skills.

Table 4.2: Mrs. Zimmerman's Skill Chart

Communication Skills	Leadership Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Organizational Skills
Explains writing lessons and unfamiliar concepts in depth	Member of teaching team	Shows respect to students by using some words from their languages	Daily lesson plans
Interacts with students in class and out side the class.	Member of school activities	Uses humor to liven up the class	Good manager of time
Advocates of phonics awareness	Deals with inappropriate behaviors quickly in a friendly yet a firm manner	Caring, loveable, and welcoming	Excellent in organizing students' work on folder and files
Uses different strategies to carry out information	Providing quick, clear, and un criticize feedback for students	Good talker and good listener	Knows how to start and how to end her writing sessions

Adapted from http://www.tefl.net/esl-jobs/transferable-skills-teachers.htm

Interview Analysis

I interviewed Mrs. Zimmerman in February 2008. The interview was conducted in

her classroom after school. She greeted me with a smile and asked me to sit on a table

where I could face her. I took my tape-recorder out of my backpack and made some tests

before starting. Mrs. Zimmerman was excited about the interview and she seemed relaxed

and comfortable.

Mrs. Zimmerman's interview coding led to ten categories: enjoyment to teach

children, problems in teaching ESL, personal strengths and weakness, teaching ESL

experiences, writing activities/methods, students' responses to writing activities,

encouragement to write, rapport with ESL students, writing assessment,

challenges/difficulties, philosophy/beliefs. I describe each category separately and document with interview words, terms, phrases, and sentences.

- *Enjoyment in teaching children.* When Mrs. Zimmerman was asked about the reason for becoming a teacher, she answered: *You know I don't really know when I have actually decided to become a teacher. It's just that I've always enjoyed children and so I just started teaching.*

- *Problems in teaching ESL.* Mrs. Zimmerman had serious problems in teaching ESL. These problems had nothing to do with the students themselves, but the education system that forced her to accept ESL students at anytime of the year. This procedure made teaching English to newer students while having students who already gained substantial English very difficult. As she stated:

> *Probably the biggest problem that I have had happened last year*
>
> *when I had a group of students and I started working with them in*
>
> *August, and then in January I received new students and the*
>
> *children who had been with me since August really had gained a*
>
> *lot of English and we were making a lot of progress and then when*
>
> *I had a new batch of students coming in January, it was like*
>
> *starting over again, so it was very hard for the kids who already*
>
> *had been there, and the new kids because I needed to make it even*
>
> *for both of them and that was very hard .*

- *Personal strengths and weaknesses.* Mrs. Zimmerman's personal strengths included her close relationship with her students. In this relationship students were more likely to cooperate with her. Another strength Mrs. Zimmerman possessed was her ability

to laugh at her mistakes and students' mistakes. However, one of her weaknesses was her inability to fluently speak other languages:

> *I think one of my strengths is that it seems that the children and I*
>
> *develop a really nice strong rapport , relationship with each other,*
>
> *and they tend to work very hard with me and I have the ability to*
>
> *laugh at my mistakes and their mistakes and it makes the class nice*
>
> *and relaxed. One of my weaknesses is I wish I spoke another*
>
> *language (Laugh). I think that is a weakness.*

- *Teaching ESL experience.* According to her answer about her teaching ESL experience, Mrs. Zimmerman had enjoyed being an ESL teacher. This position offered her an opportunity to learn about different cultures and different religions. Her experience was interesting. She said, *I have absolutely loved being an ESL teacher, absolutely. It's exciting it's interesting. I have learned, you know, about different cultures. I have learned about different religions; you know it has been extremely interesting.*

- *Writing activities/strategies/approaches.* Mrs. Zimmerman used several writing activities, strategies, and approaches to enhance her students' writing skills. She used phonics, the writing process, different text structures and genres such as persuasive, compare and contrast, writing commercials and descriptive texts. And when teaching vocabulary, she drew pictures and acted out the words.

- *Students' responses to writing activities.* Mrs. Zimmerman's ESL students had enjoyed the writing activities she offered when teaching writing. She said,

> *I think they enjoyed the writing activities I've tried to do various*
>
> *activities using different text structures, we've tried persuasive*

piece, we made posters, we tried to write commercials, and we

looked at pictures. So I think by using different activities keep it

kinda fresh for the students.

- *Encouragement to write.* Mrs. Zimmerman used more emotional encouragement to promote her students' writing. The positive relationship she had with them, the care she provided to them, and being on their side, gave them more confidence in themselves and in their teacher. Also she liked to smile at them and made them feel that her classroom was a safe place to be.

- *Rapport with ESL students.* Mrs. Zimmerman believed that building a strong rapport with students was a keystone for them to learn. She said, *Once they realize how much I care for them, and that I am on their side, although I am still the teacher, that develops that relationship.*

- *Writing assessment.* Mrs. Zimmerman used a simple rubric through which she evaluated her students' writing. She stated:

    I like to use a rubric. Something that pretty basic and I use that to

    evaluate their writing. Sometimes I say for a sort of text structure, I

    say this is what I am looking for and they know in advance what

    they need to include. So I try to make it by using a rubric that is

    fair and they know what they're gonna be graded on.

- *Philosophy and beliefs.* Mrs. Zimmerman believed that in order for ESL students to master the language skills such as reading and writing, they had to practice over and over. She stated:

I would say that my philosophy is the kids have to learn basically

by doing. For example, on writing it takes a great deal of practice

to become a good reader, I mean a good writer, just as reading

takes a lot of practice to become a good reader.

Through coding Mrs. Zimmerman interviews, several characteristics had been identified. The first and most significant one was her passion and enthusiasm for teaching ESL students. Her twenty year teaching experience added more professionalism on every aspect of her teaching strategies and techniques. In fact, the way through which she interacted with her ESL students as individuals with special needs had a tremendous impact on their writing performance. Her patient and open personality encouraged her students not only to feel secure but also valuable in the class community. The multiple strategies she employed when teaching writing strengthened her practice and enabled her to serve the ESL students as they differed considerably in their language limits.

Mrs. Phipps

Mrs. Phipps had a bachelor's degree in education. She taught fifth grade for four years. She started teaching English in 2003. She started taking classes in teaching ESL in 2005, and she finished her last training class in fall 2007. In these training classes, she had acquired effective teaching methods and techniques that helped her with ESL students in particular, and with regular students as well. Her experience with teaching ESL had been positive and she found her class diversity interesting and forthcoming. More information about Mrs. Phipps is provided in Chapter Three. I observed Nasser in Mrs. Phipps'writing classroom from 9:30 to 10:00 once a week from December 2007 to the end of April 2008.

Classroom Climate

Mrs. Phipps had a quite large room with 14 students. From the moment I entered her room, I noticed how orderly she fashioned her room and arranged the desks in a way that encouraged class participation. The desks were arranged in groups of four and distributed around the class. Students' jackets and backpacks were hanging on the wall next to the right of the room entrance. Mrs. Phipps' room was decorated with many posters about the subjects which she taught. On the black board, there were cards written in six languages. She kept the classroom shelves organized and properly anchored. She also provided clear access to the materials the students used in the classroom by labeling them and putting them in labeled storage boxes next to the wall.

Mrs. Phipps was concerned about creating a positive classroom environment for her students. I found that students were comfortable and motivated to learn. They usually moved around the tables and went to the teacher's desk to ask about something. In this classroom, the students felt safe and knew it was the place where they could freely share their ideas and not be embarrassed. For example, one day the teacher asked the students to write about how they felt about homework. In the prewriting stage, all students were sharing their opinions about whether homework was a good or a bad experience in a way that gave me a sense of how respectful the teacher was of her students' views and how confident and self-assured the students were. The students in Mrs. Phipps classroom were willing to cooperate with whatever she required. The classroom atmosphere offered opportunities for learning that encouraged students to be problem solvers, decision makers, and life long learners.

Mrs. Phipps was successful in establishing a friendship rapport with her students. Three main characteristics I identified that made her relationship with her students different were that she was flexible, friendly, and humorous. When her students asked her for extra time to finish their assignment, she always agreed to that. But at the same time, she determined a due date for it. Her flexibility garnered her trust from her students. Sometime she would be the students' friend, not their teacher. She listened to them and respected their ideas and talks. She liked to act in a manner that attracted her students to her. Students in general like their teacher to act like a human being, to laugh, correct herself, and to admit mistakes. This was one of Mrs. Phipps most liked characteristics. Mrs. Phipps created a competitive, co-operative and individualistic classroom.

Stages of the Writing Process

There are eight writing process stages that were observed if they were employed by the teacher: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams,1998). In this section, I describe how the teacher employed each stage in her classroom.

- *Prewriting.* Mrs. Phipps employed the prewriting stage in her writing class. Her students were familiar with the writing process approach and knew what stages to follow throughout their writing. In this stage, Mrs. Phipps provided a comfortable atmosphere for her students to discuss a topic by asking questions. They also were free to draw graphic organizers, pictures, outlines and practice some freewriting they found necessary. According to Tompkins (2003) and Lipson and Wixson (2003), utilizing the graphic organizers becomes the foundation upon which quality writing is built. In brainstorming,

Mrs. Phipps helped her students to generate ideas about the topic they were to write by drawing graphic organizers. This technique supported the prewriting stage and involved the students in the discussion and gave them an opportunity to visualize the topic and find ways to write it down.

- *Planning.* In Mrs. Phipps' writing class, students were required to check out their brainstorming webs, maps, or charts and make sure that all the ideas written were matched with the main topic. This stage was not done separately, but was incorporated into the prewriting stage. Students usually prewrote and planned at the same time.

- *Drafting.* After prewriting and planning, students wrote their topics using the webs, diagrams, charts, maps, or pictures they drew. Students organized the information they had generated during prewriting and started to put it down on paper. As they composed, students began to determine what to include and exclude, and made personal decisions about how these thoughts would be organized in written form. Mrs. Phipps gave her students ample time to finish their rough draft and she always kept her classroom quiet and comfortable to write. Frequently students wrote their first drafts on paper.

- *Pausing.* In pausing, students are required to read their writing silently or loudly to see how it matches the plan. This stage took only two to three minutes. Occasionally, Mrs. Phipps asked her students to take few minutes to read what they wrote silently. However, there was a time when Mrs. Phipps asked her student to read their first drafts aloud to themselves or to a classmate.

- *Reading.* Pausing and reading stages were accomplished at the same time. After students finished their rough draft, Mrs. Phipps asked them to read their papers and go

over the ideas and check their webs, pictures, diagrams, and timelines to make sure that their ideas and thoughts were aligned with what they wrote in their plans.

- *Revising.* This stage divided into two phases: peer conference and teacher conference. After students finished their writing, they would be asked to share and exchange their papers with each other. They would reorganize and sequence relevant ideas and add or delete unnecessary words or sentences. In this stage the students reread and reflected upon their own work.

After they finished their peer conferences, Mrs. Phipps would welcome them to meet with her. The students would come to her desk and she would read their paper. In the teacher conference, Mrs. Phipps would write her comments and suggestions down on the student's paper. She would ask for more information, details, and examples about ideas being written. Mrs. Phipps did not make corrections for her students. Whenever she found surface grammar, punctuation or spelling errors, she would underline them and ask the students to fix them. She also would praise her students verbally by saying *good job*, you *have done great job* and *excellent.*

- *Editing.* After students finished meeting with their peers and teacher, the students would rewrite their papers including the corrections that needed to be made. The students would check their grammar errors by asking another student or asking the teacher. The spelling mistakes were corrected by looking at the dictionary or asking the teacher. Sometimes the teacher would ask the students to check out their punctuation by reading the punctuation poster hanging on the wall.

- *Publishing.* Once the editing stage was completed, the students would be ready for the final step which was publishing. Mrs. Phipps rewarded her students by having their

papers published in class or outside the class. In this stage, Mrs. Phipps employed numerous ways to publish her students' work. Some techniques she used to publish their work included: 1) reading the final product to the whole class or to a peer; 2) printing copies for a friend or a classmate; 3) displaying the work in classroom bulletin board; and 4) placing the writing on the school publication board.

Strategies and Techniques

Throughout my observation in Mrs. Phipps' classroom, there were several teaching techniques employed to improve students' writing skills. I describe each strategy and provide evidence addressed in the classroom.

- *Providing collaborative and cooperative activities.* In Mrs. Phipps' writing class, students sat in groups or pairs when discussing a topic. They usually worked in a collaborative environment where they worked together to achieve a specific goal. I found that students working in groups or pairs were responsible for one another's success. Therefore, Mrs. Phipps always mixed these groups so there was at least one advanced student in the group. She believed that the successes of one student helped other students to be successful. I also found that the students working in groups or pairs introduced more ideas and opinions than if they were working independently. According to Machey and Gass (2006), numerous studies have indicated that interactions are a source for negotiation of meaning, which may facilitate the development of L2.

- *Providing written feedback.* Mrs. Phipps provided her students with two types of feedback- direct and indirect. The use of these types depended on each student's English level. Direct feedback was underlining grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors and

correcting them. It was usually provided when students did not understand their mistakes and the way in which they should fix them. On the other hand, indirect feedback provided students with their mistakes and their places but not the corrections of these mistakes. According to Fathman and Walley (1990), when students receive grammar feedback that indicated the place but not type of errors, the students effectively improved their grammar scores on subsequent rewrites of the papers. In addition, Frodesen (2001) notes that indirect feedback is more useful than direct correction.

- *Encouraging contributions, participation and promoting peer interaction to support learning.* Mrs. Phipps encouraged her students to participate in class and designed her daily activities accordingly. She started her class by asking questions, or asking about a specific topic to promote their level of contributions. She also arranged her classroom desks and tables to serve this purpose. Students' level of participation was high in Mrs. Phipps' class. The safe, enjoyable, and respectful environment she was providing played a key role in promoting peer interaction. During the writing process approach, most of the activities that were undertaken involved group or peer interactions. When Mrs. Phipps found that there were certain students who were dominating the discussion part, she would say, *I would like to hear from some others who have not contributed today.*

- *Scaffolding the writing instruction.* The concept of scaffolding roots back to Lev Vygotsky's theoretical concept, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is the "area between what children can do independently and what they can do with assistance" (Clark & Graves, 2005, p. 571). The writing process approach could be considered a scaffolding approach. The different stages the students needed to go through required the teacher to provide continuous assistance from the first stage onward. Mrs.

Phipps *scaffolded* her students using various approach: asking questions and spending time elaborating on a student's responses. For example, in one of class discussion about sport, Nasser showed interest in soccer. Mrs. Phipps asked him several questions such as, *What is soccer? Why it is important? How do you play soccer?* By this technique, Mrs. Phipps intentionally assisted Nasser to guide his thought and generate ideas about soccer. In this strategy, Mrs. Phipps provided her students with writing activities that were just beyond the level of what they could do alone. For example, when she assigned them to write on a topic matter, she would ask them to provide examples and supporting details. Not all students were capable of doing so. Therefore, in teacher conference she would advise them to use the Internet, for example, to find out information or pictures about a topic. If she noticed misspelled words she would not correct that errors; however, she would direct a student to use the dictionary or other resource. Gradually she would lessen her help until a student reached a point where he/she could write independently.

Skills

In order to effectively teach ESL, Mrs. Phipps possessed some individual skills that helped her in providing meaningful and effective learning experiences. These skills were divided into four various categories: communication, leadership, interpersonal, and organizational skills. Table 4.3 displays the characteristics and skills of Mrs. Phipps.

Table 4.3: Mrs. Phipps's Skill Chart

Communication Skills	Leadership Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Organizational Skills
Invites students to share their knowledge and experience	Member of teaching team	Friendly toward students	Sets organized objectives for writing class
Knowledgeable of how to communicate with her students	Member of school activities	Provides assistance when needed	Has command of her classroom

Interacts with the students before, during, and after the class	Has confidence of what she is doing	Warm, kind, and sympathetic	Provides corrective feedback
Relates to students as individuals	Promotes active students learning	Walks around while she talks	Varies the speed and the tone of her voice from content to another
Uses various approach to deliver information	Welcomes criticism of her ideas, thoughts, and suggestions	Provides chances for students to interrupt anytime if they don't understand	Stays with the subject and does not shift direction to other subjects

Adapted from http://www.tefl.net/esl-jobs/transferable-skills-teachers.htm.

From the above table, Mrs. Phipps had the skills required to understand her ESL students' language needs and to provide rich and meaningful writing lesson that supported their language growth. Using various approaches to deliver information and incorporating different speech speeds and voice tones were two of her distinguishing and supporting skills.

Interview Analysis

I interviewed Mrs. Phipps in February 2007 in her classroom. The school was celebrating Valentine's Day and all the students were attending a dancing party in the gym. I sat on a table next to Mrs. Phipps' desk. She was on my left. I prepared my tape recording and my interview questions card and checked the tape recording for readiness before I started the interview. Mrs. Phipps was smiling at me all the time, and she seemed relaxed and comfortable while she was answering my questions. As the other teachers, Mrs. Phipps's interview led to ten categories: appreciation of teaching ESL, problems in teaching ESL, personal strengths and weakness, teaching ESL experiences, writing activities/methods, students' responses to writing activities, encouragement to write, rapport with ESL students, writing assessment, challenges/difficulties, philosophy/beliefs. I describe each category separately and support it with interview words, terms, phrases, and sentences.

- *Appreciation of teaching.* Mrs. Phipps decided to be a teacher because she appreciated working with children and wanted to make a difference in their live. She responded to a related question saying, *I just love working with children, and wanted to make a difference in their lives.*

- *Problems in teaching ESL.* When Mrs. Phipps asked if she had any problems teaching ESL, she answered, *I think it's the same as teaching other students, I mean what we learn is just basic good teaching methods and techniques. It helps you with ESL students but it's also helps you with all students, so I think it's pretty comparative.* Mrs. Phipps looked at teaching ESL as not a different experience than teaching regular students. Although some teachers would consider teaching ESL students as challenging and frustrating, Mrs. Phipps found it not problematic.

- *Personal strengths and weakness.* When Mrs. Phipps asked about her personal strengths and weakness she replied, *I think my strengths are my curiosity to know more about my ESL background and cultures and the safe and fun environment I provide them to work in. My weakness is my inexperience with other languages.*

- *Teaching ESL experience.* Mrs. Phipps had positive experience teaching ESL students. It added more knowledge to her about other cultures and other countries. Responding to a related question she answered, *I've had good experience, I've learned about the different students, different cultures, and I come from a small town where there is not a lot of diversity. It's just so amazing to see all different cultures and learn from them.*

- *Writing activities/strategies/approaches.* Two main writing strategies were used by Mrs. Phipps - the Six Traits model and the writing process. She stated:

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OK. At the beginning of the year we focus on the six traits of

writing and also the writing process that the district has set up for

us, and they've been using the six traits plus the writing process at

Central. So we just kinda add on it, remind them, you know, this is

what you need to be working on your writing. This is what we start

on with at the beginning of the year, and then as we start

throughout the year we just continue to use those strategies.

- *Students' responses to writing activities.* Mrs. Phipps' ESL students responded

positively to her writing activities. With the free choice she provided them to choose their

own topic, they felt more willing to write and express their thoughts and emotions.

- *Encouragement to write.* To encourage her ESL students to write, Mrs. Phipps

allowed them to choose their own topic. This technique encouraged them to write instead

of narrowing it to a topic from her choices. She stated, *I think by allowing them to choose*

their own topic that encourages them. If something they are interested in, so they are

going to write about it more than if I narrow it for them.

- *Rapport with ESL students.* Mrs. Phipps established positive relationships with her

students by knowing them and making their class a comfortable environment. When she

sat with her students in a teacher conference to revise their work, she would never criticize

what they wrote for the sake of criticism. She believed that having a positive attitude as a

teacher would provide her students a superior impression about her and her classroom.

She stated:

I usually just try to know them, making the environment

comfortable for them, and you know not criticizing what they write

or you know helping them more to develop their writing instead of

you know trying not to say "no, you did it wrong." And I think just

having a positive attitude every day when they come in is

important.

- *Writing assessment.* Mrs. Phipps used the Six Traits Writing Rubric to evaluate her

students' writing. Sometimes she would give her students a check card where they

independently evaluated their own work or evaluated it with peers.

- *Challenges/difficulties, philosophy/beliefs.* Mrs. Phipps believed that all children

could learn and it was her job to help them to learn. She stated, *I believe that all children*

can learn and my job is to help them reach their full potential.

Generally, Mrs. Phipps had some characteristics that were similar to the other ESL

teachers. Her passion for teaching young students and to help them reach their goals

reflected her teaching styles and beliefs. Although Mrs. Phipps was new to the ESL arena

with just three years of ESL teaching experience, she showed a high level of motivation to

learn from her ESL students and to elevate their writing ability. The non-threatening

environment in which her students were able to speak out their feelings, challenges, and

fears had an effective impact on speeding up their learning process and improving their

writing ability overall.

Mrs. McCain

Mrs. McCain had a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Kansas State

University. She had six years of teaching experience. She had taught social studies and

language arts in fifth and sixth grade. The year 2007 was her first year to teach writing.

She had gained certification endorsement to teach ESL in 2007. She enjoyed being around

the students and spent the day with them. At the beginning of the year, Mrs. McCain was

nervous; however, afterward, she found teaching ESL a little challenging because she had

to design different ways to present the material being studied. More information about

Mrs. McCain was provided in Chapter Three. I observed Naseema in Mrs. McCain's

writing classroom from 9:30 to 10:00 once a week from December 2007 to the end of

April 2008.

Classroom Climate

Mrs. McCain had established a warm and welcoming environment for her students.

She had 15 students. Being a large room, her classroom was a location to which her

students came before and after school and worked on their homework. She arranged

students' desks differently every week to meet her lesson goals. The students usually sat in

groups of four so that they could discuss and exchange stories. The classroom was well

organized with labeled shelves and containers for more accessibility. Students' works hung

on the wall or were displayed on the tables. One distinguished character of her classroom

was an area next to her desk filled with big throw pillows where her students sat to read or

write. She also had her traditional rules: no food, no drink, no throwing things, no chewing

gum, respect for others and property.

Mrs. McCain had established a safe and comfortable environment for her students.

During my observations, I found that Mrs. McCain's classroom functioned as a respectful

and caring unit. She allowed and encouraged the students to take risks and even fail

because she believed that if students did not feel that they could get help from their

teachers and their peers, they would not become involved in their learning. She gave them

choices and encouraged them to choose the topic about which they liked to write. By doing so, students felt confident and responsible for their choices. One characteristic I identified in Mrs. McCain's attitudes toward her students was how she spent a lot of time encouraging them to communicate whether with her or with others. She modeled this attitude by starting conversations with her students to talk and discuss different subjects. She helped them by giving them words and reinforcing their statements.

Mrs. McCain had established an effective rapport with her students. Her classroom was full of enjoyment and respect for everyone. She valued not only students' academic needs, but also their emotional and social needs as well. She had an open relationship with her students through which students' confidence grew. She liked to know about her students' cultures and life styles. Because of her joyful personality, her students did not hesitate to come to her desk whenever they needed anything. I found that there were no boundaries between her and the students. They all worked as one family. At the same time, they all respected her and listened to her when she required them to write an assignment. A combination of satisfaction and restriction undertaken in order to finish tasks was what distinguished this classroom climate from others. Mrs. McCain established a competitive, co-operative and individualistic classroom.

Stages of the Writing Process

There are eight writing process stages that were observed if they were employed by the teacher: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams, 1998, p.55). In this section, I describe how the teacher employed each stage in her classroom.

- *Prewriting.* Mrs. McCain employed the prewriting stage in her writing class. There were a variety of ways through which she utilized this step: brainstorming, drawing maps, webs, pictures, or creating charts. She brainstormed by asking her students questions about subject matter and waiting for their answers. In this way she helped them to generate their ideas and feed the topic with different thoughts and opinions. One day, in her persuasive writing session, she gave the student two topics: *There Should Be No Homework* and *Why We Should Exercise*, and asked them to choose one by voting. They voted and chose the first topic about homework. For brainstorming, she asked them to give her reasons why they chose this topic. All students participated and came up with different answers. Of the 15 responses some included: 1) it is hard; 2) takes up fun time; 3) work should be done at school; 4) cannot play with pets; and 5) too busy.

Mrs. McCain wrote these 15 answers on the blackboard and asked the students to choose five reasons and write a story about why there should be no homework. She also used mapping as a more organized form of prewriting. In this step, the teacher suggested a word or the students choose a word such as *fish*. Then students thought of subideas that were related to *fish*. Each subidea would be linked to the main topic with arrows. Mrs. McCain encouraged students to draw pictures when she found them hesitating about writing. I determined that when students drew pictures of their favorite pet, sport, or food, they were more likely to write than without the visual picture. According to Jurand (2008), the visualization embedded in the writing process approach allows students to integrate art with writing and collaborate with their peers. Visualization influences students' ideas and writing content and quality while creating a community of writers.

- *Planning.* In Mrs. McCain's class, students were asked to review their webs, maps, charts, or pictures and make sure that all the ideas which were written were related to the main idea. Usually the students reviewed their webs, read their ideas and prepared to start writing their first drafts with the assistance of this web. They would also check on their web organizer pages to make sure that all their ideas were included and nothing was missing. Therefore, planning was more like checking on details and if they were related to the main topic.

- *Drafting.* After the students finished their prewriting and planning stages, they wrote their first drafts. In Mrs. McCain's classroom, students were free to move from their desks and choose another spot in which to write. Some students chose the floor, others sat in the corner, and others stayed at their places. This choice gave the students the feeling that writing was not a boring or a strict but a pleasant experience. When students wrote, Mrs. McCain worked around the class and made sure that every student was on the right track. She did not mind her students asking questions and inquiring information. She provided help and suggestions all the time.

- *Pausing.* Mrs. McCain asked her students to carefully read their writing whenever they finished it. Quietly, all the students who finished writing would use a few moments of silence and read their pieces. They would make sure that they covered the topic and supported it with the subideas and details they had on their web or chart. Afterward, they would get ready for peer editing sessions. The pausing stage did not take much time from the writing period time. It took only a few minutes for students to read their papers and check out their ideas. So, pausing was reasonably shorter than the prewriting or the drafting stages.

- *Reading.* This stage was embedded in the pausing stage. Through pausing, students already read their work and made sure that their idea matched their plan. This stage cannot be observed separately from pausing, since they both occurred at the same time in Mrs. McCain's writing class.

- *Revising.* Revising was a major stage in Mrs. McCain's class. She would ask her students after they finished reading to share their writing with their peers and start revising each other papers. Sometimes, she would choose these peers according to their writing proficiency levels. In this stage, the students would read each other's papers and wait for responses, comments, or suggestions about the topic and the supporting details. Students could make changes if their ideas did not match their prewriting plan.

- *Editing.* Usually, this stage occurred concurrently with the revising stage. In this stage, students considered all the changes, comments, and suggestions they received from their peers and attempted to rewrite their paper accordingly. In this stage, students focused on sentence correctness and the goal was to write error free grammar and spelling papers. Mrs. McCain helped her students to practice this stage by holding teacher conferences. In these conferences, she checked their surface-level spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors and asked them questions if she found something confusing by saying *Do you mean this or that.* The distinguished technique she utilized in this stage was giving her students editing checklist cards that help them edit their writing. See Figure 4.1.

- *Publishing.* There were many opportunities for Mrs. McCain's students to publish their work. There was a classroom bulletin board where the teacher displayed each student's works. They could also publish their works outside the classroom; for example, on the school bulletin board or in the school hallways. The work I saw published was from

the technical writing genre. Students were asked to write about how to make toast. After they finished writing this topic using the writing process approach, the teacher published all students' works on the class bulletin board. By publishing their works, students' self-esteem and self confidence would rise and consequently their attitudes toward writing in English would gain a positive stance.

Strategies and Techniques

Throughout observing Mrs. McCain's classroom, I noted a variety of strategies she employed when teaching writing to her ESL students. I shared each strategy and provided evidence of its occurrence.

- *Providing collaborative and cooperative activities.* Mrs. McCain used collaborative and cooperative activities when teaching writing as methods of learning in which students teamed together to explore today's topic or to create meaningful pieces of writing. This technique was shown as whole class team work through the discussions they made, or through small groups where students talked to each other, helped each other to generate ideas, shared strengths, and improved weaker skills and dealt with disagreements and conflicts. Through the use of these methods, students engaged in numerous activities to improve and expand on their assigned topics.

- *Encouraging contributions from all students and promoting peer interaction to support learning.* In order to make this happen, Mrs. McCain took three principles into consideration. First, students were provided with a safe and free to talk environment; however, respecting each other views, opinions, and perspectives was necessary. Second, students' contributions were valued and challenged at the same time. Third, diversity was

celebrated in Mrs. McCain's classroom where the ESL students were free and open to share their cultures, languages, and traditions. This technique helped the ESL students to move on in developing their knowledge about the writing process and to fulfill their needs by sharing this knowledge with groups and peers.

- *Designing writing assignments for a variety of audiences, purposes, and genres, and scaffolding the writing instruction.* Scaffolding allows the teacher to help students transition from assisted task to independent performances (Bliss & Askew, 1996; Bodrova & Leong, 1998; Palincsar, 1998). Scaffolding goes along with the writing process. In the writing process, the teacher helped students to move from one stage to another with her assistance or with others such as peers. Scaffolding was also a step by step process in which the teacher provided guidance and directions to students until the experience being taught was learned. Mrs. McCain scaffolded her students in an interesting way. She provided her students with the optimal amount of support necessary to complete the task, and then decreased her amount of assistance progressively until the student became capable of completing the activity independently.

- *Providing feedback, comments, and suggestions.* Providing feedback, comments, and suggestions was an essential aspect of Mrs. McCain's writing class. The process approach she used required this technique in order to help students improve their writing proficiency and be able to produce minimal errors and maximum clearness in their pieces. This technique was completed in two parts: teacher conference and peer conference. In a teacher conference, Mrs. McCain's feedback fell into two categories: feedback on form and feedback on content. Feedback on form was conducted by correcting the surface error where she underlined and indicated the error without corrections. On the other hand,

sometimes she would write her comments on the drafts to point out problems and to offer

more suggestions for improvement. No correction was suggested by the teacher in this

category. Students were asked to keep these suggestions in minds when they rewrote their

pieces. She also liked to comment on her students' papers orally. Some of her comments

included 1) I like this very much; 2) Tell me more about this; 3) You are repeating

yourself; 4) Can you write more details; and 5) I am not sure what you mean here.

Skills

ESL teachers play an effective role in developing their students' writing ability.

Without special skills and characteristics they are distinguished with, effective teaching

writing to ESL students would be hardly accomplished. In this section I describe Mrs.

McCain's teaching skills and how these characteristics contributed to her students' writing

development.

Table 4.4: Mrs. McCain's Skill Chart

Communication Skills	Leadership Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Organizational Skills
Provides students with equal opportunity to participate and receive adequate feedback on their performance	Member of teaching	Patient and passionate	Effective manager of time
Knows if her class understand her or not	Member of school activities	Helpful and caring	Excellent in organizing her students' writing papers and grading them
Uses probing questions	Encourages class discussion and provide help, suggestions, comments when needed	Approachable, friendly, and available for her students	Well prepared for her writing class
Explains clearly	States objectives for each class session	Warm and kind	Uses a variety of instructional strategies
Represents information from several perspectives to help students grasp concept	Has command of her class	Firm when misbehaviors occur	Presents facts and concepts from related fields

Adapted from http://www.tefl.net/esl-jobs/transferable-skills-teachers.htm.

As shown above, Mrs. McCain had most of the skills that were needed to make a successful ESL writing teacher. Although her experience of teaching writing was considered short, just one year, her passion to help ESL students in developing their writing ability encouraged her to apply various writing activities and achieve her objectives for each writing session. In addition, her patience and acknowledgment of learning from those students made her teaching mission much easier and more rewarding.

Interview Analysis

I interviewed Mrs. McCain in December 2007 in her classroom early in the morning before her first class started. Her class was quiet and well organized. She sat at her desk and I found a chair and sat in front of her facing her. I took my tape recorder and my question card out of my bag and placed it on her desk. I turned the tape recorder on and made sure it was working. After I made sure that everything was fine, I started my interview. Mrs. McCain was calm, excited, and free to answer my questions.

After coding Mrs. McCain's responses to the interview questions, I identified ten categories: appreciation of teaching ESL, problems in teaching ESL, personal strengths and weakness, teaching ESL experiences, writing activities/methods, students' responses to writing activities, encouragement to write, rapport with ESL students, writing assessment, and challenges/difficulties, philosophy/beliefs. I describe each category separately and provided each with documented interview words, terms, phrases, and sentences.

- *Appreciation of teaching.* Mrs. McCain had absolute appreciation of teaching
children especially at this age. She couldn't handle younger ones. During her interview
she stated:

> *I think it is something I have wanted to do. Growing up always*
>
> *seeing myself as a teacher I love being around the kids and just*
>
> *spending the day with them particularly the older kids. I don't*
>
> *think I can handle the little kindergarten or first grades but this*
>
> *age group is just about perfect.*

Teaching ESL students of all ages is not an easy job. However, it is crucial in early
levels, such as pre-school, kindergarten, and first grades. Students in these stages can be
taught by example with patience, compassion, and tenderness. And it is so essential that
teachers fully comprehend students' characteristics and behaviors in order to provide the
optimal approach toward them. Teachers will not succeed in their teaching career unless
they have passion for their students and their jobs.

- *Problems in teaching ESL.* Because it was her first year teaching ESL, Mrs.
McCain was nervous at the beginning of the school year. However, when she started
teaching ESL students, she found that teaching ESL student was no different than teaching
regular classes. The challenging aspect was to come up with different methods to present
the information. She stated, *It's a little challenging at this time just because you have to*
come with different ways to present the material to them. Sometimes particularly since I
teach social studies, you've to do visual and hand gestures for them to understand the
concept.

- *Personal strengths and weakness.* Mrs. McCain personal strengths were her determination to be successful and to lead her students to success, too. She was also patient with her students. Her only weakness was her inexperience in teaching ESL students.

- *Teaching ESL experience.* Mrs. McCain experience in teaching ESL was different than what she had expected. She said:

> *It's been good. It has definitely been different than I expected. I thought I was very nervous to start this year just because I'll be teaching ESL students. I just thought you would have to learn a completely new different way of teaching and it's not so much of that. It's just you have to move a little slower and provide more concrete ideas for them to grasp.*

- *Writing activities/strategies/approaches.* Mrs. McCain used the writing process approach as the foremost writing activity when teaching writing to ESL students. She used all the approach stages from prewriting to publishing. In prewriting stages, she encouraged her students to draw graphic organizers to help them generate their ideas. Her students usually wrote a rough draft to which they would later conduct revision by their peers or their teacher. Editing would be the stage where students would polish their first draft and make correction toward perfecting their final drafts.

> *Even if it's a topic that I gave them or a topic that I left them to choose themselves, usually their prewriting is some sort of graphic organizer. Right now we're doing auto- biography so they did a timeline to put their events in chronological order. It just kinda*

depends on the topic what your prewriting will be and then I just

have them jot down some ideas of what they want to include in

their paper. We always do rough draft, and do several editing on

the rough draft by peers and by themselves, and then a final copy.

- *Students' responses to writing activities.* Mrs. McCain's students enjoyed the

writing activities she was providing. And they tended to write more especially when the

writing assignment was personal narrative. As Mrs. McCain stated:

When we do like personal narrative or something like that, they

tend to have more experiences than the other students in the class

just because they travel a lot more or have seen a little more of

that world or cultural experiences that way. They seem that they

have much more to say than the other students.

- *Encouragement to write.* Mrs. McCain encouraged her ESL students to write by

asking them to jot down their ideas on papers, and not worry about surface errors such as

grammar and spelling. She stated, *It's one of those things I just kind of tell them to start*

writing whatever they think of and we can polish it all up later just to get their ideas down

on the paper.

- *Rapport with ESL students.* Establishing connections with her students was very

important for Mrs. McCain. This relationship gave them the chance to feel comfortable

and welcomed in her classroom. She stated:

I think connecting with them is something that's really important. I

cannot imagine coming to a country where you hardly know the

language or the customes or anything like that. So making them

feel comfortable and just trying to talk to them and you know you

learn about them and hear about their life and their stories they

have so far.

- *Writing assessment.* Mrs. McCain used the Six Trait Writing Rubric to evaluate her student's writing papers. However she adjusted it so it could assess their writing according to the English language level at which they resided. She stated:

    Well, writing itself is evaluated on the six trait model where you

    look at their conventions and their ideas. With ESL students you

    use basically that same model though you might adjust a little bit

    to take into account what level of English language they might be.

- *Challenges/difficulties, philosophy/beliefs.* Mrs. McCain's philosophy about teaching was to help students to reach their learning goals by trying new and different approaches. She stated, *It's to help the students to learn and to do whatever it takes to help them to learn, just trying different approaches just really trying to connect with the students.*

Overall, Mrs. McCain had exceptional characteristics that differentiated her from the other ESL teachers. The only factor that could be considered a minus was her inexperience in teaching ESL. Nonetheless, her appreciation of teaching young students in general, and her new experience with the ESL students enriched her performance. She successfully applied several writing activities from which her students enjoyed and benefited. Her patient and warm personality gave her students opportunities to practice the writing process approach effectively.

Overview of All Four Teachers

In this study, I identified numerous qualities, characteristics, and skills the four ESL teachers individually possessed that guaranteed the success of their teaching of writing. This section illustrates and compares these characteristics and their contributions to the instruction of writing. I listed these qualities in Table 4.5 and then wrote a descriptive paragraph explaining each.

Table 4.5: Teaching Characteristics of ESL Teachers of Writing

Names	Teaching Characteristics
Mrs. Cook	- Using the writing process approach - Providing collaborative writing activities - Social interactions with students - Showing interests in students' cultures and languages
Mrs. Zimmerman	- Using phonics - Using the writing process approach - Playing educational games - Respecting students' cultures and languages - Interacting socially with students
Mrs. Phipps	- Using the writing process approach - Providing collaborative writing activities - Varying speed and voice tone from content to another - Using hand and visual gestures - Interacting Socially with students
Mrs. McCain	- Using the writing process approach - Providing collaborative writing activities - Creating enjoyable but firm environment for learning - Presenting information from several perspectives - Interacting socially with students

From Table 4.5, I concluded that there are similarities and differences in the teaching characteristics of the four ESL teachers I observed in this study. The similarities included: 1) employing the writing process when teaching writing; 2) providing collaborative writing activities; 3) building strong relationships with their students; 4) providing choice in writing; 5) interested in cultures; 6) being positive, warm, caring and

supportive; 7) showing respect to their students; 8) using scaffolding; 9) creating connections and relevancy; and 10)

In contrast, some of the differences among these teachers included: 1) trying out and using words from other languages; 2) using phonics; 3) playing educational games; and 4) using hand and visual gestures.

The four ESL teachers I observed were strong advocates of using the writing process as an effective method to improve ESL students' writing ability. The writing process approach was the umbrella under which all the writing activities the teachers applied took place. Through this approach, ESL teachers taught their students prewriting, planning, drafting, reading, revising, editing, and publishing strategies. In each stage, teachers assisted their students to write generously to create high quality products.

In addition, the collaborative writing activities these teachers utilized were all embedded in this approach. Students were participating in class discussion through the brainstorming activity with which they started the writing task. Then they socialized and cooperated with each other in peer and teacher conferences. During these conferences, students developed communication skills, collaborative skills and habits of life long learning (Nilson, 2003). ESL teachers also benefited from the revising stage to apply their collaborative activities. In this stage students provided each other with feedback, comments, and suggestions.

It was also through this approach that teachers encouraged the ESL students to write regardless of their English proficiency level. The teachers assured their students that producing a final product was not the goal. However, practicing writing through the writing process approach was their major aim.

The strong relationships the ESL teachers built with their students played a key role for the ESL student to adjust to writing in English. All the teachers established well-built relationships in which students became capable of improving their writing ability. The impact of this rapport can be identified in students' self confidence, self esteem, and motivation level toward writing.

However, each teacher had possessed her own distinguished teaching characteristics she used to serve her students' needs and to meet their writing levels. Mrs. Cook was using words from other languages to explain some English unfamiliar words. Mrs. Zimmerman asked her students to tell her, in their languages, the names of objects, numbers, days of the week, food or any word which she found difficult to initially explain in English. Both teachers had lower level ESL students. Mrs. Phipps used varied speed and voice tone from content to another. Mrs. McCain presented information through several perspectives.

The noteworthy teaching characteristic was the using of phonics in Mrs. Zimmerman's class due to her students' lower English proficiency level. She adapted this method as a means through which her students would understand the relationship between letters and their sounds. Mrs. Zimmerman successfully and constantly utilized this technique and her students became familiar with using it whenever they encountered hard to spell words. In addition, Mrs. Zimmerman fostered her teaching techniques with using educational games by which her students transferred from regular routine instruction to more active learning settings. In these games students played with the letters of the alphabet and brought them to life. They were excited and motivated to discover new words and increase their English vocabulary.

Teachers could not insure their students' understanding of the oral English words, sentences and terms they spoke; therefore, they resorted to using physical and visual gestures. Sometimes, ESL teachers found this technique successful especially when students were in their lower levels of English proficiency. By using hand and face gestures, teachers provided alternative means for their students to grasp and negotiate meanings.

In conclusion, the roles the ESL teachers played when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students contributed to improving their students' writing performance. The success of applying the writing process stages and the diverse strategies, techniques, and skills the ESL teachers employed when teaching writing provided necessary elements in achieving their goal of making writing in English as enjoyable and productive an experience as possible.

CHAPTER 5 – Student Case Studies

This study had two major purposes; 1) exploring the role of ESL teachers when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students and the strategies, techniques, skills they incorporate when teaching this approach; and 2) identifying the impact of using the writing process approach on five fifth grade Saudi Arabians' writing development.

Qualitative methods, including classroom observations, interviews with the students and the teachers, collecting students' writing samples, and student think-aloud protocols were used to collect data during the study. Fieldnotes from observations, interviews, think-aloud protocols were transcribed and content analysis was performed to obtain an in-depth description and understanding of the effect of the writing process in developing Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students' writing skills.

In Chapter Five, I described the writing process of five fifth grade ESL Saudi Arabian students when they wrote in English as their second language. In this chapter, the data analysis procedures answered the following questions:

What is the role of the writing process in the writing development of five
Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students?

    a. What stages of the writing processes, strategies, and skills do Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students use when composing in second language (L2)?

    b. What is the impact of utilizing the writing process on the writing development of five Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students?

The description of this chapter was obtained from four data collection methods: classroom observations, interviews, student think-aloud protocols, and students' writing

samples. This chapter discussed four main elements for each of the participant ESL students. Through the classroom observations I made, I described the stages of the writing process, individual writing strategies, and techniques the students used in composition writing. Then I searched for individual strengths, challenges, and growth through analyzing the observations, interviews, the think-aloud protocols, and the writing samples.

For this study, I conducted a series of non-participatory classroom observations to examine the writing process stages: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams, 1998). I also examined the strategies, skills, and proficiencies of the five Saudi Arabian ESL students when they wrote in English. In addition, I examined how they reacted and responded to the process-oriented approach, and identified the impact of utilizing the writing process on the writing development of these five students.

The five students were enrolled in four different classes according to their English proficiency level. Each student was taught by a different teacher. All four writing classes occurred at the same time from 9:30-10:00. I observed each student once a week for half an hour for five months, starting December 2007 to the end of April 2008.
I designed guidelines to assist me to have comprehensive, detailed and in-depth observational data (Appendix B). I used these guidelines to observe each participant's writing stages every week.

The participants for this study included five, fifth-grade Saudi Arabian students, four females, Naseema, Noof, Najah, and Nadia (pseudonyms), and one male, Nasser (pseudonym). All the students were born in Saudi Arabia. They all came to the United States with their parents who were pursuing their M.S. or Ph.D. degrees in one of the state

universities. As soon as the students' parents finished their degrees, they planned to leave the U.S. with their families and attend Arabic schools in Saudi Arabia. All the students were bilingual. They spoke English at school and Arabic and English at home with their parents, siblings, and their Arab friends.

In this chapter, I analyzed each student's writing process, strengths, challenges, and growth in a case study format. Each case study revealed writing practices unique to each individual.

Nasser

Nasser was ten years old. He was from Saudi Arabia. He had been living in the U.S. for nine years. He was only one year old when he arrived with his family in the U.S. He was the second child in his family. He had one older brother and two younger sisters. He had a quiet and friendly personality. He was active, a fast learner, and was motivated to learn everything new. His father and his mother both held M.S. degrees and were pursuing Ph.D. degrees. I observed Nasser from December 2007 until the end of April 2008. More background information about Nasser was provided in Chapter Three.

Stages of the Writing Process

There are eight writing process stages I examined throughout classroom observations: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams,1998). The definition of each stage was provided in Chapter Three. In this section, I described how Nasser used each stage when he wrote in English. Nasser was taught by Mrs. Phipps.

- *Prewriting.* In the prewriting stage, Nasser participated in class discussions by answering the teacher's questions or asking his own. Through discussion, he would write down ideas or create outlines. He usually drew web organizers that helped him to generate ideas. In the autobiography writing session, he drew a timeline and wrote down his life events by following his teacher's guidelines. However, sometimes he would just listen to his teacher and did not take any notes. He occasionally would engage in the discussion quietly. Sometimes he would write down some ideas being mentioned by the teacher or by other students. He liked to talk with his peers and brainstorm with them. I would sometimes see him draw a diagram or graphic organizer for his prewriting stage. Some of his prewriting activities were completed orally or mentally.

- *Planning.* Planning as a separate stage did not occur in Nasser's writing process. This stage was more likely associated with the prewriting stage where Nasser would usually check his main topic with the outlines he obtained from the prewriting stage. So planning took place within the prewriting stage. For example, when Nasser finished brainstorming on a topic of *My Life*, he immediately checked his ideas and how they matched the topic. To do so, he would look at his prewriting page and read it. Sometimes he would add extra ideas or delete some of what he already had. And then he would start writing his first draft.

- *Drafting.* Nasser usually wrote two drafts, a first draft and a final draft. In drafting, he would silently get ready to write. He usually sharpened his pencil and prepared his notebook for writing. When he wrote his first draft, he would start writing his topic at the top center of the page and his name and the date at the left corner top of the page. He would usually write more than three paragraphs. He looked confident when he wrote and

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he used a good range of vocabulary due to his advanced level of English proficiency. Nasser would be interrupted by his peers while he was writing. His peers usually asked him questions about an idea or a paragraph or a spelling.

- *Pausing.* When Nasser finished his writing, he took two to three minutes to go over what he wrote. I observed him reading his paper and sometimes erasing some words and adding some others. In this stage, Nasser did not hesitate to correct and do self revision and editing for himself. One day, waiting for his friend with whom he was going to share his paper, he started to self revise his own writing by reading it and then erasing some words.

- *Reading.* Nasser read his first draft all the time. He made sure that he included all the details and ideas being discussed in the early stages. Reading and pausing stages usually occurred together and they could not be separated. Usually Nasser would read his writing as soon as he completed it. For example, when he was writing about *Albert Einstein,* he read his first draft as soon as he finished writing it.

- *Revising.* Revising occurred a little bit earlier with Nasser in the pausing and reading stages, but in a self revising form. What made this stage different in Nasser's writing process was that it required a peer or his teacher to read his writing and provide him with corrections, suggestions, and comments. He would usually get together with a friend who already finished his writing and they sat together. They exchanged and read each other's papers. During the reading, they were supposed to find incorrect spelling or grammar and then add any suggestions to develop more ideas during a peer conference. After they finished this stage, Mrs. Phipps welcomed them to a student teacher conference where she wrote her own suggestions and comments over their revisions.

- *Editing.* When Nasser finished the revising stage, he was ready to write his final draft. Most of the time, Nasser liked to type his final draft on the computer. In this stage, he rewrote his first draft putting into consideration the audience, his peers and his teacher's editing. He was supposed to produce a grammar and spelling error-free paper.

- *Publishing.* Most of the papers Nasser wrote throughout my observations were published in a variety of ways: by turning in his papers to the teacher, allowing me to make copies of them and publish them in my research, sharing them with his classmates, and/or presenting them in computer programs such as PowerPoint. The only presentation he did during this study was a PowerPoint presentation about soccer.

During the five month period observations, Nasser had employed all the writing process stages (Williams, 1998) in a meaningful way. He learned that he could not produce a text without experiencing these stages in which he addressed his plan, audience, purpose, and his paper's final format.

Strategies and Techniques

Like other regular students, ESL students have some strategies and techniques they used in the classroom to learn and improve their learning. In this section, I described each technique Nasser used throughout my observations. These techniques included: asking questions; asking for help; collaborating with classmates, participating in group, peer, and teacher discussions; participating in peer/teacher conferences; asking for more time to finish writing; and using the computer.

- *Asking questions.* In all the writing classes in which I observed Nasser, he asked a question or two whenever he encountered a problem or difficulty whether related to

content or instructions. He did not hesitate to express his misunderstanding of subject matter. When his teacher requested an assignment or asked a question, Nasser always made sure that what his teacher said was clear to him and paid attention to her responses and answers.

- *Asking for help.* Nasser had an open personality toward his teacher. He did not mind stopping his writing, raising his hands, or going immediately to his teacher's desk to ask for help. One day, he was confused about the pronunciation of a name of a place, *"Garden of the Gods,"* he visited during his summer vacation. His teacher wrote it down and searched it on the Internet. After a few seconds, they found the name to be correct.

- *Collaborating with classmates.* One of the distinguished features of Mrs. Phipps' class was the freedom of movement and chatting with each other for learning purposes. Nasser had three class mates with whom he liked to talk and discuss ideas. I could see him moving around in the classroom from one desk to another to learn more about a topic or to check out a grammar rule or spelling. This purposeful movement in the class helped him to organize his thoughts and to move his writing toward perfection.

- *Participating in group, peer and teacher discussions.* Mrs. Phipps consistently engaged her students in class discussions by asking questions and designing activities that motivated them in learning. Nasser liked to participate in both discussions by answering questions and giving examples and details. One day Mrs. Phipps and her students were discussing different sports in the United States. Since Nasser was a big fan of soccer, he participated in that discussion by saying, *Soccer is a very popular sport in the Arab world.*

- *Participating in peer/teacher conferences*. Nasser showed interest in participating in peer and teacher conferences. He would edit his peers' writing and let them read and

edit his own writing as well. I noticed that he had high self-esteem and high self-confidence during these activities. One day while he was editing his colleague's writing, he insisted on adding a sentence in a paragraph to clarify the idea. His partner refused and there was a discussion between them over this matter. The teacher eventually walked up to their desks and helped them to accept each other's suggestions and ideas. She told them that by reading each other's papers and correcting mistakes, they would be able to produce nicely written papers.

- *Asking for more time to finish writing*. Like his classmates, Nasser would ask for more time if he could not finish his writing. The flexibility of his teacher helped him in this matter. Because he sometimes could not turn in his paper unfinished or unrevised, time usually was given to him as well as to the rest of his classmates.

- *Using the computer*. As his teacher liked to call him a computer wizard, Nasser was computer literate, especially with PowerPoint. Whenever students used computers, Nasser would be called upon for help and assistance. During my observations, students were working on their expository session where they were assigned to choose a topic and write about it. They had to make a PowerPoint presentation of their final papers. Nasser chose his favorite sport, soccer, about which to write. His PowerPoint presentation was the best in the class because of all the sounds and color effects he added. He also had Mrs. Phipps' permission to help his classmates with their PowerPoint presentations.

Nasser utilized various strategies and techniques when writing in English, ranging from asking questions to asking for more time to finish his writing. These techniques included such skills as questioning, active listening, elaborating, summarizing, clarifying, and challenging, all significant skills that improved Nasser's writing abilities.

Think-Aloud Protocol Analysis

To utilize his procedure as a data collecting method, I asked Nasser's teacher to provide me with a quiet room so we could record the writing protocol. She talked to the school librarian and scheduled a time and a date for this session. I gave Nasser two topics: Topic A was *Write About Your Mother and Why You Love Her;* Topic B was *What Is Your Favorite Sport?* He was required to choose one and write about it. He chose topic B. Nasser was asked to say aloud anything he thought of as he was writing into a tape recorder. The outcome from the taped record of the composing aloud was analyzed. This method enabled me to scrutinize Nasser's whole process of thinking, organizing, and writing instead of focusing only at his final product.

In the think-aloud protocol, Nasser spent 20 minutes composing aloud. He composed using four different stages. First, he prewrote to generate ideas by drawing a web organizer. Then he used this organizer to write his first draft. When he finished, he read his first draft and made surface-level editing for his work. Then he wrote his error-free final copy. The final writing product for the protocol is in Writing Sample 5.1

Coding for the 20 minutes prewriting, drafting, reading and final draft stages of Nasser's think-aloud protocol tape using an adapted version of Perl's (1981) coding scheme (see Table 3.2) resulted in the following summary of his writing process.

Nasser chose topic B which was *What Is Your Favorite Sport?* He composed 13 sentences in 20 minutes. He used four stages of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, reading and editing. He prewrote and organized his ideas using a spider web graphic organizer, where he wrote his topic in a circle in the center of the page and then drew four arrows out of the main topic and drew four circles. In these new circles he wrote his

supporting ideas. After brainstorming he wrote his first draft and then read it looking for sentence-level concerns such as spelling, punctuation, agreement between subjects and style.

Finally, he wrote his final draft. While recording, Nasser looked relaxed and calm. He wrote this assignment with confidence and poise. As evidenced from the coding alone, he started his writing by reading back the title and making sure that he was on the right track. Then he wrote his first sentence and moved on smoothly. His prewriting page, the spider web graphic organizer, was in front of him all the time referring to it just like a road map while he was composing. He moved from one idea to another easily. He supported each idea with two to three examples. Nasser composed at a fair pace, a period of twenty minutes, spent on the four stages of the writing process.

Nasser had a possible 30 minutes of composing time. The composing time was the duration that Nasser took from the moment he started brainstorming until he submitted his final draft to me. He wrote his assignment in less than the given time since he composed in 20 minutes. Nasser utilized four main stages of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, reading, and editing. I described each stage and provide detailed information about the entire setting.

What is your Favorite Sport?
What is your Favorite Sport?
Is it Soccer because my Favorite
Sport is soccer, Many people around
world like to play Soccer, When I
play Soccer I play competively
and try to have fun. I like to play
Soccer with my Friend because we
fool around, You play with your feet which
Soccer even harder. There are many rules
In soccer if you don't follow them you
get called a Foul on your team, And
if you Foul hard the ref decides
if its yellow or red card, Yellow
are warning and if you get two
yellow that counts a red card a
red means your out for the game,
And the goalie are the only people
who can use there hands. The goalie
defend the goal from he opents trying
to Score, And that is why I like
soccer,

Writing Sample 5.1: Nasser's Think-Aloud Protocol Writing

- *Prewriting.* Nasser drew a web organizer containing five circles, the center circle was the topic and the other four circles were the supporting ideas. In line 2 in the prewriting section from his think-aloud protocol transcript he said, *Now I am gonna start brainstorming with the web.* He spoke of his ideas aloud. He spent three minutes brainstorming. After he finished, he ripped out that page from his notebook and placed it in front of him to begin writing his first draft.

- *Drafting.* As soon as Nasser finished brainstorming, he started writing down the topic. He used the organizer web he drew to help him connect these ideas together. He

was talking most of the time while he was writing. Nasser started his text writing an introduction about soccer. In line 1 from his tape transcript, he said:

> *And now I am gonna start my first draft, well...I will start my topic*
>
> *with a question, what is your favorite sport? And I will answer the*
>
> *question...it is soccer...because my favorite sport is soccer, and*
>
> *now I am gonna write few sentences for my introduction.*

In some occasions, he was repeating some words before he wrote them down. While composing aloud, Nasser had some problems writing and talking at the same time. He would sometimes verbalize a sentence in a certain way, but would write it a little bit differently and vice versa.

For example, in his taped transcript, these discrepancies occurred in the drafting section in lines (5), (7) and (11). In line (5), he said *When I play soccer, I play as a competitive and fun* and he wrote it *When I play, I play competitive and fun.* In line (7) he said *You play with your feet which makes the game harder*, and he wrote it, *You play with your feet which makes it even harder.* In line (11) he said, *There are some position you play and only one position gets use their hand and they are called the goalie,* but he wrote *There are only gets use there hand and they are called the goalie.*

- *Reading.* When Nasser finished writing his first draft, he went back to proofread what he wrote. As he was reading his first sentence, he spotted a mistake-*competitive*- in the fifth sentence. He immediately corrected it to *competitively* and forgot to go back and read the draft from the beginning. Nasser was confused a bit about the purpose of this stage. And he was also confused about the difference between revising and editing. At the beginning of this stage, he said in line 1 in the reading section from his taped transcript,

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Now that I finished with my first draft now I can revise it. At the end of this section, in line 9 he said, *And now I am finished with my editing and I can write my final draft.*

In this stage, Nasser started to read sentence by sentence. Whenever he found a surface-level mistake, he would jump and correct it. In line 2 from the reading section, he stated, *Because when I play... I found a mistake here...I play competitively*. He changed *competitive* which he wrote in his first draft to *competitively*. The reading stage is where students take silent moments and read their writing and compare it to their plans. This purpose did not appear here with Nasser.

- *Editing*. In this stage, Nasser opened a new page and wrote down his final copy. He had his first draft in front of him where he copied and edited to his final draft. In this stage, I found him paying attention to sentence structure although he did not correct his surface errors. He fixed all the problems he made in his first draft. The same discourse discrepancy occurred in this stage, too. In his final draft transcription, in line (9) he said, *The goalie defends the goal from the opponent trying to score* but wrote *The goalie defend the goal from the oppents* (opponent) *trying to score*. When he read the first sentence, he pronounced the third person "s" in *defends* but he forgot to write it.

Nasser did not write his assignment in a paragraph format, neither in the first nor the final draft. He wrote down his ideas and connected them using multiple punctuation words in one long paragraph.

For this assignment, Nasser wrote 13 sentences and 128 words in his first draft, and 13 sentences and 137 words in his final draft. Although the number of sentences stayed the same, Nasser added more words when he wrote his final draft. This was an indication that the writing process, especially the editing stage, enriched the quality of the final draft.

His paper was evaluated by using the Six Traits Writing Rubric and received a score of 27 out of 30 because he missed breaking down his writing into paragraphs and had some grammar and spelling errors as well. Although he wrote an interesting introduction using a question, which was one of the indicators of "good beginnings" taught by his teacher, he concluded his writing insufficiently using just one sentence.

Interview Analysis

I conducted two interviews with Nasser throughout this study. First, I conducted an initial interview in December 2007 where I asked him a few introductory questions about his name, age, country, number of years he stayed in the U.S., and his feelings about English and writing in English (Appendix H). In April 2008, a follow up interview was conducted (Appendix H). The questions in this interview shed more light on his feelings and attitudes toward writing, and his relationship with his ESL teacher utilizing the writing process approach, and his reactions to his teacher's writing activities. Both interviews were conducted in the school library.

In the initial interview, Nasser was quiet and a little bit nervous. He was not sure what he was going to be asked. I was assuring him that the questions I had for him were simple, and it was all about how he felt about writing in English and what techniques and strategies he applied when he wrote. We sat at a small table in the corner in the library. I took my tape recorder out of my bag and made sure it was working. I started the interview. We moved from one question to another smoothly. Nasser answered my questions with confidence and coolness. After we finished, I thanked him for his time and he went back to his classroom.

In the follow up interview, Nasser looked more confident and relaxed. We sat in a different place in the library and we started the interview. This time, his responses to my questions were longer and more informative.

While coding Nasser's interview responses to the interview questions, I identified five categories: feelings and attitudes toward writing, preferred language for writing, relationship with the ESL teacher, utilizing the writing process approach, and reactions to the teacher's writing activities. I described each category and provided each with documented words, terms, phrases, and sentences.

- *Feelings and attitudes toward writing.* Nasser's responses in the interview to related questions indicated that his feelings and attitudes toward writing were negative, in both languages Arabic and English. He described writing as *boring* and *hard*. However, every aspect I observed on his writing behaviors, starting from the classroom observations to his writing samples analysis, indicated that he was a good writer. He had no problems with spelling or grammar that were different than the ones his peers had. Therefore, I assumed that writing was simply not his favorite activity. His dislike for writing cannot be correlated to his English level proficiency since Nasser is considered an "on grade" type of an ESL student, or a lack of utilizing effective writing strategies at classroom, but it could be more associated with his personal inclination. I noted that he actually disliked writing by itself. He responded to a related question, *I don't like to write at all because sometimes I think it's boring to write because sometime you have to write down ideas and stuff and it's hard to find ideas.*

On the other hand, Nasser found the writing class enjoyable when it provided students with various ways of writing such as narrative, persuasive, technical, or

expository. In response to how he did feel about the writing class, Nasser replied, *It's O.K.*
It's fun to see new ways to write, such as, persuasive, technical writing, narrative writing;
but it's boring to write, it's difficult to find ideas.

From his response, I noted that the negative image he had about writing was not
plainly driven from his home language, background, or English proficiency level;
however, it's more related to his personal interests and desires. Nasser had attended U.S.
schools from kindergarten to his current fifth grade.

- *Preferred language for writing.* Nasser's response to the interview question about
if he liked to write in Arabic was negative. He disliked writing in Arabic as well as
English. However, he would choose English over Arabic because it was the language he
was formally taught in throughout his school years.

- *Relationship with the ESL teacher.* Nasser's relationship with his writing teacher
was a crucial element in improving his writing. This relationship was well-built. There
were no boundaries between them. Whenever Nasser found problems, whether with his
writing or with other areas, no hesitation would be made to ask for his teacher's help. This
mostly had taken place in teacher conference time. He would ask many questions to which
he had no answer or would ask for suggestions and oral feedback. In addition, his teacher
occasionally used the Internet as a searching tool to answer his questions.

Nasser's teacher applied multiple writing activities to reach her goal of improving
students' writing skills. His reaction to these activities was positive. When he asked about
whether he liked the writing activities that his teacher practiced, he said, *Yes I like it*
because it makes the writing class more fun and helps us focus on writing.

- *Utilizing the writing process approach.* Nasser, like other students in his classroom, adapted the writing process approach in his writing. When he wrote a task, he would use several stages to accomplish it. He responded to a related question *I usually start brainstorming, and then write my first draft, when I finish, I do some editing with my friends or my teacher and then write my final draft.*

Throughout my observations, Nasser used all the writing process stages, starting from prewriting activities to producing a final draft. He usually participated in classroom brainstorming to bring out ideas and thoughts. During prewriting activities, he would ask questions and give examples and suggestions about a topic matter. Then he wrote one first draft and one final draft. This process could take a week or two on some occasions.

- *Reactions to the teacher's writing activities.* Nasser's response in the interview to a related question indicated that his reactions to the writing activities his teacher applied in the classroom was positive. He replied, *I like it because it makes the writing class more fun and helps us focus on writing.* Nasser viewed his teacher's writing activities as tools that added enjoyment to the writing class and helped students to focus on writing as well.

Nasser's interview analysis indicated that although he did not have a lack of writing skills, he disliked the writing as an activity. He utilized one or more of the writing process stages in each writing session. In addition, he appreciated his teacher's writing activities and the way she taught writing class. Nasser had a strong relationship with his teacher through which he trusted her suggestions, corrections, and comments.

Writing Samples Analysis

Two methods had been used to analyze students' writing samples - the Six Traits Writing Rubric (Spandel, 1997) (Appendix O), and writing process guidelines that I designed (Table 3.3). These tools helped me to investigate the writing process the five Saudi Arabian ESL students used while writing and the quality of their produced texts. Two graduate students from a Kansas university helped me analyzed the writing samples using the Six Traits Writing Rubric.

The writing topics the students wrote about throughout the semester were designed by the district and there was a monthly plan every teacher followed to cover all these genres. For example, in December, they were assigned to write "narrative," and in January, they were assigned to write "persuasive."

Throughout this study, Nasser wrote six writing pieces from different genres, including expository, biography, narrative, persuasive, and autobiography. Because of his advanced English level proficiency, he had limited spelling and grammar errors. The over view of his writing indicated that his English was on grade level for this type of student. According to the Six Traits Writing Rubric, Nasser's writing, including his Ideas and Content, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions, fell into the **Exemplary (6)** and **Strong (5)** categories. The interrater reliability for Nasser's writing samples was 95.66%. These rankings were assessed for his final drafts. I described Nasser's writings and how they fit into each category in the Six Traits Writing Rubric. One of his writing samples is provided in Appendix P.

- *Ideas and Content.* In Nasser's *A New Family Member* writing sample, his ideas and content were clear, focused, and supported with relative details. A reader could understand his writing clearly without difficulties.

- *Organization.* In this sample, Nasser produced well organized writing text. He started his writing with a meaningful introduction and ended it with a satisfying closure. However, occasionally in his first drafts, he would not pay attention to writing in paragraphs. He would write an interesting introduction and follow it with a flow of ideas and details in one long paragraph that ended with a conclusion. There was a time when Nasser's teacher, Mrs. Phipps, wrote down a suggestion on his first draft, *Break your paragraphs up.*

- *Voice.* Nasser's voice was heard in all his writing. A reader of his writing would get a sense that a "real" person was discoursing on paper. Nasser would express his ideas in a way that gave the reader a feeling that he was talking to him/her directly. Whether you knew Nasser or not, his writing was a reflection of his life, experiences, and background. In this sample, Nasser expressed his happiness for the arrival of his new baby sister in a way that grasped the reader feelings.

- *Word Choice.* Nasser had a broad range of vocabulary. In this sample, Nasser used several words such as *announce*, *crawl*, and *anxious*. In other writing samples, for example, in his autobiography text, he described the beautiful time he spent in his vacation in Colorado by using synonyms such as *magnificent, marvelous,* and *wonderful.* He wrote, *After that magnificent time I went back to peaceful Lawrence. I had a marvelous summer.*

- *Sentence Fluency.* In his writing, Nasser created a sense of rhythm and fluency with the sentences he wrote, which the reader found enjoyable and interesting. He used varied sentence structures and lengths. When he needed to make a statement he would use short sentences while detailed and supportive sentences would be longer. In his second paragraph, line 2, from this sample, Nasser wrote, *I was so anxious to see her*, and in line 5 from the same paragraph he wrote, *When I went home my mom didn't come with me becaused* (because) *she had to stay at the hospital.*

- *Conventions.* Nasser had few grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing errors. Moreover, Nasser had a strong control of conventions, especially when he edited and proofread his writing. In his writing sample, I found a few misspelled words such as *becaused* (because) and *paginated* (pregnant). From other samples, I found a few misspelled words, too, such as *dublex* (duplex), *hop* (hope), and *stead* (stay).

From reading and analyzing Nasser's writing samples, I noted that his writing could be categorized in the **Exemplary (6)** and **Strong (5)** categories in the Six Traits Writing Rubric. The clear ideas, the supporting details, the order of structure, sense of personality, the broad range of words, the flow and rhythm of sentences, and the strong control of conventions, characterized and distinguished his writing. Because of his educational background, his English and his ability to write in English were substantive to enable him to produce well-written texts.

A comparison made between two drafts, a draft Nasser wrote in December 2007 and another he wrote at the end of April 2008, indicated that there were no major differences between the two except for one trait, Organization**.** At the end of April, Nasser paid more attention to paragraphing. The level of accuracy in spelling and grammar stayed

the same. However, the number of misspelled words and incorrect grammar were constantly diminishing. For example, in December Nasser would have five or six errors in his writing and as the semester went by, this number was reduced to two to three errors and sometimes to zero.

To investigate Nasser's sequenced use of the writing process stages, I used Table 5.1 to check out each writing session and what stages he employed when writing in English. To produce these different topics in a quality standard, Nasser had used several stages of the writing process approach: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing.

Table 5.1: Nasser's Writing Process Stages

Month	Topic	Pre-writing	Planning	Drafting	Pausing	Reading	Revising	Editing	Publishing
December	**Expository**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
January	**Biography**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
February	**Autobiography**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
March	**Persuasive**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
April	**Narrative**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

In prewriting, most of his samples had a brainstorming page where he jotted down his ideas or drew web organizers. Planning would occur when Nasser checked out his ideas and how closely they were to the topic. After that, he would write his first draft in an elongated format. He would start with an introduction and follow it with three body paragraphs and ended it with a closure. After he finished, he would meet with his peer or his teacher to go over his writing looking for errors. In the editing stage, he would produce a final draft that had no errors. Publishing took place when Nasser turned in his papers to his teacher, allowed me to make copies of them, and presented them to his classmate in a PowerPoint format.

After analyzing Nasser's semester-long observation, think-aloud protocol, and writing samples, I analyzed his strengths, challenges, and growth which I summarized in Table 5.2

Table 5. 2: Overview of Nasser's Writing Process

	Strengths	Challenges	Growth
Observations	Proper oral and written English such as tenses, verb and noun agreement. Participation in classroom discussion and asking questions. Computer use. Writing process approach.	Personal dislike of writing	Continuous sufficient participation in classroom discussion and continuous utilizing of the writing process approach.
Think-aloud protocol	Sufficient time to write. Writing process approach. Effective range of sentences and words	Verbalizing sentences in a way and write them differently. Limited control of conventions. Paragraphing was missing (one large paragraph)	NA
Writing samples	Clear ideas. Expressive and engaging voice. Broad range of vocabulary. Easy flow and rhythm. Strong control of conventions.	No paragraphing in first drafts. Limited errors.	Well-organized first draft emerged later.

In summary, Nasser had several strengths, challenges, and growth. His strengths recapitulated in his proper use of written English language and effective participation in class discussion. Using the writing process approach and the computer to facilitate his writing were additional strengths of Nasser's. The only challenges I identified during this study were his personal dislike of writing and lack of paragraphing when writing first drafts which appeared in his think-aloud protocol and his limited control of conventions. As the semester went by, that challenges changed and Nasser started to write well-organized first drafts and had less grammar and spelling errors.

Naseema

Naseema is ten years old. She was born Saudi Arabia. Her father came to the U.S. to pursue a Ph.D. degree in education five years ago. She was just five years when she came with her family, her mother, her three sisters and her little brother. In Saudi Arabia, she attended kindergarten where she learned to write few Arabic words. She attended first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades here in the U.S. She liked English and she liked to write in English as well. She found the Arabic language difficult to learn and confusing. Personality wise, Naseema was quiet, warm, and friendly. She was open to meet new friends and new members of her class. I observed Naseema from December 2007 until the end of April 2008. More individual information about Naseema was provided in Chapter Three.

Stages of the Writing Process

There are eight writing process stages I examined throughout classroom observations: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams,1998). In this section, I described how Naseema employed each stage when she wrote in English. Naseema was taught by Mrs. McCain.

- *Prewriting*. In this stage, Naseema would usually participate in class brainstorming activities. She would ask questions or generate ideas. She would also talk with her teacher or with her peers about the main topic and how to come up with sub ideas. To make it easier for her to remember her ideas, she would write them down in a graphic organizer. Naseema liked to keep a mapping sheet where she wrote her main theme or topic in the center of that paper. Then she would write all the various ideas associated with her main topic. Each idea would be arranged in bubbles around the edges. In her prewriting paper,

she also liked to draw pictures --that occurred once when she was writing about Halloween.

- *Planning*. After Naseema finished her prewriting stage, she would go over her graphic organizer page or pictures and make sure that she included those ideas she heard in the discussion and the ones she generated herself. One day during my observation, I observed her sharing her graphic organizer with a classmate. I considered this behavior as a part of the planning stage where she reflected on the material produced during prewriting and shared it with a friend to support her ideas and claims.

- *Drafting*. After the prewriting and planning stages, Naseema wrote down her first or rough draft. When she wrote in an "Autobiography" session, she wrote about her life and the most important events that happened during her life. She drew a time line in which she wrote down her ideas in front of her and started connecting these ideas in sentences and paragraphs. She wrote her pieces smoothly and did not pay attention to spelling. This stage is characterized as being more writer-centered. During drafting, Naseema was just discoursing to herself what she knew about the topic.

- *Pausing*. After Naseema finished writing, few moments of silence would occur. She would check out her plans and the story she wrote. In this stage, she read her paper and I found her a couple of times erasing words and exchanging them with others.

- *Reading*. During my observations I realized that the reading and pausing stages usually overlapped. After students finished drafting, they would immediately stop writing, go back and read their papers and some of them would revise and edit.

- *Revising*. Revising Naseema's writing happened in two paths: peer and teacher conferences. Usually it was a colleague at the next desk who would revise her paper. It

took them three to five minutes to read each other's stories and make corrections or add suggestions. Sometimes, the teacher would put them in pairs to revise each other's papers. The teacher would not do a teacher conference before the peer conference was completed. In this stage, Mrs. McCain distributed a check card for each student to follow.

- *Editing.* To give her paper the final look, Naseema rewrote her piece eliminating any spelling and grammar errors, and checking out her punctuation. When she wrote about *More Recess,* Naseema composed her final draft on the computer. While she was rewriting her text, she would include all the corrections and the suggestions that were offered by her peer and her teacher. She accepted these changes and never argued with the teacher about them.

- *Publishing.* Naseema's writings had been published in a variety of ways. This stage was marked by turning in her papers to her teacher, sharing her stories with her peers, and allowing me to make copies of her writings and publishing them in my research.

During this study, Nassema utilized the writing process approach and its stages (Williams, 1998). She would use three to four stages in every writing session. This depended on the time she had for writing. After all, by the end of April, she had the opportunity to utilize the entire list of stages and benefited from their advantages.

Strategies and Techniques

Throughout my observations of Naseema's strategies and techniques of writing in English, I identified a list that represented the four main approaches she used: asking questions frequently, participating in classroom discussion and activities, participating in peer/teacher conferences, and using the computer.

- *Asking questions frequently.* Naseema was an active learner. She did not like to sit and listen to the teacher's instruction if she did not understand what was going on. She would raise her hand and ask her questions. Besides asking her teacher, she would ask her classmates, too, if something unclear came to surface. She liked to talk with her classmates and obtain the information she needed. One day she heard the idiom, *Go jump over a cliff,* from one student in the classroom. She immediately turned to the student sitting next to her and asked her about the meaning.

- *Participating in classroom discussion and activities.* Her quiet personality gave the feeling that Naseema was a passive student, but in fact she was not. During her participation in classroom discussion, I observed some of her characteristics that showed how active she was. She liked to perform to her best and be appreciated for that. She was competitive, alert, energetic, and passionate. One day when Mrs. McCain was holding a discussion on the reasons why students should not have homework, Naseema was the first student to participate and to state her own reasons.

- *Participating in peer/teacher conferences.* Naseema always engaged in peer and teacher conferences that helped her improve both the content and form of her writing through constructive feedback. When she wrote about *Why Students Should Not Have Homework,* Naseema was keen to get as many ideas/reason from her peers and teacher as possible. She was open to their suggestions and comments and never took them as criticism of her work.

- *Using the computer.* Naseema liked to word process her final draft on the computer. She looked familiar with using several programs such as Power Point and Word. When she finished her writing about *How to make a toast,*, she word processed her

final draft on the computer. That knowledge of using the computer gave her an advantage at word processing where she easily worked with the text and shifted it around making her changes and corrections.

During classroom observations, Naseema practiced several learning strategies including asking questions frequently, participating in classroom discussion and activities, participating in peer/teacher conferences, and using the computer. Besides using the writing process approach, it seemed that Naseema greatly benefited from these techniques and therefore adapted them as a means in which she improved her writing.

Think-Aloud Protocol Analysis

I met with Naseema in the school library to conduct the think-aloud protocol. I told Naseema about this procedure and how to do it. We both practiced it until she became familiar with its steps. I asked Naseema to speak out everything in her mind when she composed. Everything she said would be recorded and analyzed later. When Naseema fully comprehended the procedure, I prepared my tape recorder and started observing and recording Naseema's think-aloud protocol. She was relaxed to try such a method and curious about the results. She kept asking me, *Are you gonna look at my writing while I am talking?* I said, *Yes, everything you say will be recorded and then analyzed to see how good you are in writing.*

Naseema was given two topics to choose from: Topic A was *Write About Your Mother and Why You Love Her*, and Topic B was *What Is Your Favorite Sport?* She chose Topic A. Naseema executed the think-aloud method using different stages of the writing process approach. She brainstormed, wrote her first draft, read her whole draft, and edited

it by writing her error-free version. Naseema's think-aloud protocol tape transcription for the three stages is provided in Appendix I. Writing sample 5.2 displays Naseema's think-aloud protocol final product.
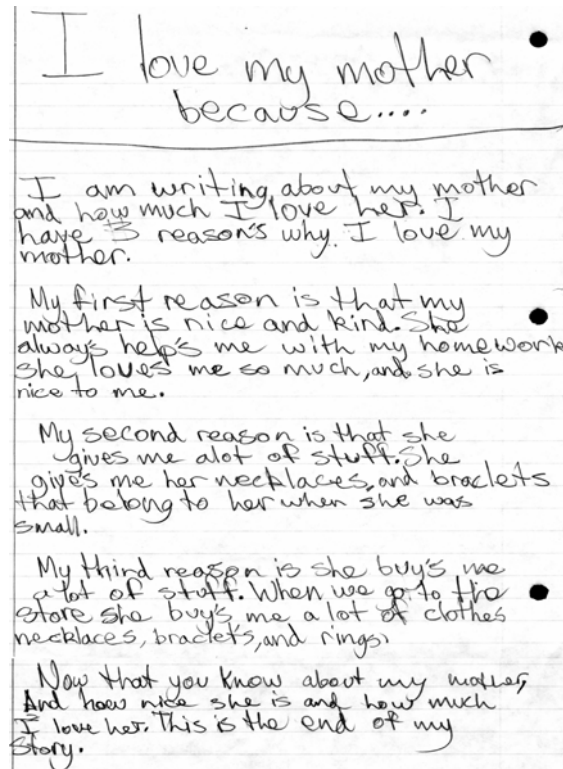
Writing Sample 5.2: Nassema's Think-Aloud Protocol Writing

Coding for 29 minutes of prewriting, drafting, reading and editing stages of Naseema's Think-Aloud Protocol tape using an adapted version of Perl's (1981) coding scheme (see Table 3.2) resulted in the following findings. The coding of her think-aloud protocol is in Appendix J.

Naseema used four stages of the writing process approach during the think-aloud protocol; prewriting, drafting, reading, and editing. In her prewriting stage, she drew a spider web organizer where she wrote the title, three reasons why she loved her mother, an introduction and a conclusion. After that she wrote her first draft she immediately started

to read it. During this reading, she made some sentence-level correction. At the end, she wrote her final draft. She was talking aloud in every stage with a confident and clear voice.

From the 30 minutes Naseema was given to compose, she spent 29 minutes to write. This time started from the moment she started brainstorming until she finished her final draft. Naseema utilized four of the writing process stages: prewriting, drafting, reading, and editing. She spoke aloud in each stage with a clear and understandable voice.

- *Prewriting.* In this stage, Naseema spoke out her organizing plan. She started reading the title she chose and wrote it down on paper. Then, she drew a spider web organizer and jotted down her three reasons why she loved her mother. In line 1 in the prewriting section from her think-aloud protocol transcript, she said, *I am going to brainstorm for some ideas about my mother and how I love her so much. And I am gonna draw a circle and then put some lines so it looks like a spider.* In addition, she wrote a two sentence-introduction and a two sentence-conclusion. During the think-aloud protocol, Naseema made just one mistake. In her taped think aloud protocol, she said, *She buys me a lot of stuff* however, she wrote it *She buy me a lot of stuff.*

- *Drafting.* After brainstorming, Naseema started writing her first draft. She was well organized when she composed. She started writing the title first, and then divided her story into five paragraphs-an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. In the introduction, she wrote two sentences, one was an introductory sentence and the second was a thesis sentence. In line 1 in drafting section in her think-aloud protocol transcript she said, *I am going to write my first draft. I am gonna start out with introduction* (see Appendix I). In each paragraph, she wrote one of her three reasons and supported it with examples. In line 4 she said, *I have three reasons why I love my mother.* In most cases, she

would say out the whole sentence she was thinking about and then jotted it down. She moved from one paragraph to another without problems or difficulties.

Verbalizing the sentences she was going to write did not conflict with her actual writing. I observed that throughout the entire session. Several repetitions occurred in her taped think aloud protocol. In these repetitions, Naseema was either changing some of her words or correcting herself. She would say a sentence and change some words of this sentence when she repeated it. Or she would say a sentence and automatically correct herself if she heard it wrongly. For example, in line 12 in the drafting section in her think aloud protocol transcript (Appendix I), she said aloud, *When we go to the store, she buys me some clothes, bracelets, necklaces, and rings… she buys me a lot of clothes and bracelets, necklaces, and rings.* In her first sentence she said, *She buys me some clothes,* and when she repeated it she said, *She buys me a lot of clothes.* And she ended up writing it in both of her drafts *She buys me a lot of clothes.* In line 15 from the drafting section, she said, *Now that you know about my mother, now that you know about my mother, and how she is nice… how nice she is.* She first said, *how she is nice,* and then immediately corrected herself by saying, *how nice she is.* So her repetitions of the sentences and the words helped her to make corrections to her writing. This technique gave her a chance to hear aloud what she was saying and match it with what she wrote.

- *Reading.* When Naseema finished her first draft, she immediately read it for the purpose of identifying spelling, grammar, punctuation, or capitalization errors. She stated that in her reading section from taped transcript in line 1, *Now I am done with my final draft, first draft…I am going to go over it just in case there're any misspelled words or periods or like that.* Instead of reading her writing to compare it with her plan, Naseema

mistakenly thought that reading as a stage in the writing process approach was used to find sentence-level errors. While she was reading, she edited her writing by making some correction. Instead of looking at the misspelled words, Naseema mistakenly misspelled the correct word. In line 8 from her think-aloud transcript, in reading and revising section, she said, *She gave me a lot of stuff. She gives me her necklaces and bracelets... I spelled bracelets wrong...I spelled it (b, r, a, c, e, l,e,t,s) and the right spelling is (b,r,a, c, l, e, t, s).*

- *Editing.* After correcting her misspelled words in the reading stage, Naseema started writing her final draft. First she wrote down her title and then she moved down writing five paragraphs. She was looking at her first draft and copying the error-free sentences from it. Therefore, she was just reading and repeating every sentence aloud. In this stage no thinking activities had occurred. It was all about writing an edited text.

As a whole, it could be indicated that Naseema conducted the think-aloud protocol successfully. She wrote 11 sentences and 128 words in her first draft and 12 sentences and 129 words in her second draft. The slight changes she made during the editing stage increased the number of words and sentences. This increase showed no major difference between her first and final draft. In this protocol, she spoke aloud all the processes she went through from prewriting to writing her final draft.

Her final draft was assessed by using the Six Traits Writing Rubric. Her paper received 26.5 out of 30. She received 3 points out of 5 in her Word Choice. As seen in her think-aloud protocol sample, some of her words were correct but repetitive. In her third reason or paragraph, she wrote, *She gives me a lot of stuff. She gives me her necklaces, and braclets.* She repeated quite the same sentence in the third paragraph when she wrote, *She*

buy's me a lot of stuff...she buy's me a lot of clothes necklaces, braclets, and rings. In this piece of writing, she was confused using an apostrophe for a third person "s" which she did not show in any of her other writing samples.

Interview Analysis

I conducted two interviews with Naseema, an initial interview where I acquired general information such as her name, age, country, number of years she has been in the U.S., and her reactions about the English and Arabic language (Appendix G). This interview took place in December 2007 in her school library. In April 2008, I interviewed her again with more in depth questions about the writing process and her reactions about her teacher writing activities. (Appendix G). This interview was executed in the school library too. Naseema was keyed up in both interviews. In both interviews, we sat at the same place in the library, "The Quiet Zone", where students usually sat comfortably in the floor to read or study. She answered my questions with confidence and a clear voice. For her interview transcript, see Appendix M, and for interview coding categories, see Appendix N.

While coding Naseema's responses to my questions, I identified five categories, feelings and attitudes toward writing, preferred language for writing, relationship with the ESL teacher, utilizing the writing process approach, and reactions to the teacher's writing activities. In the following section, I described each category and provided each with documented words, terms, phrases, and sentences.

- *Feelings and attitudes toward writing.* As mentioned in her responses to questions related to this element, Naseema showed positive feelings and attitudes toward writing.

She enjoyed learning English as a language and writing as a significant component of this language. Several terms and phrases occurred in Naseema's interview responses such as, *I like English*, *I love writing class*, and *Writing is fun*. These terms showed her interest in writing in English.

- *Preferred language for writing.* English language was Naseema's preference to use when writing. She stated that English was easier for her to use in writing than Arabic. She viewed the Arabic language to be difficult and hard to learn. This is understandable because she came to the U.S. when she was five years old and did not have the chance to be formally taught Arabic. Nonetheless, her family hired an Arabic teacher who tutored A her and her sisters on weekends. When she was asked whether she liked to write in Arabic, she replied:

> *No, it's like really hard. I have not really learned it a lot …Yes*
>
> *…like a teacher...she's a friend of my mom… she comes and*
>
> *teaches us …me and my sisters at home at my house…I can write*
>
> *some words and sentences in Arabic …but it's easier for me to*
>
> *write in English. sometimes there are a lot of parts...like if you can*
>
> *read in Arabic…it's like lots of parts…and like you got confused if*
>
> *this is with this or this like separate.*

- *Relationship with the ESL teacher.* Naseema, like other ESL students, showed a high level of respect to her teacher, Mrs. McCain, and a strong relationship was established between them. When Naseema needed help, she would not hesitate to ask for it. Naseema welcomed her teacher's comments and suggestions and never viewed them as

criticism. She responded to a related question saying, *She would help me to organize my ideas; she would give me suggestions and never critique me.*

- *Utilizing writing process approach.* Naseema depended on the writing process stages when she wrote in English. She successfully applied this approach in her writing. When she asked about the steps/stages she used when writing, she replied:

> *There are many stages… first we do brainstorming with the whole*
> *class, the teacher would ask questions and we answer these*
> *questions…and then we write… I write my first draft and make*
> *revision with a friend or my teacher…and then I write my final*
> *draft.*

- *Reaction to teacher writing activities.* Naseema was pleased with her teacher's writing activities. These activities were a chance to talk with her classmates and discuss subject matter. Throughout these activities, she and her friends would share their stories and clarify unclear statements or terms. She again described her teacher's writing activities as *fun*. Her response to this point was:

> *Yes, I like writing activities because it's fun when you work with*
> *groups…We talk with each other and share our stories and ask*
> *questions about our drafts if we don't understand some difficult*
> *words or sentences…I think it helps a lot.*

Naseema's interview analysis indicated that she preferred using English language when writing over Arabic. She found Arabic difficult to learn because of its confusing parts. She utilized the stages of the writing process in her writing. Naseema had established a well-built relationship with her teacher, Mrs. McCain, through which Naseema was

comfortable to ask questions and to receive comments and suggestions. Moreover, Naseema was satisfied with the writing activities her teacher employed which gave her a chance to share her stories and to clarify vague statements, words, and sentences that were found in her and her classmates' writing texts.

Writing Samples Analysis

Naseema wrote seven pieces throughout this study. According to her advanced-level of English proficiency, Naseema had limited and only surface-level errors. Through reading and analyzing her writing, I analyzed that she had strong control over her writing. Her advanced English level helped her to produce quality texts. According to the Six Traits Writing Rubric, Naseema's writing, including her Ideas and Content, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions, fell into the **Exemplary (6)** and **Strong (5)** categories. These rankings were assessed for her final draft. The interrater reliability for Naseema's writing samples was 87.5%. These rankings were assessed for her final drafts.

I described Naseema's writing and how it fit into each category in the Six Trait Writing Rubric. One of her writing samples is provided in Appendix Q.

- *Ideas and Content*. Naseema had clear, understandable, and focused ideas. Her writing samples showed that she always supported her main topic with relevant details and examples. There was only one time during this study where Naseema had difficulty writing and received a C+ (78%), the lowest writing grade since the beginning of the semester. That was in a persuasive writing session. Some of the composition feedback her teacher gave was: *What are your reasons why kids should have more recess?; What is*

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your first reason; Why do thy need exercise and fresh air?, and Re-state your reasons why kids need more recess.

- *Organization.* One of the distinguished characteristics of Naseema's writing was her organization. She effectively knew how to organize her writing by writing an introduction and conclusion. Unlike her Saudi Arabian peers, all the writing samples she produced during this study included introduction and conclusion paragraphs. Her writing was easy to read and had smooth transitions. When Naseema wrote about *No Homework,* she wrote a three sentence introductory paragraph (Appendix Q).

- *Voice.* Naseema was an expressive writer. She put the readers in mind when she wrote. She liked to share her own life, background, experiences with the reader. When reading her writing, one could feel her emotions, honesty, and humor. In the first paragraph, line 3, from her writing sample, she wrote, *I really don't like homework. It's really hard. I have three reasons why we should not do any homework.* This sentence expressed Naseema's feeling about homework.

- *Word Choice.* Naseema carefully chose her words when writing. For example, when she wrote about *No Homework,* she expressed her dislike of doing homework by using words such as *I don't like* and *hardly get to study.* She also used a broad range of connected words. In this sample she wrote *after, because, for example,* and *so that.*

- *Sentence Fluency.* Naseema's writing had easy flow and rhythm. She used varied structures and lengths. In the personal narrative session she wrote about *Halloween,* Naseema wrote short and long sentences. For example, she wrote, *I was so tired.* In another paragraph she wrote, *We went to another haunted party which was also covered with chocolate but this party was way cooler.*

- *Conventions.* In general, Naseema had used as much correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization as possible. Few misspelled words occurred in her writing samples such as, *restraunts* (restaurants), *their* (there) and *by* (buy).

From reading and evaluating Naseema's writing samples, I found that her writing can be ranked in the **Exemplary (6)** and **Strong (5)** categories in the Six Traits Writing Rubric. The clear ideas, the supporting details, the strong order of structure, sense of personality, the broad range of words, the flow and rhythm of sentences, and the strong control of conventions, comprising necessary skills to produce quality texts were presented in her writing. In general, Naseema had control over her writing and could not be recognized as an ESL student. She made the same errors native speakers of English would make and her writing was not much different than theirs.

A comparison was made between a text written in December and one written in April which indicated that there were no major differences between the two except for the number of errors which diminished throughout the study. In December 2007, Naseema's average error range was five to six mistakes, including spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing. At the end of April 2008, this number minimized to two to three errors. In some occasions, Naseema would produce a text that had no misspelled words or incorrect grammar; this happened in the persuasive writing session where the topic was *More Recess.* Table 5.3. indicates the sequence of the writing process stages Naseema used throughout this study.

Table 5.3: Naseema's Writing Process Stages

Month	Topic	Pre-writing	Planning	Drafting	Pausing	Reading	Revising	Editing	Publishing
December	Expository	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
January	Biography	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
February	Autobiography	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
March	Persuasive	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
April	Narrative	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Naseema used all the stages of the writing process in this study. Sometimes, Naseema would use two to three stages in one writing session. On other occasions, she would utilize just one stage, drafting, which took most of her time. Right from the beginning, none of her writing was attempted without the prewriting activity. In this stage, she would write down outlines, ideas, draw pictures, diagrams, or web organizers. And then she would check out if these ideas were related to the topic. After that she would write her first draft and revise it with a friend or her teacher. When she finished revising, she would write her final copy on a paper or on the computer. She published her writings by turning it to her teacher and by allowing me to make copies of them.

In Table 5.3, I noted that the writing process stages had been utilized by Naseema all semester long. This approach became an essential method through which she successfully wrote different texts in different genres. After analyzing Naseema's classroom observation, think-aloud protocol, and writing samples, I identified her strengths, challenges, and growth which I summarized in Table 5.4

Table 5.4. Overview of Naseema's Writing Process

	Strengths	Challenges	Growth
Observations	Proper oral and written English such as tenses, verb and noun agreement. Participation in classroom discussion and asking questions. Computer use. Writing process approach.	NA	Continuous participation in classroom discussion and asking questions
Think-aloud protocol	Spending sufficient time to compose. Verbalizing the sentences before writing them.	NA	NA
Writing samples	Writing proper English, verb-noun agreement. Broad range of vocabulary. Well-organized texts with introductions and conclusions. Strong control of conventions. Easy flow and rhythm.	Limited spelling errors occurred from time to time.	Number of spelling errors reduced. Continuous organization.

From Table 5.4, Naseema's writing had several strengths, limited challenges, and

continuous growth. Because of her educational history of beginning her formal schooling

in the United States, her writing could be evaluated no different than that of a native

speaker's. The strengths she had included were: her appropriate use of English language

vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and punctuation, using of the computer, and utilizing the

writing process approach. The only challenge she faced was a few spelling errors that

would occur from time to time in her writing. However, by the end of this study, the

number of these spelling errors had diminished.

Noof

Noof is a ten years old. She was born in Saudi Arabia and attended her first grade there. After she finished her first grade in Saudi Arabia, all her family members, including her father, mother, three brothers, and four sisters moved to the U.S. Her father is pursuing a Ph.D. degree. She likes to write stories about her friends in school in English. She also can write in Arabic. Her mother teaches her Arabic at home and helps her with Arabic spelling. Noof came to the U.S. without any knowledge of the English language. In Saudi Arabia, teaching English language starts at seventh grade. She is a fast learner and motivated student. She has great potential to learn English. I observed her from December 2007 until the end of April 2008. More individual information about Noof was provided in Chapter Three.

Stages of the Writing Process

There are eight writing process stages I examined throughout classroom observations: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams,1998). The definition of each stage was provided in Chapter Three. In this section, I described each stage and how Noof used them when she wrote in English. Noof was taught by Mrs. Cook.

- *Prewriting.* In this stage, Noof would participate in classroom discussion by answering her teacher's questions or by paying attention to what her teacher said. Throughout discussions, Noof generated several ideas and thoughts. She could express her own opinions freely without fear or hesitation. During brainstorming, Noof would draw pictures, create a bubble web, or write an outline to organize her ideas.

- *Planning.* Usually most of the planning stage over lapped with the prewriting stage where some of the activities were performed. Noof would check out her ideas and see if they matched the topic she was planning to write about. For example, one day when she was writing about her mother, she wrote her prewriting page and at the same time she was checking her ideas and counting them. On occasion, I would see her adding some details to her ideas.

- *Drafting.* After Noof finished her prewriting activities and planning, she would write down her ideas and connect them together with sentences and paragraphs. Usually she did not write much. She would spend some of the time thinking before she wrote a sentence. The flow was somehow slow in her writing. One day her teacher came to check out her writing and found that she had written just three sentences and could not move on. Noof's teacher helped her to write more by asking her to revisit her prewriting page to obtain more ideas.

- *Pausing.* When Noof finished writing she put her pencil down and went over what she had already written. In this stage, Noof checked out if she wrote enough sentences and paragraphs. She would also check if her peers had finished their papers and she would wait for them to finish to meet in a peer conference.

- *Reading.* Noof read her writing during the pausing stage. She took two minutes maximum to finish reading her writing. Reading occurred immediately after writing the first draft. On some occasions, however, Noof would meet in a peer conference without even reading her first draft. For example, one day she wrote about a dream she had of her grandmother. When she met with her classmate in the revising stage, her peer read her

paper first. While she was reading, Noof spotted a mistake she made and immediately stopped her peer from reading and corrected that word.

- *Revising.* Noof would revise her written passage in two phases, peer and teacher conferences. She would sit down with her classmate and they would read each other's papers. She would also sit with her teacher for more suggestions and comments. Mrs. Cook would provide her with oral and written feedback. For example, in one of her teacher conferences, she asked her teacher about the meaning of *spontaneously* which she read in a story the previous week. Her teacher asked her to grab a dictionary and they together looked for the meaning.

- *Editing*. After Noof finished revising her paper with her peer or her teacher, she would move on to writing her final draft. She would open a new page in her notebook and start by writing the topic at the top center of the page. Sometimes, Mrs. Cook would provide them with computers to word process their writing. If she encountered any problems with her corrections, she would ask her teacher for help. For example, one day she was not sure about how and when to use some punctuation marks such as a semicolon. She asked her teacher for help.

- *Publishing.* Noof published her writing frequently throughout my observations. The one I remember the most was displaying the "Snow Flakes" which she wrote in the technical writing session on the classroom bulletin board. Noof and all the other students were happy and excited that their writing were presented to other students and teachers. Noof also published her writings by turning them in to her teachers and by allowing me to make copies of them.

Noof employed the eight stages of the writing process approach during this study. Although it was difficult to utilize all the stages in one writing session, by the end of April, Noof completed her writing by practicing and experiencing each one of them. Her writing ability improved through using this approach and her writing samples were evident reflections of its advantages.

Strategies and Techniques

Noof used several strategies and techniques toward writing throughout my observations of her writing behaviors and attitudes. These included: asking questions, making immediate connections with the teacher, and keeping her written papers organized.

- *Asking questions.* Despite Noof's quiet personality, she liked to ask her teacher questions about unclear concepts, words, or language rules. And because her class was small, just five students, there were many opportunities to ask for more explanation and clarification. She would also ask her classmates if there were unclear words that she did not understand. Her questions were extended to cover other areas besides writing. One day when Mrs. Cook just started the writing class, Noof raised her hand and asked her this question: *What is the color of the sea? It is blue, if so, how come its water is clear?* On other occasions, her questions would be all about writing. For example, one day during a technical writing session, she asked her teacher, *Why technical writing is important?*

- *Immediate connections with the teacher.* Noof immediately and constantly communicated and resorted to her teacher for all and probably any matter, likely due to the class small size. Whenever she encountered any kind of problems, she would ask the teacher for help. Her teacher paid a great deal of attention to her. For example, one day the

teacher was discussing the advantages and disadvantages of winter and how many people in this season could be hurt by breaking an arm or a leg when they fall down due to icy floors. She mentioned the word *cast* during her explanation. Noof immediately raised her hand and asked Mrs. Cook about the meaning of that word.

- *Keeping her written papers organized.* Noof kept her written papers in a folder she carried in her backpack. In this folder, she would keep her first drafts with the corrections. One day, Noof made a spelling mistake while writing, but did not seek her teacher's help because she remembered making the same mistake a week ago and she had the previous corrected spelling in her folder. This strategy helped her to easily access her previous writings and to be independent in correcting her own mistakes.

Think-Aloud Protocol Analysis

Noof and I went to the library to conduct the think-aloud protocol. At the outset, I trained Noof on the think aloud protocol and how it would work. I gave Noof two topics: Topic A was *Write About Your Mother and Why You Love Her*; Topic B was *What is Your Favorite Sport?* She was required to choose one and write about it. She chose Topic A. I put my tape recorder on the table and made sure it was working. I asked her to write about her topic and just say aloud whatever came to her mind. We made a practice together at first so she could be familiar with the procedure. She liked it and was willing to try it out. The outcome from the recording of the composing aloud was analyzed. Using this tool helped me to identify Noof's cognitive process while she wrote. It also provided me with her composing behaviors. The final writing product for the protocol is in Writing Sample 5.3

I like my mother because she doese alot of work in the house and anthor reseon I like my mothe is because she cares alot about me. also she doese all the cooking in the house. my mother is the best.

My mother doese alot of work in the house
my mother washes the dishes in the Kichen. and she also doese the cleaning in the house the most.

My mother cares alot about me
my mother cares alot about becaus she is the one who feedes me. And brushes my hair. And make sure I am good to go.

My mother doese all the cooking in the house
my mother cooks rice, chicken and sometimes she cooks arbic food and also she cooks macronine and cheese.

My mother is the best
my mother is the best because she's the one who took care of me when I was a baby. And she cares alot about my family. And her mom and dad.

Writing Sample 5.3: Noof's Think-Aloud Protocol Writing

Coding for 13 minutes of prewriting, drafting, reading, and editing of Noof's Think-Aloud Protocol tape using an adapted version of Perl's (1981) coding scheme (see Table 3.2) resulted in these findings.

Noof spent 13 minutes composing. She chose topic A and wrote her piece using the writing process stages. She used the main stages of the writing process approach which included prewriting, drafting, reading and editing. She started with prewriting where she jotted down her ideas and put them in a spider-web organizer. And then she wrote her first

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draft. When she finished, she went back and read it, she did not say what her purpose of reading was. At the end of the protocol, she edited her first draft by correcting punctuation, capitalization and only one spelling error. At the end of this protocol she forgot to write her final draft.

Noof was relaxed and confident while simultaneously talking and writing. It was obvious from the coding alone that she started her writing by reading the title and looking for ideas to support this topic. Brainstorming helped her to come up with three ideas, an introduction, and a conclusion paragraph. She put each supporting idea in a circle connected to the main idea.

Noof moved on to write her first draft. She wrote an introduction with all the ideas about which she would be talking. And then she wrote three body paragraphs with two to three sentences each. Noof concluded her writing with two closure sentences. Noof was given thirty minutes to compose in this session. The time started from the moment she started her writing activities to the time she submitted her final draft to me. She wrote in 13 minutes. She used four stages of the writing process approach when writing, including prewriting, drafting, reading and editing. However, she did not write a final copy; she edited her first draft and made all changes needed for a final draft. I described each stage Noof utilized in her think-aloud protocol.

- *Prewriting.* In this stage, Noof did not start writing her first draft immediately. Nevertheless, she brainstormed to come up with new ideas and thoughts about the topic she chose. In line 2 in the prewriting section from her think-aloud protocol she said, *I am gonna brainstorm for a little so that I can get the ideas of the story.* She started by drawing a spider web organizer, where she wrote her main idea in the center of the paper,

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and drew four lines connected with four circles, a circle for each idea. She talked about these ideas aloud while she was jotting them down in the circles. She spent two minutes brainstorming. Her brainstorming was going smoothly and there was no problem whatsoever about expressing those ideas out into the tape recorder. She ripped out the web page and used it as a guideline to help her put what she came up with into sentences and paragraphs.

Verbalization conflicted with writing on some occasions. Noof would say some words aloud but then wrote them differently. For example, in line (8) from her transcript she said, *I like my mom* and she wrote this sentence *I like my mother.* In line 10 she said, *My mother cares a lot about me* and wrote it *My mother carse a lot about me.* In the same line Noof said, *My mother does all the cooking in the house*, and wrote *My mother does all the coking in the house*. All these errors were fixed in the drafting stage. Noof noticed that she wrote some words incorrectly, and fixed them immediately while she was composing her first draft.

- *Drafting.* After Noof finished organizing her ideas, she started composing her first draft by using the brainstorming web she created earlier, confirming that in line 6 in the prewriting section from her taped transcript by stating, *OK. I am gonna rip the page off so I can see it when I write my story.* In a paragraph, she introduced the ideas she would be talking about later in the draft. After that, she wrote four paragraphs. Each paragraph had two to three supporting details. While writing, Noof had some problems talking and writing at the same time but that did not prevent the think aloud procedure from moving smoothly. Noof would say the sentence that she was thinking of aloud, and then write it down. This was a distinct technique Noof used during the think-aloud protocol. During the

drafting stage, Noof was confident and calm. She spoke out almost every word she wrote or thought.

- *Reading.* Noof read what she had written twice in her think aloud protocol. Earlier in this procedure, Noof read the introduction as soon as she finished writing it. In line 4 in the drafting section from her taped transcription she said, *OK. I am gonna read my introduction now.* That was the first reading she did during her think aloud protocol. Then when she finished writing the first draft, she went back and read the whole draft. In line 1 in the reading section from her taped transcript she stated, *Ok. I am gonnan go back and read the whole thing.* In reading, her voice and pronunciation were clear and comprehensible.

- *Editing..* This stage occurred after reading. For editing, Noof was reading her text sentence by sentence looking for surface-level mistakes to correct. Whenever she spotted a misspelled word, she would erase it with her rubber and replace it with the correct spelling. There were not many spelling errors in Noof's writing. The only misspelled words she found were *checkin* (chicken) and *cocking* (cooking) and the latter word was found in her brainstorming page. And since she used the brainstorming page to copy the sentences she wrote, she did not copy that misspelled word and wrote it correctly in her first draft, and also corrected carse (cares). All other changes she made were capitalization and punctuation. In line 5 in the editing section from her taped transcript, Noof said, *My mother cares a lot about me because she is the one who feeds me, period, and brushes my hair, capitalize "and."* Moreover, in line 12 from the same section, Noof said, *I put period there and capital A in "and."*

In this assignment, Noof wrote 15 sentences and 164 words in her first draft. Noof did not write a final draft. Therefore, making a comparison between the number of sentences and words she wrote before and after the editing was not possible. The number of sentences and words she produced during composing could be a sign of the effect of the writing process stages she used. However, using such an approach was enough to predict that Noof benefited from utilizing this method in connecting her ideas into sentences and paragraphs. The using of the writing process helped Noof to shape her writing and make it look more organized. In addition, using this method promoted her to understand that writing does not occur automatically, but needs to go through an active process in order to produce legible and coherent texts.

Noof's first draft think-aloud protocol writing sample was given 26 points out of 30. She wrote an introduction, a conclusion, and three body paragraphs. She just made two spelling errors *kichen* (kitchen) and *feedes* (feeds).

Interview Analysis

I interviewed Noof twice throughout this study: an initial interview through which I asked her a few informative queries about her name, age, country, number of years she has been in the U.S, and her attitude toward writing in English and Arabic (Appendix H). Then a follow up interview was conducted in April 2008 (Appendix H). In the latter interview, I asked her more elaborate questions about her feelings and attitudes toward writing, the steps/stages she used when she wrote in English, and finally the writing activities her teacher, Mrs. Cook, used in the writing class. Both interviews were conducted in the school library.

When I interviewed Noof for the first time, she was shy and quiet. We sat face to face at a round table next to the wall in the library. I took my tape recorder out from my bag and put it on the table and tested it to make sure it was working. I started the interview and Noof's responses to my questions were short and clear.

In the follow up interview, Noof was excited and appeared more familiar with the steps we previously practiced. She talked more this time and responded to each question with confidence and satisfaction. While coding Noof's interview responses to the interview questions, I used five categories: feelings and attitudes toward writing, preferred language for writing, relationship with the ESL teacher, utilizing the writing process approach, and reactions to the teacher's writing activities. I described each category and provided each with documented words, terms, phrases, and sentences.

- *Feelings and attitudes toward writing.* Noof had positive feelings and attitudes toward writing. Her responses to related questions illustrated that writing was plain enjoyment in Mrs. Cook's writing class. She stated, *I like writing class. I like Mrs. Cook when she teaches me how to write. It's fun class.*

Noof showed satisfaction when responding to the questions that were associated with the feelings she had for writing. She enjoyed her writing class with all the activities, and techniques she practiced.

She worked with writing as a means through which she expressed and organized her thoughts and ideas. She stated that when she had ideas she liked to put them down in a written format. She replied when she asked about a related question, *I like writing. It's fun. Like when you have ideas you like to write a story about these ideas.*

- *Preferred language for writing.* Noof could write in both languages, Arabic and English. When she was asked if she liked to write in Arabic, she replied:

> *Yes. I like to write in Arabic at home…my mom helps me to write*
>
> *in Arabic. She gets a notebook that has Arabic stuff and she makes*
>
> *me read it and she makes me do spelling in Arabic and makes me*
>
> *write in Arabic …my mother teaches me spelling…I can write*
>
> *stories in Arabic.*

Noof attended her first grade in Saudi Arabia and then she moved to the U.S. and attended her second, third, fourth, and fifth grade in American schools. However, her family, especially her mother, taught her Arabic at home. They made sure that she maintained reasonable reading and writing knowledge of her first language.

- *Relationship with the ESL teacher*. Noof had a strong relationship with her teacher, Mrs. Cook. In this relationship, Noof played the role of a positive listener, while her teacher played the role of a proficient ESL teacher, learning motivator, and a friend. When Noof needed help, Mrs. Cook was available to offer suggestions, comments and encouragement. Noof and her teacher seemed to know each other's writing strategies. For example, when Noof misspelled words, she knew that her teacher would not directly make corrections, rather, Mrs. Cook would ask Noof to use other sources, such as a dictionary to look up words. In responding to a related question, Noof pointed out, *She helps me to look for correct spellings… like using the dictionary…when I write few sentences she would say 'I know you can do more' She always encourage me.*

- *Utilizing writing process approach.* Noof used all stages of the writing process. Before writing, prewriting activities such as brainstorming should be executed. Then she

would write her first draft and make sure to revise it whether with her teacher or with her classmates. After that, editing would take place to produce a quality error-free product. When I asked her about the steps/stages she used when she wrote in English, she answered: *Many steps. I do brainstormin,g ask questions and then I write first draft and then I make revisions and editing with the teacher and with classmates. After I finish I write my final draft. That's all.*

- *Reactions to the teacher writing activities.* Her reaction to Mrs. Cook's writing activities was positive. She stated that these activities assisted her in understanding the topic and to produce correct versions of her writing. Mrs. Cook used several writing activities to improve her student's writing skills. One of these activities was giving students a sheet of paper about good beginnings and good endings. On this sheet of paper, there were many examples of how one can start a story and how adequately one can end it.

Noof's interview analysis indicated that she liked writing and viewed it as a fun and enjoyable action. She liked to write in both languages although she was not learning Arabic formally in school. She utilized the writing process approach because it was an effective method to turn out few ideas for quality writing. Her relationship with her teacher was well-built and helpful in terms of developing her writing skills.

Writing Samples Analysis

Noof had written seven pieces throughout my observation of her class. The analysis of her writing samples according to the Six Traits Writing Rubric indicated that Noof's writing, including her Ideas and Content, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence

Fluency, and Conventions, fell into the **Proficient (4)** and **Developing (3)** categories. Noof's writing was functional and clear in general, but sometimes lacked structure. There was limited control of conventions over her writing. The interrater reliability for Noof's writing samples was 86.67 %. These rankings were assessed for her final draft. I described Noof's writings and how they fit into each category in the Six Trait Writing Rubric. One of her writing sample is provided in Appendix R.

- *Ideas and Content*. At certain times, Noof's main idea would be clear and focused. However, on some other occasions, her ideas would be cloudy. She would write general details that were far off the topic or she would limit these details so they did not cover the main idea. From the writing sample in Appendix R, she wrote about the death of her grandmother and the dream she had about this incident. Noof's ideas were clear and supported with details.

- *Organization.* Two introductions Noof wrote throughout this study were unrecognizable introductions. One of these introductions was written in her narrative writing session about**,** *The Most Important Person in the World.* Noof wrote,

> *I think my mother is the best because she always brushes my hair*
>
> *everyday before I go to school. Also she talks to me when I am sad.*
>
> *Everyday when I am sad. Every day when I have home word and*
>
> *my dad is not here she helps me with my homework which is most*
>
> *of the time because my dad has to go grade some papers for his*
>
> *students.*

Nonetheless, in her writing, she wrote about different ideas about her mother and never mentioned any details about what she had previously written in that introduction.

The same rule applied to the conclusions. Noof would be confused on how to conclude her writing. Sometimes, she would write only one concluding sentence. Moreover, Noof would add general ideas about which she wrote her draft. For example, at the end of the same topic, Noof concluded her writing by stating, *I feel my mom is really patient and always listen to me when I am talking to her. She has a really hard job that she takes care of us at the same time. Also she cooks food for us everyday and makes sure we eat. She love me so much.*

Noof realized that a text should consist of an introduction, three or four paragraphs, and a conclusion. Her successful attempts to produce a well-organized text indicated that she would reach this point one day.

- *Voice.* This element could fell into the **Exemplary (6)** and **Strong (5)** categories. Noof did have a strong and expressive voice in her writing. Her personality could be revealed throughout her writing especially in her narrative writing. She expressed her sad feelings about her grandmother's death. She wrote, *My mom dad and I were crying again. I remembered when I walked her to the bathroom.*

- *Word Choice.* Noof used every day language in her writing. She did not stretch her writing ability to come up with new words or better ways to formulate sentences. The words she used explained her message; however, they did not capture the reader's attention. She did not have sufficient ability to clarify sentences to the reader who would figure out what she meant even though a few words were missing. She would also overdo

descriptions at times. For example, when she wrote about *The Most Important Person in the World,* she described her mom and how important she was to her. Noof wrote *Also she talks to me when I am sad. Every day when I am sad.*

- *Sentence Fluency.* Most of Noof's sentences were clear and natural. Nonetheless, some sentences were choppy and awkward. When reading her writing, the reader would find many similar patterns and beginnings. She would use more words than necessary. For example, she used the word *then* four times in her writing sample. Her use of this word was not necessary in some places and she could have used other connecting words to join the sentences.

- *Conventions.* Noof's writing would show limited control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Most of her errors were in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. These were some of the common misspelled words I identified in Noof's writing samples: *mosk* (mosque), *remamber* (remember), *wakeld* (walked), *midde* (middle), *uncel* (uncle), *waring* (wearing), *relley* (really) and *exelent* (excellent). Noof would also forget to capitalize words at the beginning of new sentences and sometimes she would have run-on sentences. In the first draft of this writing sample, she wrote, *I dreamed of my grama she was blind I dreamed that somebody killed her*.

After analyzing Noof's writing samples, I found that her clear ideas and messages, the supporting details, the order of structure, sense of personality, the limited range of words, the functional and natural sentences, and the limited control of conventions all fell in the **Proficient (4)** and **Developing (3)** categories of the Six Traits Writing Rubric.

To analyze Noof's writing samples, I also made a comparison between a text she wrote in December and one she wrote in April. By using the Six Traits Writing Rubric, I

identified that reasonable changes occurred in Noof's writing during this period. The spelling errors she used to make were all corrected. She practiced those words in her writing and wrote them correctly. In December, Noof used to write one paragraph texts, but as she moved on, her writing was developed and more details and paragraphs were included in her writing. However, her Word Choice and Sentence Fluency were still suffering from pattern repetition, limited choice of words, and use of every day vocabulary. In December, Noof's average errors ranged was ten to fifteen mistakes, including spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing. At the end of April, her average error count shrunk to four or five.

Table 5.5 displays the sequence of the writing process stages Noof utilized throughout this study.

Table 5.5: Noof's Writing Process Stages

Month	Topic	Pre-writing	Planning	Drafting	Pausing	Reading	Revising	Editing	Publishing
December	**Narrative**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
January	**Technical/Poetry**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
February	**Poetry**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
March	**Poetry**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
April	**Narrative**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Noof used all the stages of the writing process approach. Table 5.5 shed some light on what stages she used during this study and the genres in which she wrote. Throughout my observation of Noof's usage of the process-oriented approach, I identified that she usually participated in prewriting activities, such as, brainstorming, drawing pictures, drawing web organizer, and discussions, her teacher, Mrs. Cook, would use before each writing session. Drafting would come next as soon as she finished brainstorming. When Noof completed her draft writing, peer or teacher conferences would be held to revise her work. Writing a

final copy of the draft would be the last stage in the whole process. Then Noof would publish her writing by turning it in to her teacher or giving me a copy of it.

After analyzing Noof's observation, interviews, think-aloud protocol, and writing samples during the semester, I looked at her strengths, challenges, and growth which I summarized in Table 5.6

Table 5.6: Overview of Noof's Writing Process

	Strengths	Challenges	Growth
Observations	Asking questions and active participating in classroom. Immediate connection with her teacher. Show appreciation to her teacher's feedback.	Misunderstanding teacher's instructions occasionally.	Continuous participation in classroom discussion and asking questions
Think-aloud protocol	Spending sufficient time to compose. Verbalizing the sentences before writing them. Using the writing process.	Forgetting to write final draft.	NA
Writing samples	Writing proper English verb-noun agreement. Clear and expressive voice.	Limited control of conventions. Limited range of vocabulary. Confusing introduction and conclusion. Lack of variety in length and structure.	Number of spelling errors reduced.

Overall, Noof's strengths were clearly indicated in the classroom observations. Her strategies and techniques toward writing were strong enough to impact her writing ability. However, her challenges were concentrated in the writing samples, in which she had numerous difficulties. By the end of this study, Noof had a bit more control over her conventions and fewer spelling mistakes would occur.

Najah

Najah is ten years old. She was born in Saudi Arabia. She attended her kindergarten, first, second, and third grades in Saudi Arabia. She moved with her family to the U.S. and started her fourth grade in the ESL program at the Central Elementary School. She liked to write stories in English, and she viewed Arabic language as difficult to learn. She was shy, quiet, and barely spoke to others. She was taught by Mrs.Cook. I observed her from December 2007 until the end of April 2008. More background information about Najah was provided in Chapter Three.

Stages of the Writing Process

There are eight writing process stages I examined throughout classroom observations: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams, 1998). In this section, I described each stage and how Noof used them when she wrote in English.

- *Prewriting.* Due to her shy personality, Najah did not often participate in classroom discussion. Her voice was rarely heard by her teacher and her classmate. When Mrs. Cook asked questions, Najah would not raise her hand and wait for her teacher to pick on her. She hesitated to participate being afraid that she might say wrong answers. In many cases I found her unprepared for the writing class and forgetting the information that had been explained the other day. She was a little bit passive and not active as a learner. When she finished answering her teacher's questions, she would silently put her ideas on paper and quietly organize them. She would draw pictures or maps to put these ideas in order.

- *Planning.* Najah planned for her writing by going over what she jotted down and shared it sometimes with others. But most of the time she would not consider the purpose or the aim of the topic and would start drafting immediately after brainstorming. During narrative writing, Najah shared some ideas with her classmates and teacher and wrote them down. Later, she did not check those ideas with the topic and just started writing about a dream she had about *Dragons.*

- *Drafting.* In this stage, Najah would write her story. She was a slower writer and slower word processor on the computer as well. She usually wrote short stories and few sentences in each paragraph. Her vocabulary was limited. She would repeat words over and over. Najah spent more time finishing her writings than the others. One day when students were working on technical writing, Najah had difficulties writing directions on how to make a snow flake. Her teacher helped her many times to write the directions correctly.

- *Pausing.* After Najah finished her stories, she would take a few minutes to read. She did not care about how short she wrote her stories. Most of the time, she ended up with one paragraph with only a few sentences. I observed this when she was writing a narrative story about her mother. She wrote two sentences and stopped. She was running out of ideas and could not write more. When Mrs. Cook came to her desk and found out that Najah wrote just two sentences, Mrs. Cook encouraged her to write more by saying, *I am sure you have a lot to say here*. Not before that, Najah started to write more.

- *Reading.* Reading and pausing occurred at the same time. While pausing, Najah read her writing or read her classmates' papers. It took her one to two minutes to finish

reading her stories since they were so short. One day, after Najah finished writing a poem about people, she took one minute to go over what she wrote and read it silently.

- *Revising.* Revising took two phases in Najah's writing process: peer and teacher conferences. In peer conference, Najah would sit with a classmate and they exchanged each other's papers and read them. They were allowed to ask questions about unfamiliar and incorrect spelling words. Students would usually write down their suggestions on a "post it" yellow note and stick it at the bottom of the paper. In this way, they would be able not only to listen to their peer's suggestions, but to read it. Afterward, Mrs. Cook would welcome her students to a teacher conference. In this conference, Najah would listen to her teache'sr comments and suggestions quietly. Mrs. Cook always encouraged her students to use a pencil to make corrections. She, herself, never used a red pen to correct students' mistakes.

- *Editing.* After Najah finished revising her paper, she would rewrite it without spelling or grammar mistakes. In this stage, she would take some time to polish her paper and make sure that she corrected all the misspelled words. For example, one day she wrote a poem about *People*. When she finished revising it with her peer and her teacher, she spotted a few spelling errors such as *wach* (wash) and *resturant* (restaurant) and corrected them in her final copy.

- *Publishing.* Najah had her writing papers published in the classroom bulletin board only once during this study when Mrs. Cook displayed her snow flake that she created in the technical writing session. In addition, it was also considered publishing when she turned in her papers to her teacher and when she allowed me to make copies of them.

Although Najah had several challenges in her writing, she used all the writing process stages from prewriting to publishing. Practicing these stages assisted her to realize that writing could not be completed in one stage, rather it involved multiple steps in which a student would go back and forth to produce a quality written assignment.

Strategies and Techniques

The one and the only strategy Najah used toward writing in English was practicing the writing process stages. Despite the safe and comfortable environment Mrs. Cook provided for discussion, Najah did not talk or participate until she was called on. She had a quiet personality and she had fear of making mistakes when responding to her teacher's questions. Her participation in class was limited and she seemed more likely to learn from her peers. She rarely asked or stated her personal views or opinions. Utilizing writing process stages helped Najah to find ways through which she could improve her writing. As mentioned in the previous section, I described each stage and how Najah went through them and in what ways she executed them.

Think- Aloud Protocol Analysis

To implement this procedure, I asked Najah's teacher, Mrs. Cook, to find me a time and place so Najah and I could sit together in a quiet place. There was no place we could use during the school day except the school library. Najah and I sat a table in the corner and prepared ourselves to complete the think aloud protocol. It was something new to Najah to practice since she has never seen or heard about such a method. I practiced with her how the procedure could be used to know how students think and about what they

think when they write. I told her to speak out whatever she thought of during the writing.

She was given 30 minutes to complete one of the following topics. Topic A was *Write About Your Mother and Why You Love Her*; Topic B was *"What Is Your Favorite Sport?* She chose Topic A. Najah's final product of the think-aloud protocol is in Writing Sample 5.4.

Writing Sample 5.4: Najah's Think-Aloud Protocol Writing

Coding for 29 minutes of Najah's Think-Aloud Protocol tape using an adapted version of Perl's (1981) coding scheme (see Table 3.2) resulted in the following findings. In the think-aloud protocol, Najah spent 29 minutes to finish her writing. To accomplish this task, she used five stages from the writing process approach: prewriting, drafting, reading, editing, and reading.

The first thing Najah wrote in her paper was the title which was *My Mother.* After that, she brainstormed for ideas and thoughts. In line 2 in the prewriting section from her taped transcript, she stated, *First, I am gonna brainstorm so I can write my thoughts so it can help me organize things.* She drew a web organizer with a circle in the center of the page. She drew five lines out of this centered circle. At the end of each line, she drew another circle that contained Najah's five ideas. Afterward, Najah started writing her first draft by writing an introduction for her topic. She said, *I am gonna write my title, my mother, and I am gonna write the paragraph.* She moved on and spoke of all the ideas she wrote previously in the prewriting stage. This introduction included all the five ideas she came up with in her brainstorming. And then she wrote each idea as a topic sentence for a new paragraph. She supported her paragraphs with details and examples. She said, *I am gonna star,t the first reason, is I love my mother, and I am gonna write examples why I love my mother.* In each paragraph, she wrote two to three sentences. While writing her first draft, Najah was talking aloud and saying the sentences that she was about to write.

Najah was calm and relaxed, talking and writing at the same time. At the beginning she showed some hesitation and frustration at looking for ideas, but as soon as she generated one, the rest started to flow into her mind. She also showed lots of repetition in her ideas and words. She verbalized the title and the brainstorming page and wrote mostly previously written ideas. For example, in line 12 from the drafting section in her transcript she mentioned her second reason why she liked her mother by saying, *My second reason is she take good care of me* and then one of the examples she mentioned was *she love me.* Then she repeated that example and wrote it as a third reason in her writing. In line 15, she said, *The third one is she love me.* This repetition in her ideas indicated that her Word

Choice and Sentence Fluency were limited and narrowed. She orally asked questions and talked about the organization of the ideas. She started her writing with an introductory paragraph where she wrote down all five ideas that she would be writing about. For each paragraph and idea, she wrote two to three examples. These examples were her supporting details.

Najah spent 29 minutes from the 30 minutes that was given to her to finish this task. She wrote 27 sentences in her first draft and 20 in her final draft. The total of the words was 128 in her first draft, and 135 in her last one. While writing, she used the writing process approach with which she became familiar. She used: prewriting, drafting, reading, editing, and reading. In this order, Najah read her story twice, once after she finished drafting, and another time at the end of the process. Her purpose behind this second reading, as she stated in line 1 in the reading section from her think-aloud protocol transcript, was to re-edit her writing. She said, *Now I have to check my spelling,* and she moved on reading the whole draft looking for spelling errors.

- *Prewriting.* In this stage, Najah read the title and stated that she would brainstorm for some ideas to help her to organize her thoughts. In line 1 in the prewriting section from her taped think aloud protocol transcription, she said, *First I am gonna brainstorm so I can write my thoughts so it can help me organize things.* This indicated that Najah recognized the importance of brainstorming and the positive impact it had on her writing. She spoke aloud her ideas and wrote them down on a web organizer. She spent three minutes prewriting. Each idea later became the beginning sentence in each paragraph. During the brainstorming, Najah went through some silent moments to think about her ideas. The total number of the ideas she came up with was five. Those five ideas were

actually reasons for why she loved her mother. She wrote four reasons: *she does a lot of things to me, she take good care of me; she love me* and *she's nice; she is kind to people,* and *I love my mother so much.*

- *Drafting.* After Najah had finished her prewriting, she ripped out the web page and put it in front of her so it would assist her to write her first draft in a new page. She wrote her title *My Mother* and six paragraphs: one introductory paragraph, four body paragraph, and a closure paragraph. In her introductory paragraph she just copied all the sentences (reasons) she wrote in her brainstorming web page and numbered them. In each paragraph, she would start with one of these reasons and give two to three examples to support it. In line 6 in the drafting section, Najah said, *I am gonna start the first reaso, is I love my mother, and I am gonna write examples why I love my mother.* She spoke aloud while she wrote. However, the think-aloud in this stage was limited to reading off the brainstorming page and repeating the same sentences and words. There was no actual thinking about text structure or planning. Najah spent some time thinking of examples to support her paragraphs. Her ideas were all similar to one another and the examples she came up with were repeatedly addressed in each paragraph. For example, in her first draft she wrote:

    1. She does a lot of things to me

     EX. She cook for me.

    She take good care of my close.

    She wach my close.

As evidenced, first she numbered each paragraph in her writing assignment, and wrote down the reason why she loved her mother as a beginning sentence, and followed it with underlined examples. Najah did not join her sentences by using conjunction words.

- *Reading.* Reading occurred twice in Najah's think-aloud protocol. After drafting, Najah read her entire draft without mentioning the purpose of this reading. In line 1 in the first reading section from her taped transcription, Najah said, *And now I am done with all of things, and now I am gonna read my story again.* Later, when she finished writing her final draft, she went over and read it. This time she mentioned or talked aloud the purpose of reading. In line 1 in the second reading section from her taped transcript, she said, *Now I have to check my spelling.* Although checking spelling was her purpose for her second reading, there was no correction completed during that stage. During my observation of her think-aloud protocol session, I indicated that Najah could not spot her own surface-level errors.

- *Editing.* For the editing stage, Najah rewrote her story in a new page starting with the title and the rest of the paragraphs. She wrote her paragraphs without underlining her supporting examples like she did in her first draft. That gave her paper a nice and more organized look. Nonetheless, she did not yet use any conjunction terms. The only joining word she used in her text was *and.* In this stage, Najah was more likely to use punctuation marks, such as periods and commas. When Najah was editing her piece, she would say the whole sentence that she was thinking of at that moment, and then write it down. And she would also repeat that specific sentence or word. For example, in the editing section from her think-aloud transcript, in line 3 she said, *She take good care of me, Care of me.* In line 4 she said *She is nice and she's kind to people*, and repeated *kind to people*. And in line

10, she said *I help her get things done* and repeated *things done.* The only correction

Najah made in this stage was adding the third person "s" to one of the verbs. In her first

draft, Najah wrote *she invite people* and she corrected it in her final draft and wrote *She*

invites people. Najah made three spelling errors, but never corrected them, even after she

read them twice.

In most occasions, Najah would write verbs after (she) without adding the third

person (s). In her first and final drafts, she wrote, *She cook for me, She take good care of*

me, She take me with her, and She love me. However, there were sentences where she

added the (s) to the verbs after *she*, such as *She helps me* and *She makes me happy.* All

these errors stayed the same in her final copy except for one in which she made a

correction, *She invites me*. In addition, there were some spelling errors that appeared in

Najah's first draft and she did not recognize them neither in the editing nor the two reading

stages. These errors were *close* (clothes), *wash* (wash), and *lisen* (listen).

As a whole, Najah did well in practicing the think-aloud protocol. She utilized five

writing stages in this protocol: prewriting, drafting, reading, editing, and reading. She

talked aloud her ideas and every sentence she later wrote. She wrote 27 sentences and 128

words in her first draft. There were 20 sentences and 135 words in her final draft. These

numbers showed that there was major difference in her both drafts. While the number of

sentences decreased in her final draft, the number of words increased.

By using the Six Trait Writing Rubric to evaluate Najah's think-aloud writing

sample, she received 23 points out of 30. She received the lowest scores for Word Choice

and Sentence Fluency. As shown in the above sample, in the second paragraph, she wrote

she take good care of my close and *she wach my close.* She also repeated the sentence *she*

love me three times in her piece. In several occasions, she dropped the third person "s", but correctly used it with two verbs, *she helps* and *she invites.*

Interview Analysis

I conducted two interviews with Najah: an initial meeting in December 2007 and a follow up interview in April 2008.They both were conducted in the school library. Short answering questions were the focus of the initial interview such as name, age, country, and general background (Appendix H). In the follow-up interview, the questions were more intense and informative about feelings toward writing, strategies and activities she and her teacher, Mrs. Cook, utilized in the classroom, and her reactions to these activities (Appendix H).

In the first interview, Najah was introverted, but answered the questions with clear and understandable voice. On a table next to the children story book shelf, we sat facing each other. I made sure that my tape recorder was working and then I started the interview. This interview was short, however informative.

In April, a follow-up interview was conducted. I met Najah and she seemed excited this time and she helped me to find a place for us to sit in the library. With a relaxed and clear voice she answered all my questions. I thanked her at the end and she went back to her classroom.

While coding Najah's interview responses to the interview questions, I selected five categories: feelings and attitudes toward writing, preferred language for writing, relationship with the ESL teacher, utilizing the writing process approach, and reactions to

the teacher writing activities. I described each category and provided each with documented words, terms, phrases, and sentences.

- *Feelings and attitudes toward writing.* By tracing back Najah's responses to questions that were related to her feelings and attitudes toward writing, I noted that she liked to write stories and poems. She also liked the writing class; nevertheless, it was difficult for her to write especially when she was running out of ideas. Moreover, she described writing as *fun* because it helped her to put her ideas down on papers. One of her responses to related questions was, *I like writing class but sometimes it's difficult to write…sometimes I have no ideas.*

- *Preferred language for writing.* Najah could write in English and Arabic. Because she came to the U.S. when she was at the third grade level, she had the chance to learn Arabic back home for a while. However, Arabic eventually became more difficult to learn compared to English. Informally, she learned some Arabic at home from her mother and sisters.

- *Relationship with the ESL teacher.* Najah and her teacher, Mrs. Cook, had established a positive relationship through which Najah was free to ask for help whenever she had problems. When Najah was asked in the interview if she asked for her teacher's help when she had difficulties, she answered *Yes, I do.* Mrs. Cook offered help in many ways. For example, if she found Najah running out of ideas, she would ask her questions and give her examples to revive her memory. This technique helped Najah on many occasions to work on her prewriting activities independently. When asked about her teacher's help, she replied, *She helps me with ideas so I can write more. She asks me questions. She gives me examples.*

- *Utilizing writing process approach.* Najah used four stages of the writing process as she answered the associated questions. These stages were prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. She said, *Four stages, I draw a web and then I write my ideas inside the circles, then I write my first draft, and then I correct my first draft and then I write my final draft.*

- *Reaction to teacher writing activities:* Najah responded positively when she was asked about this point. She stated that the writing activities her teacher used in classroom were "fun" and it helped her to write more and it also helped her to find ideas. She said answering a related question, *Yes, I like it. This activity is fun. It help me to write more and to get ideas.*

Najah's interview analysis indicated that she can write in both English and Arabic. However, she found writing in Arabic difficult for her to master. She employed the stages of the writing process in her writing. Her positive relationship with her teacher enabled her to be more active toward writing and to learn more through the numerous writing activities her teacher provided in the classroom. Najah appreciated Mrs. Cook's writing activities and found them great tools to assist her with writing and finding ideas.

Writing Samples Analysis

Najah wrote seven pieces from December 2007 to the end of April 2008. The analysis of her writing samples indicated that her writing fell into the **Proficient (4)** and **Developing (3)** categories. However, in some traits such as Word Choice and Sentence Fluency, her writing would be ranked in the **Emerging (2)** category. The general findings of Najah's writing indicated that she wrote in clear, functional way, but there were a great

deal of cluttered ideas that were sometimes irrelevant. According to the Six Traits Writing Rubric, Najah's writing fell into the **Proficient (4)** and **Developing (3)** categories. The interrater reliability for Najah's writing samples was 85.72%. These rankings were assessed for her final drafts.

I described Najah's writing and how they fit into each category in the Six Trait Writing Rubric. One of her writing sample is provided in Appendix S.

- *Ideas and Content.* Developing ideas and content were still basic in Najah's writing. When she wrote about a subject matter, her ideas looked common, displaying information that everybody else already knew. There were no attempts on her part to come up with new ideas; she was always running out of ideas. In addition, when she wrote, she would hesitate to write about a specific idea or another. Occasionally, Najah would write and support her writing with mostly muddled and repetitive ideas. For example, when she wrote about *The Most Important Person in the World,* she wrote about her mother. She wrote, *My mom is the best because she gives me what I want, and she lets me buy what I want from my money.* She repeated *what I want* twice in this statement and did not use new words.

- *Organization.* Najah's writing sometimes did not really grab the reader's attention because she would not give clues of what was coming next in her text. Her beginnings and endings were not developed enough and needed more work. For example, in her writing sample, she wrote an introduction of two sentences, but then did not refer to or provide further explanation or details to the content of that introduction. She wrote, *I am writing about my mom, my mom really likes to cook, and sometimes she likes to sing, my mom takes care of me, and she cooks for me a lot of times.*

In her text she did not write about her mother's *cooking* or *singing*; neither did she make the connection of these elements to the main topic.

- *Voice.* The connection between Najah as a writer and the reader was missing. Although her writing was understandable and pleasant, her voice was hidden somewhere in her writing. Sometimes, what Najah truly thought and felt faded in and out. For example, when she wrote about *My Dream*, she expressed her fear about a bad dream by writing, *Have you ever seen dragons? This was my worst day of my life when I saw the dragons.*

- *Word Choice.* For this trait, Najah's writing ranked in the **Emerging (2)** category. She used the same words repetitively and some of the words were misused. She had a limited range of vocabulary that she could not exceed nor she could she come up with new words. She would write *I like school and stuff* and *This is cool.*

- *Sentence Fluency.* Najah's sentence fluency fell into the **Emerging (2)** category, too. The sentences she wrote were choppy and were interconnected constantly with *and* or *because.* The sentence patterns were repetitive, and it was difficult sometimes to tell where one sentence started and another ended. From her writing sample in Appendix S, she wrote her sentences with incorrect use of punctuation. She wrote, *I saw dragons in my classroom the dragons were eleven years old, they were playing tag I was, screaming when I saw the dragons playing tag, then when they saw me, they screamed and ran away.*

- *Conventions.* Frequent spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization errors would occur in Najah's writing. There was limited control of conventions. The most

misspelled words I found in Najah's writing were: *famly* (family), *becuase* (because), *freneds* (friends), *there* (their), *tow* (two), *sow* (saw), and *ther* (they).

From reading and assessing Najah's writing samples, I found that her writing can be ranked in the **Proficient (4)** and **Developing (3)** categories in the Six Traits Writing Rubric. However, her Word Choice and Sentence Fluency were ranked in the **Emerging (2)** category. Although Najah had some problems in developing ideas, sometimes she would produced clear ideas and focused on choosing these ideas. She had a sense of order and structure and sometimes attempted to write reasonable introductions and conclusions. In general, Najah still needs more practice to improve her writing especially in the area of generating ideas and content.

To further investigate the effect of using the writing process approach on Najah's English writing ability, I made a comparison between a text she wrote in December 2007 and another written in April 2008. The findings indicated that there was no recognizable progress in her writing accuracy level in this period; Najah showed similar challenges. Some of the errors Najah made in her writing in December reemerged at the end of this study in April. The most challenging factor I noted in Najah's writing took place in her Word Choice and Sentence Fluency. She also had difficulties in creating new ideas and developing introductions and conclusions for her texts.

Table 5.7: Najah's Writing Process Stages

Month	Topic	Pre-writing	Planning	Drafting	Pausing	Reading	Revising	Editing	Publishing
December	**Narrative**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
January	**Technical/Poetry**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
February	**Poetry**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
March	**Poetry**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
April	**Narrative**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Najah applied all the stages of the writing process in her writing. Table 5.7 displays

the sequence of the writing process stages Najah employed throughout this study.

Using these stages would take days and sometimes weeks. Because of the limited time

Najah and Mrs. Cook had in writing, applying all these stages in one writing session was

not possible. Nonetheless, by the end of April, Najah had used and practiced all these

stages and became familiar with them from the prewriting stage to the publishing stage

through which she published her "Snow Flake" on the class bulletin board.

In Table 5.7, I noted that the writing process stages had been utilized by Najah by

the end of the semester. Although there were no major differences between Najah's writing

through the five month period, practicing process writing stages offered her a valuable

opportunity at least to attempt to improve the accuracy and overall quality of her final

drafts.

After analyzing Najah's observation, think-aloud protocol, and writing samples

during the semester, I looked at her strengths, challenges, and growth which I summarized

in Table 5.8

Table 5.8: Overview of Najah's Writing Process

	Strengths	Challenges	Growth
Observations	Showing interest in learning new approaches/techniques. Paying attention to teacher's comments and suggestions. Using the writing process approach. Good listener.	Limited participation in classroom discussion. Fear of making mistakes when talking. Limited questions to her teacher.	Continuous participation in classroom discussion. Attempts to ask questions to clarify vague concepts and words.
Think-aloud protocol	Spending reasonable time composing. Using the writing process.	Lack of coherence. Lack of organization. Choppy, monotonous sentence patterns.	NA
Writing samples	Using the writing	Cloudy, repetitive, and	NA

	process approach. Attempts to stretch the length of her writing.	muddled ideas. Lack of organization. Lack of coherence. Inappropriate, repetitive vocabulary. No control of conventions	

In conclusion, Najah showed several strengths in classroom observation and the writing samples. Using the writing process approach, showing interest in learning new strategies and techniques, and attempting to expand her writing length were all notable strengths. On contrast, challenges that occurred in class observation impacted her writing development. For example, her limited participation in classroom discussion and fear to make mistakes affected her writing. By not being able to share ideas and bring new ones to surface, Najah frequently ran out of ideas. By the end of this study, no apparent improvement occurred in Najah's writing. However, I identified Najah's several attempts to ask questions and participate in classroom discussions.

Nadia

Nadia was eleven years old. She was born in Saudi Arabia. She had three sisters and two brothers. Her mother came to the U.S. a year and a half ago to pursue a M.S. degree in education. Nadia did not like English because she found it difficult and hard. However, she found writing in English enjoyable. Nadia preferred Arabic language because it was easier for her to communicate with than English. She attended her kindergarten, first, second, and third grades in Saudi Arabia. She came to the U.S. with limited English. English language is introduced to students in Saudi Arabian public schools at seventh grade. When she came to the U.S., Nadia knew only a few words in English,

e.g. dog, cat, happy, sad, and how to write her name. Her older sister took English classes when she was in the seventh grade in Saudi Arabia and taught Nadia these few words. Nadia started her fourth grade in the ESL program at the Central Elementary School and was attending fifth grade ESL class with Mrs. Zimmerman when this study took place. Nadia had an active and sociable personality. I observed Nadia from December 2007 until the end of April 2008. More information about Nadia was provided in Chapter Three.

Stages of the Writing Process

There are eight writing process stages I examined throughout classroom observations: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams,1998). In this section, I described how Nadia used each stage when she wrote in English.

- *Prewriting*. Mrs. Zimmerman was one of those teachers who took interest in applying prewriting activities in her classroom to evoke their thoughts and ideas. Because her students had a lower English proficiency level, she spent a long time brainstorming. Nadia liked to participate in the classroom discussion and to share her personal and family stories. She had a great personality speaking and listening to others. She would also ask her teacher any question that came to her mind.

During the discussion, Nadia would listen carefully to her teacher and other students. She liked to comment on ideas or subjects that had been brought up whether by her teacher or her classmates. She would ask questions, argue with them and make sure that she understood their talk. In prewriting, Nadia organized her ideas and thoughts by drawing pictures or graphic organizers. Sometimes, Mrs. Zimmerman would distribute a

sheet of paper, copied or printed out from a website, on which students could write their topic sentence, their ideas, and finally their conclusion sentence.

- *Planning*. After Nadia jotted down her ideas on the paper, she would read it and go over the main topic and the ideas supporting it. She would immediately start writing her first draft. Planning did not occur in every writing lesson I observed. Sometimes, Nadia would draw her mapping web and instantly write the rough draft.

- *Drafting*. During writing, Nadia would gather her ideas and put them in sentences. Sometimes, she would typically write her story in one paragraph and sometimes in two paragraphs. She also used her mapping web to help her copy the sentences or the words she previously wrote into her rough draft. There were no computers provided for the students to write. They only wrote on paper.

- *Pausing*. After Nadia was finished with her writing, she would stop and put her pencil down. She would say to her teacher, *I am finished.* Her teacher would smile at her and ask her to read what she wrote. Most of the time, Nadia read her story silently.

- *Reading*. Reading occurred in the previous stage, pausing. One day when Nadia wrote about *Fire in the House,* she went back and read her first draft as soon as she finished drafting. It took her one to two minutes to finish reading because her writing was usually short.

- *Revising*. Mrs. Zimmerman required her students to *check* their writing themselves at the beginning. So Nadia would go over her writing looking for errors. After she finished, she would sit with a classmate to exchange papers or sit with her teacher. Peer conferences did not occur frequently in Mrs. Zimmerman's writing class. During my

observations, I saw them conducting peer revising only twice. The revising was usually completed individually or with the teacher.

- *Editing*. Nadia would edit her work as soon as she finished revising. For example, when she finished conferencing with her teacher about *Nadia's Juice*. She rewrote her story in a separate paper including all the corrections she made with her teacher. The correct version of the writing would occur in this stage.

- *Publishing*. During my observations, Nadia's writings had been published in various ways. In one of the persuasive writing sessions, Nadia wrote a poster comparing juices and soft drinks. Mrs. Zimmerman displayed Nadia's and other students' posters on the class bulletin board. Publishing also included turning in the written papers to the teacher and sharing them with classmates and the researcher.

Strategies and Techniques

Throughout my observation of Nadia's writing, I recorded a number of approaches she undertook which seemed to help her with ideas: asking questions; participating in class discussion; and practicing the writing process approach.

- *Asking questions*. One of the strategies Nadia used to improve her writing skills was asking her teacher questions. She would usually ask more than four questions in each writing session. Because she had problems with spelling and sometimes understanding the assigned topic, she did not hesitate to raise her hand and ask questions whenever she was confused. She also talked much. Students in Mrs. Zimmerman's class were free to talk and to interrupt if they did not understand what was being presented. Therefore, Nadia was

usually confident that her desire of inquiry would be fulfilled. One day she asked her teacher about the difference between the terms *comparison* and *contrast*.

- *Participating in class discussion*. Although Nadia had a lower writing proficiency compared to her classmates, she could communicate with her classmates and teacher with a clear voice and understandable conversation. She was active and was never tired of sharing her stories about her family and her country with the class.

- *Practicing the writing process approach*. Nadia, like her classmates, had used the writing process approach when she wrote in English. When she wrote her narrative about *Summer Time,* she brainstormed with her teacher, wrote her first draft, and then wrote her error-free final copy. Throughout these stages, Nadia would ask questions and seek help from her teacher.

Think- Aloud Protocol Analysis

Nadia and I sat together in the library to conduct the think aloud protocol. We sat at a table at the left corner of the library. I introduced the think aloud procedure to her by practicing its steps very slowly so she could get a grasp of it. Nadia was given two topics from which to choose: Topic A was *Write About Your Mother and Why You Love Her;* Topic B was *What Is Your Favorite Sport?* She chose Topic A.

After explaining every aspect of this procedure, I started tape recording Nadia's talking aloud while she was writing her text. She spent just six minutes composing aloud. That duration was the shortest compared to other participants. Nevertheless, she used threes stages of the writing process approach: prewriting, drafting, and reading. Nadia's final writing product for the protocol is in Writing Sample 5.5

Writing Sample 5.5: Nadia's Think-Aloud Protocol Writing

Coding for six minutes of prewriting, drafting, and editing stages of Nadia's Think-Aloud Protocol tape using an adapted version of Perl's (1981) coding scheme (see Table 3.2) resulted in these findings.

Nadia chose topic A and wrote a story about her mother in only four sentences. She utilized some of the writing process approach stages in order to produce her final product. In her web organizer page, she drew four circles, one in the center and the rest were all around the page. In her middle circle, she wrote her topic, and she wrote her ideas/reasons in the other circles.

Nadia composed in just six minutes, however she was given 30 minutes. Throughout her writing, she used three stages of the writing process approach: prewriting, drafting, and reading. She just wrote one draft. She talked aloud in each stage while she was planning and composing. Her voice was clear in some places and she was not sure about the pronunciation of some words in other places.

- *Prewriting.* In this stage, she employed her knowledge of brainstorming by drawing a web organizer on her paper and jotting down her ideas. In line 3 in the prewriting section from her think-aloud protocol transcript, she stated, *First thing I am gonna draw the circle for the brainstorm, and then write I love my mother because.* She knew that before writing a story, one should make a plan of what he/she was going to write. In line 1 in the prewriting section from her think-aloud protocol transcript she said, *I am gonna start. I am gonna brainstorm and I am gonna write it first. It's gonna be like a tornado, because there are so many words I want to write.*

The word *tornado* she learned from her teacher Mrs. Zimmerman when she was teaching them how to bring out all the ideas and thoughts they were thinking. The tornado metaphor was used to liken the blowing and arousal of ideas just like debris in a storm. In her brainstorm page, she drew four circles, including the centered circle where she wrote her title. In each circle, she wrote one sentence about why she loved her mother.

- *Drafting.* Drafting took place when Nadia turned to a new page and started to connect the sentences she had in her brainstorm page together. In line 1 in the drafting section from her think-aloud protocol transcript she said, *And I am gonna write it on another paper,* referring to the ideas she wrote in the prewriting paper. She started copying every sentence she wrote in her prewriting page without supporting details or examples. The writing was disjointed. She did not use any conjunction words to put her sentences together in paragraphs form. She wrote four sentences with 31 words. There were numerous errors in her writing including spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Some of the misspelled words I found in Nadia's think-aloud piece included: *mather* (mother),

becas (because), *nis,nise* (nice), *my* (me), *car* (care), *win* (when), *brigint* (pregnant), bay (buy), *wint* (want), and *gav* (gave).

- *Reading.* When Nadia finished writing her first draft, she immediately read the whole draft without saying anything about this stage. She just took her paper and read it aloud. And because of the multiple errors she had in her writing, it was difficult for her to follow or read aloud. She could not read her own handwriting because it was confusing. For example, in line 1 in the reading section from her think-aloud protocol transcript, she said, *She is nice to me and she talking... taking care of me*. She was distracted when she read her text because it lacked clarity and intelligibility.

As a summary, throughout Nadia's think-aloud protocol she used three stages of the writing process approach: prewriting, drafting, and reading. However, these stages did not occur in the correct order. She successfully spoke aloud her ideas and created an organizing plan in the prewriting stage. When drafting, she also talked aloud about the ideas she was writing in her entire draft. At the end, instead of editing and polishing her work, she read the whole draft. Without any knowledge about the purpose behind reading, which should occur earlier after the drafting stage, Nadia postponed it to the end.

Nadia's received 13 points out of 30 for her think-aloud writing sample. It was the lowest score among her ESL peers. The main idea of this writing sample was relatively clear; however, the writing lacked structure and organization. Her essay that she was supposed to write resulted in a single short paragraph. Nadia did not have a choice of vocabulary for her to use and elaborate on her ideas. Her sentences were choppy and incomplete. Nadia's writing had numerous errors that would confuse the reader.

Interview Analysis

Two interviews had been conducted with Nadia, one in December 2007 and one in April 2008. The first interview questions were about general information including name, age, country, number of years lived in the U.S., and language preference in writing (Appendix H). The questions in the second interview were deeply related to the writing process approach, the feelings and attitudes toward writing, the relationship with the ESL teacher, the utilizing of stages of the writing process, and the reactions to the writing activities being introduced by the teacher (Appendix H). Both interviews were executed in the school library. In both interviews, Nadia was eager to be interviewed by me. We sat at a round table next to a non-fiction story shelf and prepared for the interview.

While coding Nadia's responses to the interview questions, I used five categories: feelings and attitudes toward writing, preferred language for writing, relationship with the ESL teacher, utilizing the writing process approach, and reactions to the teacher writing activities. I described each category and provided each with documented words, terms, phrases, and sentences.

- *Feelings and attitudes toward writing.* Because of her short stay in the U.S., one year and a half, Nadia struggled with English, but found enjoyment with writing. She liked writing, especially writing stories. When she was asked if she liked English and writing in English, she replied, *A little bit…because it's hard sometimes. I like to write story but it's hard to do the chunks, but it's fun. I like to write at school. I like to write stories about fire in the house and milking the cows.*

- *Preferred language for writing.* As she mentioned in her interview, Nadia *loved* writing in Arabic. She contributed this *love* to the Arabic language because it was her

native language. She answered a related question, *I love to write in Arabic in the school, home, everywhere. It's easier for me to write in Arabic because it is my language.*

- *Relationship with the ESL teacher*. Nadia and her teacher, Mrs. Zimmerman, had created a strong relationship. The comfortable environment that had been provided to Nadia strengthened her learning skills to become an active participant in Mrs. Zimmerman's writing class. One indication of this successful relationship was the help Nadia constantly received to keep her on the right track. The teacher's beliefs in Nadia's learning abilities and how it was important for her as a teacher to use numerous strategies to introduce the information effectively helped Nadia to be highly motivated to leave behind all the difficulties she was having. Here are some of the terms Nadia used in answering related questions, *Mrs. Zimmerman help me a lot, Mrs. Zimmerman tell us many stories, and she is nice to me. She correct my wrong word, wrong spelling.*

- *Utilizing writing process approach.* Nadia used writing process stages in her writing. She became familiar with this approach and how it should be used. She started with brainstorming and moved on to drafting and then at the end polishing or editing and producing quality written pieces were her goal. She stated, *I do brainstorm tornado…I write my first draft and then check my spelling, capital letters, and I write my final draft.*

- *Reaction to teacher's writing activities.* When Nadia was asked if she liked the writing activities her teacher employed, she replied positively. She *likes* the writing activities that allowed her and her class to *laugh* and to have *fun* as she stated in her response.

From Nadia's interview analysis I noted that she enjoyed writing in English although she had numerous struggles. She also *loved* writing in Arabic because it was her

mother tongue. Nadia applied writing process stages such as prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Her positive relationship with her teacher made it possible for her to ask for help whenever needed. Nadia valued Mrs. Zimmerman's writing activities and viewed them as means for laughing and fun.

Writing Sample Analysis

Nadia wrote ten pieces from December 2007 to April 2008. The analysis of her writing samples indicated that her writing fell into the **Emerging (2)** and **Beginning (1)** categories. The interrater reliability for Nadia's writing sample was 83.33%. These rankings were assessed for her final drafts. Nadia's writing lacked several elements such as coherence, spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization accuracy, and word variety. The major findings of Nadia's writing samples showed her writing was difficult to read, rambling and confusing to follow. I describe Nadia's writing samples and how they fit into each category in the Six Traits Writing Rubric. One of her writing sample is provided in Appendix T.

- *Ideas and Content.* Although Nadia always tried to cover the topic with ideas and supporting details, irrelevant and cluttered information would occur in her texts. That can be indicated from reading the sample provided in Appendix T.

- *Organization.* Her papers lacked clear beginnings and introductions. The ideas she wrote about looked scrambled, disconnected, and disjointed. I did not see any conclusions either in her first or final drafts. For example, one day her class was required to write a comparison between any two subjects. Nadia chose winter and summer to make the comparison. She wrote neither an introduction nor a conclusion for this task. She only

wrote seven disjointed sentences about winter. At the beginning of her writing she wrote, *I think winter is the best. In winter you kin* (can) *make snwo* (snow) *me* (man). *You kin* (can) *slide in the snow. Winter has christma* (Christmas) *and van* (fun) *times. The snow flek* (flake) *is so burefol* (beautiful).

- *Voice.* Nadia's writings gave out reasonable hints about her personality. For example, when she made a comparison between life in Saudi Arabia and the United States, she talked about her knowledge of the people in her country, the language they spoke and the religion they practiced. She wrote, *The schools are defrant* (different). *The pepll* (people) *toc* (talk) *arabck* (Arabic) *and englesh* (English). *The pepll* (people) *from u.s.A.* (U.S.A) *pre* (pray) *in the therch* (church) *and the pepll* (people) *from KSa* (KSA) *they prae* (pray) *in Moseck* (mosque).

- *Word Choice.* Nadia had very limited choice of words that she kept using repetitively. The words she used in her writing were monotonous and mundane. From her writing sample in Appendix T, it could be noticed the words she used and the repetition she made. She wrote, *Today is the first day for summer. The famiy* (family) *wint* (went) *to have som* (some) *picnic becus* (because) *to day* (today) *is the first day for summer.*

- *Sentence Fluency.* Because of the numerous errors Nadia made in her writing, I had to go back and forth and read it several times, just to figure out what the sentences meant. Her writing had neither flow nor rhythm. For example, she wrote, *Thy* (they) *are 5 people in the family they have 3 chdrins* (children) *2 pous* (boys) *and 1 grow* (girl).

- *Conventions.* As I read Nadia's writing, significant and numerous spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization errors were in every single writing sample she wrote. There was no control over her texts. Spelling errors were frequent even of common

words. Punctuation and capitalization were always missing. Errors in grammar were also noticeable and made both text and context awkward. Most of her spelling errors I found in her writing samples: *kin* (can), *by* (buy), *becas/backas* (because), *mintes* (minutes), *ried* (write), *ned* (need), *enveolpe* (envelope), *boks* (box), *pley* (play), *ther* (their), *fete* (feet), *pol/boll* (ball), *peplle* (people), *wht/wat* (what), *thy* (they), *ever* (every), *hier* (her), *gna* (going to), *ther* (there), *herd* (hurt), *hasptol* (hospital), and *hapin* (happen.)

My assessment of Nadia's writing samples ranked them in the **Emerging (2)** and **Beginning (1)** categories in the Six Traits Writing Rubric. Her writing lacked several elements such as Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions. The numerous errors that occurred in Nadia's writing indicated that writing in English was challenging and she had to continuously practice in order to produce comprehensible writings.

To further investigate the effect of using the writing process approach on Nadia's English writing ability, I conducted a comparison between a text she wrote in December 2007 and another she wrote in April 2008. The assessment results of her writing samples showed that there was a slight difference between the quality of writing she produced at the beginning and then at the end of the semester. Nadia started the semester with tremendous writing errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. The number of errors notably stayed the same by the end of April. The misspelled words she used in December reemerged in her final drafts. Her teacher's feedback and suggestions at the end of April were addressing changing words, correcting spelling, grammar, or adding more details and writing introductions or conclusions. During the duration of this study, Nadia's writing had a bit of improvement in covering the topic and coming up with ideas

and examples; although she still had multiple areas on which to work. Writing well in

English will demand Nadia read more so she can recognize content, form and structure.

She also needs to stretch out the time she spends on writing so that she is able to practice

more writing and identify the significant elements of writing in English.

I also investigated Nadia's use of the writing process stages. Table 5.9 shows the

sequence of the writing process stages Nadia used throughout this study.

Table 5.9: Nadia's Writing Process Stages

Month	Topic	Pre-writing	Planning	Drafting	Pausing	Reading	Revising	Editing	Publishing
December	**Phonics/Spelling**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
January	**Text Structure Persuasive**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
February	**Writing Sequence**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
March	**Narrative**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
April	**Narrative**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Nadia utilized all the stages of the writing process in her writing. Mrs. Zimmerman

applied these stages in her teaching of writing and always applied some of them in each

writing session. Therefore, Nadia became familiar with these stages and frequently applied

them in her writing. She would usually use two to three stages in each writing session

because of the diminutive 30 minutes time she had for writing class. First, she would

participate in whole class discussion and brainstorming and then draw web organizers or

write down her ideas or outlines. Then she would write her first draft using the web page

she previously made with her teacher and classmates. After she finished writing, she then

revised her work whether with Mrs. Zimmerman or with her peer. After revising, she

would edit her work and write her final draft. Mrs. Zimmerman would decide later if this

work could be published on the school or classroom bulletin boards.

Writing an essay would last two and sometimes three weeks. Table 5.9. indicated that all writing process stages had been employed by Nadia by the end of April. Incorporating all the writing process stages within this period could be a major contributor to Nadia's future writing improvement. In addition, using these stages may enable her to reduce her errors in different areas and be familiar with such an approach that assisted her to eventually produce error free-texts.

After analyzing Nadia's observation, interviews, think-aloud protocol, and writing samples during the semester, I identified her strengths, challenges, and growth which I summarized in Table 5.10

Table 5.10: Overview of Nadia's Writing Process

	Strengths	Challenges	Growth
Observations	Showing interest in learning English. Paying attention to teacher's questions and answers. Using the writing process approach. Good listener. Active participation in classroom discussion.	Understanding her classmates' talks.	Continuous participation in classroom discussion and asking questions.
Think-aloud protocol	Using the writing process.	Composing in very short time. Limited sentences and words. Generating repetitive ideas. No organization (no introduction or conclusion). Producing difficult to follow or read aloud text.	NA
Writing samples	Using the writing process approach. Attempts to cover the titles with ideas and examples.	Cloudy, repetitive, and muddled ideas. Lack of organization. Lack of coherence. Inappropriate, repetitive vocabulary. No control of conventions. Numerous errors distract	NA

		the reader and make the text difficult to read.	

As a summary, Nadia's could be rated as the lowest ESL student in this group. As evidenced from Table 5.10, Nadia's had more challenges in her writing sample than strengths. From my own perspective, these challenges could be encountered by any ESL who had lived in the U.S. for a short period of time. In Nadia's case, it was a bit of success that she reached this level so far in her ongoing learning process. Her active personality and continued participation in the classroom would hopefully have its impact on her writing development one day.

Summary

In this chapter, I analyzed the writing process of five ESL Saudi Arabian students when they wrote in English as their second language. The data analysis procedures answered the following questions:

What is the role of the writing process approach in the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

a. What stages of the writing process, strategies, and techniques do Saudi Arabian ESL students employed when composing in English as a second language (L2)?

b. What is the impact of utilizing the writing process approach on the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

To provide this chapter with thick analysis description of the writing process stages and writing strategies Saudi Arabian fifth grade ESL students used when composing in English as a second language, I analyzed four data collection methods: classroom observations, interviews, think-aloud protocols, and students' writing samples. This

analysis led to several findings. I summarized the five Saudi Arabian ESL students'
similarities/commonalities, differences in using the writing process approach, using
strategies/techniques, the think-aloud protocol, interviews, the writing samples and one
unique character for each one. Table 5.11 displays these characteristics.

Table 5.11: Students' Similarities and Differences

	Writing Process Stages	Strategies/Techniques	T. A. P. Stages	Interviews	Writing Samples	Unique Characteristic
Nasser	Utilizing all stages.	Asking questions Participate in class discussion. Using the computer.	Prewriting Drafting Reading Editing Using L2	Negative feeling toward writing in English and Arabic.	Exemplary & Strong	Knowledge of using the computer
Naseema	Utilizing all stages.	Asking questions. Participate in class discussion. Using the computer.	Prewriting Drafting Reading Editing Using L2	Positive feeling toward writing in English.	Exemplary & Strong	Well-organized papers
Noof	Utilizing all stages.	Asking questions. Keeping her writing papers organized. Direct connection with the teacher.	Prewriting Drafting Reading Editing Using L2	Positive feeling toward writing in English and Arabic.	Proficient & Developing	Connection with her teacher
Najah	Utilizing all stages.	Limited participation in class discussion. Good listener.	Prewriting Drafting Reading Editing Reading Using L2	Positive feeling toward writing but sometimes it is difficult.	Proficient & Developing, but Emerging in "Word Choice and Sentence Fluency"	Desire to compete
Nadia	Utilizing all stages.	Asking questions. Participate in class discussion.	Prewriting Drafting Reading Using L2	Positive feeling toward writing in English and Arabic.	Emerging & Beginning	Talkative , social, motivated to learn

Table 5.11 showed that all five students used the writing process approach as a
method to produce quality texts. They all looked familiar with utilizing the approach and
understanding its benefits on their writing. They enjoyed the writing activities their
teachers employed daily in classroom through which they improved their writing skills and

abilities and realized that these enhancements would be beneficial for them in the long term.

Participation in class discussion was one of the similarities in the strategies that the students practiced during the writing sessions. While Nasser, Naseema, Noof, and Nadia looked more active and energetic in communicating with their teachers, Najah showed apprehension toward making mistakes and hesitated to answer her teacher's questions. The more participation in which the students engaged, as observed during this study, the more vocabulary and new language patterns they used in their writing.

The five Saudi Arabian ESL students were encouraged to ask questions and never hesitate to ask for help. This strategy encouraged the students to approach their teachers without fear of making mistakes or hesitation to ask for more time for writing. The relationship between them and their teachers played a key role in providing these students with a safe and motivated learning atmosphere. They all appreciated their teacher's help and their understanding of their students' backgrounds, languages, and cultures. All the students were good listeners, motivated, and active learners. The inner desire they had for success in their school gave these students the power to practice writing in various ways in order to meet their teacher's high standards.

All five students used several stages of the writing process approach when they participated in the think-aloud protocol. However, the order of these stages and the time students spent composing aloud differed from one student to another. All the five students blended or overlapped use of prewriting and planning, pausing and reading, and revising and editing. Students were relaxed during the protocol and had no problems practicing such a technique. They all used their second language (L2) in speaking of their ideas.

On the other hand, the five Saudi Arabian students had multiple differences in several areas: English language proficiency, feelings toward writing, and the writing sample evaluation using the Six Traits Writing Rubric all differed for each student.

When interviewing the students, all showed positive feelings toward writing except Nasser who had a personal dislike of writing in both languages, English and Arabic. Naseema liked to write in English and found it difficult to write in Arabic. Noof and Nadia liked to write in both English and Arabic. Although Najah's feeling toward writing was positive, she found writing challenging especially when she was running out of ideas. She also found it difficult to write in Arabic as well.

For Nasser and Naseema, there were no challenges or difficulties to understanding the English language through both reading and writing. The reason for that was the advanced language proficiency of their academic backgrounds as they both started their formal schooling in the U.S. Their level of English proficiency was close to each other. However, the situation was different with Noof, Najah, and Nadia who joined school in the U.S. at later grade levels and could not attain high language proficiency. The impact of their first language (L1) contributed to the challenges they had in their second language (L2), especially in spelling.

By reviewing Noof, Najah, and Nadia's writing samples, I found that there were three main problems/challenges they encountered when writing: they could not relate sounds to symbols, they could not hear distinct parts of words, and they made random guesses at spelling.

Not all the five ESL students had the same level of organization of their writing. For example, Nasser would not pay attention to paragraphing in his first drafts, but he

would do this later in his final drafts. Noof and Najah would attempt writing an introduction or a conclusion, but they both lacked the ability to state that introduction. Their teacher, Mrs. Cook, noted this problem and tried to teach them how to write introductions and conclusions using several strategies. Once, she distributed a sheet containing two lists of how to write a good introduction and good conclusion.

Other differences I identified among students were Word Choice and Sentence Fluency. The best Word Choice and Sentence Fluency used during this study were conducted by Nasser and Naseema. Their words were specific and accurate; it was easy to understand what they meant. Their words and sentences would create pictures in the reader's mind. Their sentences were constructed in a way that underscored the meaning. Moreover, the sentences they used were purposeful and varied in length as well as structure. In contrast, Noof, Najah, and Nadia had varied levels in using these traits. Noof did not stretch her writing ability to utilize new words or formulate better sentences. In the same vein, Najah had a limited range of vocabulary that she could not exceed. Nadia was the lowest among this group in using a very limited choice of words that she kept using repetitively. The words she used in her writing were monotonous and mundane.

Having control of conventions varied among those students. Nasser and Naseema had the highest degree of control over their conventions. On the other hand, Noof and Najah had limited control. Errors would occur in their writing frequently. Nadia had the lowest degree of control of conventions. She had numerous spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization flaws.

Each one of these students had his or her own unique characteristics through which she/he viewed writing. For example, Nasser was the computer wizard in his classroom. His

knowledge of using the computer and the skillful way he operated presentation programs such as Power Point was distinguished.

Naseema was distinguished for her well-organized writing. Her organization enhanced her main idea. The order, structure, and the presentation of information would take the reader step by step through her text. She would write an inviting introduction and satisfying conclusion. The details she wrote fit appropriately in their places without repetition or duplication.

Noof's strong relationship with her teacher, Mrs. Cook, played a key role in Noof's writing ability. She never hesitated to ask for help whenever she needed it. One day when the class was brainstorming about a topic, the teacher gave an example containing the expression, *It rained cats and dogs*. Noof immediately jumped to ask her teacher what she meant by the expression. This was a unique characteristic of Noof's.

Najah's desire to compete was a personal characteristic I found worth sharing. Because she was attending the same class with the other Saudi Arabian student Noof, she was in constant connection with her. She always would sit next to Noof and ask her questions if she did not understand a subject matter. At the same time, Noof would encourage her to participate and to answer the teacher's questions. Whenever she saw Noof participating, she would raise her hand and try to show herself as an active student.

Nadia, who was taught by Mrs. Zimmerman, was considered to be the lowest ESL student. Nonetheless, her enthusiasm in classroom and her discussion with her teacher gave the sense that she was an active English learner. Her speaking and listening skills were far more developed compared to her reading and writing skills. Her talkative personality was one of her unique characteristics.

Overall, the most important principle of learning the writing process approach showcased was that writing was the result of a complex, sophisticated process. Well-written papers are not produced from a singular step; rather, long, intensive, and laborious stages resulting in quality products. ESL students must address several questions when writing such as, What should I write about? What is my plan? What examples should I write to support my ideas? What I am going to write in my introduction and my conclusion?

Virtually each student in this study had learned the significance of using the writing process approach when writing in English as a second language. The stages they went through, the strategies they utilized, the writing samples they produced were indications of the impact of using such an approach in their writing.

Although some of the writing samples of the Saudi Arabian ESL students showed no major difference after using the writing process approach, the writing samples of Nasser, Naseema, and Noof showed improvement in the number of errors they made. Working through the writing process environment enabled the students to make both several successful and failing attempts to write. While they were perceptive of their peers' and teachers' positive criticism, all these attitudes mattered to determine students' success in using the writing process approach.

CHAPTER 6 – Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the findings addressed in Chapter Four and Chapter Five of this qualitative case study concerning: 1) the role of ESL teachers when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students and the strategies, techniques, and skills they incorporate when teaching this approach; and 2) the impact of using the writing process approach on Saudi Arabian students' writing development. By reviewing language theories and process writing research in Chapter Two, I examined and analyzed the data I collected from four methods: classroom observations, teacher and student interviews, student think-aloud protocols and writing samples to answer my two main questions and subquestions. In this chapter, I also discuss implications of these findings for further Arab ESL research and implications for Arab elementary ESL teachers. Lastly, I conclude this chapter with my final thoughts about the effectiveness of using the writing process approach and what role an ESL teacher can play to support this approach in the writing of English as a second language.

Summary of the Study

The tremendous increase in the number of ESL students in the United States public schools has placed more burden on ESL teachers' shoulders to find sufficient methods as they strive to help their students learn how to write in English. Teachers in the U.S. have attempted several approaches in teaching writing. The most popular approaches are the product-oriented approach and the process-based approach. Nonetheless, the writing

process approach is the one that is adapted widely and utilized in many schools in the United States. The analysis of the 1992 NAEP assessment asserted that "teaching the cluster of writing techniques known collectively as 'writing process' is associated with higher average writing proficiency among students" (Goldstein & Carr, 1996, p.1). This quote poignantly stated the necessity of teaching the writing process. This study focused on the role of ESL teachers when using the writing process and the impact this approach had on five fifth grade Saudi Arabian's writing development in English as a second language.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to provide a detailed description of each ESL teacher's role in utilizing the writing process approach to instruction and to investigate the effectiveness of using such an approach on five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students. I conducted this study for several reasons. First, I sought to identify ESL teaching writing methods that ESL teachers utilized when teaching ESL students and what strategies, techniques, and skills they applied when doing so. Secondly, there is limited research concerning using the writing process approach with Arab ESL elementary grade level writers. Most of the research studies reviewed earlier in Chapter Two dealt with high school or college level ESL students. This study's purpose was to document the writing development of Saudi Arabian ESL students in fifth grade when utilizing the writing process.

This qualitative study took place at an ESL elementary school in the Midwest from December 2007 until the end of April 2008. Participants of this study were four female students, Naseema, Noof, Najah, and Nadia (pseudonym), and one male, Nasser (pseudonym). All were originally from Saudi Arabia and were enrolled full time in this

school. Participants of this study had different residency periods in the United States. Their stays in the U.S. differed since some of them started school here while others arrived three to two years ago. Therefore, their English language proficiency varied from one to another. Their different stay period in the U.S. was an effective contributor to the findings of this study.

I observed four ESL teachers and five Saudi Arabian ESL students who were attending four different classes. All the four writing classes started at the same time daily from 9:30 to 10:00. I observed each class once a week for half an hour for a five month period.

This study depended on four paths of inquiry: classroom observation, interviews with ESL students and their ESL teachers, student think aloud protocols, and student writing samples. In classroom observation, I conducted a series of non-participatory classroom observations to explore the stages of the writing process approach the ESL teachers applied when teaching writing and the teaching strategies, techniques, and skills they incorporated in doing so. I also observed the impact of this approach on each Saudi Arabian student's writing development. I designed two observation guidelines, one for teacher observation guidelines (Appendix A) and one for student observation guidelines (Appendix B). These guidelines were used to observe each teacher and student in the study. I also took field notes focusing on the stages of the writing process which were taught by the teacher- prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing. I analyzed the ESL teacher classroom observations by identifying the stages of the process - based approach they employed, as well as the strategies and techniques they undertook in order to employ this approach. I also analyzed student

classroom observations to explore the stages of the writing process they utilized when they composed and the strategies and techniques they used to produce well-written texts.

To gain deeper understanding of the ESL students' backgrounds, beliefs and attitudes toward writing in English, I conducted two interviews with each student participant, one introductory interview at the beginning of this study, and a follow-up interview at the end of this study. ESL teachers were also interviewed once during this study to explore their roles in teaching writing and to identify strategies and techniques they employed when using writing process approach. Teacher and student interviews were analyzed by identifying repetitive terms, phrases, and words. Then they were coded into different categories.

A student think-aloud protocol was a technique that provided insight into the cognitive processes of a writer, such as planning, composing and revising which played essential roles during text production. In this study, I conducted this method with each student to learn more about the subconscious processes the Arab ESL students went through when composing. I analyzed this method using an adapted version of Perl's (1981) coding scheme (Table 3.2).

The fourth and last data collection method I used in this qualitative study was an analysis of each the student's writing samples. I collected these writing samples throughout the duration of the study from December 2007 to the end of April 2008. I analyzed these writing samples by comparing texts written at the beginning of the study and at the end. I also used the Six Traits Writing Rubric (Spandel, 1990) (Appendix O).

This qualitative case study was completed in five months with four ESL teachers and five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students. The results of this study were presented

in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. Now, I discuss the overall findings of these chapters as I attempt to answer my research questions.

Findings

This study aimed to explore the role of ESL teachers when teaching English writing to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students by using a writing process approach and the effectiveness of utilizing this approach on student writing development. Two main questions and four subquestions guided this study. In this section, I provided each question with an elaborate answer.

1. What are the roles ESL teachers play when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

Mrs. Cook, Mrs. McCain, Mrs. Phipps, and Mrs. Zimmerman, all played a key role in applying the writing process approach in teaching writing to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students. Their passion along side their persistence to provide numerous writing teaching techniques to their ESL students had tremendous impact on engaging them in writing activities and consequently improved their writing and their attitude toward it.

a. What stages of the writing process approach do the ESL teachers incorporate when teaching writing?

Teaching writing to ESL students was a complex task. The mission of ESL teachers was to teach students to write effectively, not just correctly. Teachers aimed through using the writing process approach to help their students to be self-sufficient writers. Essentially, the writing process approach was a method used by teachers to lead students from random thoughts to cohesive thinking.

In this study, ESL teachers were strong advocates of using this approach and its stages: prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing (Williams, 1998). In this section, I describe each stage the teachers utilized during this study.

Prewriting. In this stage, teachers taught their student to generate, develop and connect their ideas by drawing various graphic organizers such as webs, maps, pictures and diagrams. By doing so, teachers provided a genuine opportunity for their students to be prepared to write their first drafts. Applying this stage was essential to encourage students to write by stimulating their thoughts for getting started (Richards & Renandya, 2002). In prewriting, teachers always required students to write without worrying about grammatical or spelling errors. Teachers in different writing sessions would ask their students to write down their ideas in a natural and spontaneous way as idea came to their minds.

Planning. Another stage the ESL teachers employed was planning. This stage came immediately after and sometime within the prewriting stage. Teachers employed this stage but it did not occur as a main stage like drafting or revising. However, students were

familiar with utilizing this techniques and it was usually accomplished when they matched the ideas they produced with the main topic.

Drafting. The next main stage that consumed the longest time among the other stages was drafting. Students were given ample time and were surrounded with a quiet atmosphere in which to work. Drafting was all about the students. Teachers worked as motivators and *scaffolds* who took students step by step to provide them with sufficient guidance until the process was learned and mastered. Progressively, after students had completed their tasks, the teachers would decrease their level of assistance until the students became capable of finishing their writing independently (Bodrova & Leong, 1998; Elicker, 1995). In this stage, students were free to ask questions about the topic and any vague or confusing terms.

Pausing. Pausing is the stage that involves moments when writing does not occur. Teachers in the four classes would ask their students to read what they had written. The teachers would give two to three minutes to do so. Sometimes students were required to read their writing silently or loudly to focus on the ideas and to see how it matches their plans.

Reading. This stage was constantly occurred in the pausing stage. Reading and pausing were usually completed at the same time; there was no separation between the two stages. During reading, the students would read their writing and check if they had covered all the ideas they produced in the planning stage.

Revising. Revising took two paths in every teacher class: peer and teacher conferences. Teachers taught the students how to benefit from this stage by asking questions about the beginning, the body paragraphs and the ending. Students were aware

that the order in which they presented their ideas was an important and necessary component of a quality writing piece. When peer conferences were held, teachers played the supervisor role. They would walk around the desks making sure that students were reading and revising each other's papers. The use of peer feedback was justified by numerous concepts in education, such as the process writing approach, the teaching of Vygotskian sociocultural theory and the well-established role of student-student interactions in second language acquisition theory (Liu & Hansen, 2002).

In teacher conferences, teachers would spend some time *reshaping* their students' work by providing oral and written feedback. These conferences helped students to make their writing improve orally. Teachers on many occasions asked their students to read their pieces aloud. Hearing the writing from an oral reading can change a great deal in a piece. As much as students benefited from the revising stage, teachers made use of this stage as well. They would receive higher quality finished papers that were free of surface errors, which made their revising and evaluation faster. None of the four teachers I observed during this study took student-teacher conference deliberately to criticize students' writing. Their comments and suggestions were of a friendly nature. Lightbown and Spada (1993) pointed out, "Excessive error correction can have a strong negative effect on motivation" p. (115). After this stage, students would write their final draft benefiting from peer and teacher revision. Their final drafts would be more elaborate with higher levels of conventions and better use of word and sentences.

Editing. Spotting surface-level errors such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, and paragraphing was the core of this stage. Editing also occurred in three forms: self, peer and teacher editing. In any editing form, teachers taught their students that each word and

sentence must be appropriate and suitable in the context. The editing stage would be the next step to process after revising. During my observations, I found some teachers employing revising and editing at the same time. They would read a student paper, review its format, and finally marked surface errors. I attributed this overlap to the short time assigned for writing. The noteworthy feature I found in this stage was the role the four teachers played in helping students to become self-assessors. Teachers "need to guide students in the self-assessment and self-reflection process with pointed questions that spotlight areas of improvement in their individual writing processes." (Block & Israel, 2005, p. 145).

Publishing. The final stage in the writing process approach was publishing. Publishing took several forms during this study: turning in final drafts to teachers, sharing or reading them aloud to classmates, displaying them in class or school bulletin board, and allowing me to make copies of them. Publishing is simply presenting the written drafts to an audience, whether a teacher, peer, or outsider. The teachers applied this stage since it was the most exciting stage in the whole writing process. Students liked their products to be seen and to be noted by others. Therefore, the ESL teachers were conscious to accomplish this stage whenever needed.

b. What writing strategies, techniques, and skills do the ESL teachers employ when teaching writing to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

The most important factor in teaching writing was that students needed to be personally involved in the teacher's writing activities in order to make the writing experience a lasting value. The data collected from classroom observations and interviews

revealed that teachers used several strategies and techniques that fostered students'

engagement in writing activities. These strategies were undertaken according to students'

skills that needed to be developed. For example, Mrs. Cook provided Noof and Najah with

a sheet that introduced them to write "good beginnings" and "good endings" because they

had difficulties writing introductions and conclusions. In Mrs. Zimmerman's class, Nadia's

undeveloped skill of writing and the numerous spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors

she made, raised a red flag to her teacher who designed and utilized proper teaching

activities that serve Nadia's challenges such as phonics.

Teachers took into consideration utilizing several techniques to facilitate learning

of the target area and to make writing likable and popular. These strategies were:

- Providing collaborative and cooperative activities.

- Providing written feedback.

- Promoting peer interactions to support learning.

- Designing writing assignments for a variety of audiences, purposes, and genres,
  and scaffolding the writing instruction.

- Encouraging students to write.

- Playing games.

- Teaching phonics.

- Sharing life experiences and stories to promote writing.

- Providing students with examples to explain unfamiliar terms and words.

Each teacher used several writing activities and techniques that allowed her to

better serve her students and focus on the areas with which the students struggled. Since

each teacher had different groups, applying a variety of writing activities was essential to

improve students' writing ability. The ESL teachers introduced various tasks in the classroom in order for their students to engage in language learning activities. In this engagement, students received comprehensible input through reading, writing, and hearing English language structure from the teachers and their classmates.

The relationship between the comprehensible input ESL students received in classroom and their language acquisition process was consistent with Krashen's (1982) input theory which relates to acquisition, not learning. Krashen (1982) argued that in order for language acquisition to take place, the acquirer (student) must receive comprehensible input through reading or hearing language structures that slightly exceed and challenge their current ability. For example, if a student is at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to *Comprehensible Input* that belongs to level 'i + 1'.

Although each student experienced the same writing activities the ESL teachers offered in the classroom; some experienced them in a different way than the others. For example, Najah and Noof in Mrs. Cook's class received the same input. They were both introduced to the same writing activities and practiced, the same writing tasks, but they showed different levels of English proficiency. This was evidenced in their writing samples.

Collaborative activities were obviously the most popular technique used among teachers. It can also be considered the umbrella technique under which all the above techniques teachers employed. Writing is occasionally seen as a solitary activity, perhaps because it is more associated with self-expression, revealing feelings, experiences, and opinions (Parrington, 1995). For this reason writing is often thought of as unfamiliar or difficult to involve group activities. What I observed with the ESL teachers shifted my

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mind to believing that writing can be taught in collaborative settings. I observed collaborative techniques through classroom discussions and through applying the writing process approach, especially in the revising and editing stages, where peer and teacher conferences took place.

Johnson and Johnson (1998) proposed five basic principles of cooperative learning: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing. Using the writing process approach is sometimes described as writer-based (Parrington, 1995). Devoting ample time to practice its stages starting from prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing, was often presented in an ongoing cycle that was best executed when working in groups. The writing process approach fit well with cooperative learning. In peer conferences for example, students were exchanging reading, revising their papers, and finally providing each other with written or oral feedback. The students were simply improving their writing ability during such activities. According to Murphy and Jacobs (2000), when students learn collaborative skills with which to work with one another, their peer feedback session can be more effective. Also student-teacher conferences have great impact on students' writing.

Graves (1983/2003) and Calkins (1994) noted one-on-one conferences can be effective in helping students with their writing. This interaction between students-students and teachers-students fosters ideas and encourages oral and written language which is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) sociolinguistic theory. Vygotsky (1978) stated that language learning is a life long process of development that is dependent on social interaction and that social learning actually leads to cognitive development. I strongly

agree with this theory. During this study, I found out that the greater the social interactions between the ESL students and their classmates and teachers, the more new words and phrases the ESL students learned. That was evidenced during the peer and teacher conferences they experienced in writing using the process writing approach. Their writing improved during that interaction.

Other techniques teachers employed when teaching Saudi Arabian ESL students writing included encouraging students to participate in classroom discussion, asking questions, sharing life stories or experiences, playing games, learning phonics, modeling the writing process, and most importantly establishing an anxiety-free and relaxing language learning environment in which ESL student acquired a second language. These techniques are consistent with Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis. The affective filter hypothesis states that a second language student's emotions work as adjustable filters that permit or hinder input required for acquisition. For example, if a student has high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety, he/she is more likely to succeed in acquiring a second language. In contrast, a student with low motivation, self confidence and high anxiety, will have a higher affective filter that does not provide the learner with "subconscious language acquisition" (Krashen, 1994, p. 58).

Although all ESL teachers provided highly motivated and stress-free learning environments, one of the Saudi Arabian students, Najah, still had a higher affective filter that did prevent her from participating occasionally in classroom discussion. On the other hand, Nadia who had high motivation, self-confidence and a good self-image, had numerous struggles with acquiring the language.

In addition to the writing strategies ESL teachers used with their Saudi Arabian students, personal and professional skills of these teachers also helped to improve students' writing. The data I obtained from field notes and interviews revealed that many skills contributed to the success of teaching writing to these students. The most common skills among teachers I identified in this study were:

- Using various approaches to deliver information.

- Developing excellent rapport with her students.

- Relating to students as individuals.

- Interacting with the students before, during, and after the class, inviting students to share their knowledge and experience.

- Welcoming criticism of their ideas, thoughts, and suggestions.

- Being warm, friendly, respectful, kind, patient and sympathetic.

- Providing assistance when needed.

- Integrating humor into lesson and explanations to help student learn.

- Showing interest in cultures.

- Building independence.

Overall, numerous strategies, techniques, and skills have been employed when teaching writing to Arab ESL students. Throughout these techniques and activities, teachers encouraged students to work both independently and collaboratively in order to improve their writing ability. The function of these strategies was found in the writing samples ranking categories. The five Saudi Arabian ESL students were placed in three Six Trait - based groups: two students in the **Exemplary (6)** and **Strong (5)** categories, two

students in the **Proficient (4)** and **Developing (3)** categories and one student in the challenging **Emerging (2)** and **Beginning (1)** categories.

2. What is the role of the writing process approach in the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

In this study, the five fifth grade ESL Saudi Arabian utilized the writing process approach stages (William, 1998) when they wrote in English as a second language. These stages had affected the students' writing in different areas. The answers to the subquestions provided a thick explanation of that effect.

a. What stages of the writing process, strategies and techniques do Saudi Arabia ESL students employ when composing in English as a second language (L2)?

The five Saudi Arabian students used the writing process stages of prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing. Whether they had "on grade" English level proficiency or lower level of English proficiency, the student became familiar with employing each stage properly. I describe each stage and how it was used by the five students.

Prewriting. All five students engaged in this stage. This stage consisted of idea-generating activities to help the students focus on the assignment (Farrell, 2006). Brainstorming was the most distinguished feature of this stage. Students would participate in classroom discussion or brainstorming activities designed by the teacher to speak out or write down a number of possible ideas and thoughts. Usually, students would draw graphic organizers consisting of five circles where the main idea or topic was at the center of the

page. The other four circles would be available for details or examples. Some of the students, such as Naseema, would draw pictures of characters in her story to help her write later. In addition, students would generate ideas by talking with their teachers, who gave them freedom to express their feelings, thoughts, and fears with their peers. Answering questions or making comments were also sources for seeking ideas.

Planning. Usually most of the planning stage overlapped with the prewriting stage where some of the activities were performed. The students checked if the ideas they generated previously through the prewriting activities were going to match the main topic. Once students finished brainstorming, they would go over and look at what they wrote in their brainstorming page before they started writing their first draft.

Drafting. Students would be asked to write their first drafts as soon as they finished brainstorming. Generally, all students knew exactly what they needed to perform in this stage. They would write down, and on some occasions, they would copy what they wrote previously in their prewriting stage by using connecting words to join their sentences. One of the students, Naseema, liked to organize her writing. In contrast, Nasser would pay no attention to organization at this stage and would write his first draft in one long paragraph. However, later in the process he would polish his work and break down his writings into paragraphs.

Pausing. After students finished writing their first drafts, they would take some moments to go over what they wrote and some times they would read it aloud to the class. Some of them would check the length and the accuracy of his/her writing. They would also take silent moments to wait for other students to finish writing so that they could revise each other's works.

Reading. Some students, such as Noof, would read her writing in the pausing stage. Other students would read their pieces in two to three minutes and wait for the next activity.

Revising. In a sense, revising can be viewed as a collaborative act. According to Griffith (2006), "Other people's reactions to your writing can help you to improve" (p.247). In this stage, revising took two phases with all students: peer and teacher conferences. In peer conference, students sat next to each other, exchanged papers, read them, and wrote their comments on "post-it" cards (as it was executed in Mrs. Cook class) or verbally articulated their suggestions. This stage was undertaken in a respectful atmosphere among the students where feedback was not considered criticism or an indication of disagreement. In the teacher conference, Saudi Arabian students showed respect and acceptance of their teacher's reviews.

Editing. In this stage, all students would write their final drafts after revising them with their peers and teachers. They would recopy their first drafts, adding all the changes and corrections that had been made. In editing, students' writings sometimes increased in length due to the number of changes they added to their final drafts. After editing, their papers would have fewer errors and would look more organized.

Publishing. Most of the writings the Saudi Arabian ESL students wrote during this study were published in several ways. Students' publishing was through turning in papers to their teachers, publishing them on school or class bulletin boards, or simply allowing me to make copies of them. Three classroom publications were produced during this study. The first one was publishing Noof's and Najah's *Snow Flakes* that they created out of papers in their technical writing session. The second one was publishing Nasser's

PowerPoint *Soccer* presentation, and displaying Nadia's Juice poster in Mrs. Zimmerman's class bulletin board.

Whether their papers received high or low scores, writing for these five Saudi Arabian students using the writing process approach with modifications for context was a positive experience. They realized that "writing is not just a finished product but also a process of discovering their own thoughts" (Farrell, 2006, p.72). Each stage of the writing process approach they employed when writing in English supported their writing skills in one way or another by having them focus on the cognitive process of writing rather than on producing spelling and grammar accurate texts. By using such an approach, students' believed it was effective to have more than one chance to write starting from brainstorming to drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

b. What is the impact of utilizing the writing process on the writing development of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students?

Answering this question was the core purpose of this research. The writing process is an approach to incorporate students writing skills from the beginning stages of learning English as a second language. Gail Heald-Taylor (1989), the author of *Whole Language Strategies for ESL Students,* described the writing process approach as an effective tool with which young ESL learners were encouraged to communicate their written texts while simultaneously developing their literacy skills in speaking and reading. Rather than delaying involvement in the writing process, as advocated in the past, students can perfect their abilities in handwriting, reading, phonetics, spelling, grammar, and punctuation throughout the writing process.

In this study, the five Saudi Arabian ESL students had varying English proficiency levels and, therefore, varying writing abilities. From analyzing the data collected from classroom observations, interviews, student think-aloud protocol, and writing samples throughout five months, the process writing approach was identified as an assisting method for ESL students, whatever their ability level, to improve their writing skills. In applying the writing process approach in teaching writing, students had to write with plenty of room left for growth. They were also encouraged to communicate through writing regardless of their knowledge of English grammar and structure. It was apparent that the writing process approach had a tremendous effect in developing the five Arab students' writing abilities despite their different English proficiency levels. Just managing to understand and practice the stages of the writing process and knowing how to utilize them when writing were great enhancements to these students' writing abilities. Added to that advantage, the students' unraveled trust that their teachers would definitely not criticize their work, but accept and approve their invented symbols and spelling thus making their writing experiences both positive and productive.

Overall, students' writing samples collected for this study were the functional and concrete source for analyzing the impact of utilizing the writing process in the development of the students' writing ability. Students' improvement areas differed from one to another. By the end of this study, Nasser's, Naseema's, and Noof's Conventions increased. Nasser and Naseema produced better sentences and used a broader range of vocabulary and produced well-organized texts. Noof wrote lengthier texts but her Word Choice, Sentence Fluency and Organization were maintained at their previous levels.

Najah continued to commit surface mistakes throughout the study. She was still struggling with bringing new ideas and examples. However, the length of her writing had increased through the duration of the study. Organization, Word Choice, and Sentence Fluency were the areas in which Najah still faced challenges and needed to have more practice.

Although Nadia showed high motivation and a positive attitude toward learning English, she had the lowest proficiency level among this group. Her writing suffered from numerous errors that reemerged during the study. On the Six Traits Writing Rubric, she was ranked in the **Emerging (2)** and **Beginning (1)** categories. By reviewing Nadia's writing samples, I identified three main problems/challenges she encountered when writing: 1) she could not relate sounds to symbols; 2) she could not hear distinct parts of words; and 3) she made random guesses at spelling.

They were two possible reasons why Nadia was placed in that category. The first reason involved her short stay in the U.S. - just one year and a half. The second reason was the impact her first language (L1), Arabic, had on her writing in English. She attended her first, second, and third grades in Saudi Arabia before she came to the United States. She learned Arabic in these grades and was never taught English because English is not taught in Saudi public schools until seventh grade. Her first language did interfere with her ability to write in English.

Arabic is a language written in an alphabetic system of 28 letters. One sound equals one letter. All consonants except three are long vowels. In Arabic language, short vowels are not a part of the Arabic alphabet, instead they are written as marks over or below a consonant. The Arabic language is written from right to left.

There are several anticipated reasons behind Nadia's spelling challenges.

- Because Arabic language has no vowels in its phonological system, Arab students are likely to get confused over short vowel sounds and, therefore, have difficulty writing them. The most common confusions I found in Nadia's writing were between (k) and (c) *kan* (can), (r) and (w) *ried* (write), (d) and (t) *herd* (hurt), (p) and (b) *pol* (ball), (I) and (e) *hapi* (happen), *hier* (her) and *ther* (their), (x) and (ks) *boks* (box), (u) and (y) *by* (buy), (e) and (y) *thy* (they).

- Another potential difference is that Arabic language is written from right to left. Therefore, students might transpose two or more letters, e.g. tow (two) or *waht* (what). In Nadia' writing samples, she transposed *peoplle* (people) and *envelope* (envelope).

In general, using the writing process approach assisted Nadia to perceive writing as an ongoing process that required practice and time. She was not concerned about her final product but how she could enjoy writing using the writing process stages in an independent or collaborative setting. For Nadia to be able to develop such a difficult and demanding skill, writing, and to do it in English, writing in different genres in a relatively short time, one and a half years, is actually considered successful by many standards**.**

The purpose of using the think-aloud protocol in this study was to obtain information on cognitive thinking when writing in English as a second language. The transcript of these think-aloud protocols revealed that the five Saudi Arabian used the English language (L2) when they were thinking-aloud, even Nadia who had limited English. All the students successfully employed this technique in terms of speaking their

ideas and what they were thinking of aloud. while analyzing students' transcript, I identified similar writing process stages utilized among the students. These stages were:

- Brainstorming and drawing web-organizers as prewriting activities.

- Writing first draft.

- Reading first draft.

- Editing written product.

However, the order of using these stages and the time student spent in writing differed from one student to another. Throughout these stages, none of the students showed any hesitation in writing. They were all willing to write and did not find any difficulties in talking and writing at the same time even for the low English proficiency level students. The only feature the students' think-aloud protocol transcripts revealed was that some of them (Nasser, Noof, Naseema) would say a sentence and write it differently. For example, Nasser said, *When I play soccer, I play as a competitive and fun* but he wrote it as *When I play, I play competitive and fun*.

Overall, the student think-aloud protocols indicated that students completed their writing in spontaneous and natural way. They wrote their texts by utilizing the writing process approach stages, but for some of them, the order of these stages was mixed up and overlapped.

The activities and the techniques that had been used during this study were all crucial factors for the impact of the writing process approach to occur. The four ESL teachers applied almost similar techniques with their students in order to help them develop their writing skills, such as providing collaborative and cooperative activities, providing students with examples to explain unfamiliar terms and words, sharing life experiences and

stories to promote writing, providing feedback and comments, and helping students to spell words by themselves.

Another vital contribution to the impact of utilizing the writing process on the writing development of these five Saudi Arabian ESL students was social interaction. Three theories support social interaction as an essential element in acquiring second language: Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, Krashen's (1982) input theory and Chomsky's (1965; 1980; 1986) which supports that language skills are not learned entirely through a social interaction process, but that a pre-social mental structure must also exist which facilitates the acquisition of language.

Through student-student and student-teacher revising conferences, three of the five students (Nasser, Naseema, and Noof) increased their Convention scores by the end of the study. However, three traits of the Six Traits Writing Rubric remained the same for Noof, Najah, and Nadia, from the beginning of this study to the end: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Organization.

Conclusions

This case study explored two main issues: 1) the role of ESL teachers when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Saudi Arabian ESL students and the strategies, techniques, skills they incorporate when teaching this approach; and 2) the impact of using the writing process approach on five fifth grade Saudi Arabians' writing development.

The participants of this study were five fifth grade Saudi Arabians enrolled in an elementary school that served ESL students in the Midwest of the United States and their

four ESL teachers. For five months starting from December 2007 to the end of April 2008, the students were observed while being taught the writing process approach and the effect it had on their writing ability. The teachers were also observed while using the writing process approach in addition to the strategies, techniques, and skills they applied when doing so. I sought to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of using such an approach on developing Arab ESL students' writing skills. Through analysis and discussion of the findings, several conclusions about this study were made.

The connection between a classroom environment and improving writing was crucial. Creating a positive classroom atmosphere for writing helped students set their moods to write. Being in clean, organized, and colorful classrooms may inspire students to write more than being in boring-looking classrooms. The classrooms I observed were inviting and welcoming students to write in anytime, whether before or after class. Teachers created positive environments to write by showing respect toward their students' backgrounds, languages, religions, cultures, interests, and concerns. They also provided an affirmative atmosphere by displaying colorful posters about the writing process stages, six trait writing models, and grammar rules, maps, and pictures of people from different countries of the world. In all classrooms, there were pillows in corners for reading and sometimes for writing. The classroom bulletin boards served the teaching of writing by publishing and presenting students' writings and works. The physical layout and the arrangement of desks and tables all reflected teachers' teaching personalities and styles. Most of the teachers arranged their classrooms to foster the collaborative activities they adapted in teaching writing. In such environments, ESL students were free to move occasionally to participate in peer or group work, to talk with their classmates, to listen to

each other, to offer their ideas and stories, and simply to collaborate. This access to socialize with other students gave the Arab ESL students a sense of being members of the class community. Another essential feature I observed in these classrooms was noise level. All teachers were concerned to lower the noise level in their classrooms by maintaining a control on students' "unnecessary" talk while writing. They made sure that every student had equal opportunity to write in a quiet and inspiring atmosphere. Overall, the four classroom environments I observed served the teaching of writing properly and inspired students to feel comfortable in them.

Practicing the writing process approach as a daily learning routine in the schedule of the five Saudi Arabian ESL students allowed them to feel confident about writing in English. The students became aware that writing in English is not a one-step process; however, it is an ongoing cycle through which students have ample time to finish their stories. During this process, students experienced multiple activities such as prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing.

Each stage of this approach provided ESL students with beneficial writing skills. In prewriting and planning, students learned how to generate ideas and let them flow on papers. They would not worry about organization and correctness that they would polish later in the process. The students felt comfortable in this stage which would lead them to write their first draft with prepared ideas and thoughts instead of having blank minds. The drafting stage provided students with initial attempts to organize the ideas they demand in sentence and paragraph forms. Students would concentrate upon explaining and supporting their ideas fully. Regardless of how many ideas they wrote down in their prewriting stage, they would make many partial changes to these ideas or completely omit some of them.

When they finished writing their first draft, reading and pausing would be the next step. Reading what they had written gave them a sense of responsibility of what they produced and helped them evaluate their texts. Later, students would socially interact with peers or their teachers for revising conferences. These conferences were held in a proper way that helped ESL students to build their confidence in themselves as writers, increase their self esteem, and encourage them to produce more writing. In editing, students would learn to spend an adequate time to compose well-written papers that had few errors to enhance readability. In this stage students learned that their final drafts were time worthy experiences through which they would be evaluated. These are the most remarkable skills the Saudi Arabian ESL students gained during utilizing the writing process.

Applying several techniques and strategies in teaching writing vividly enriched teaching writing to ESL students. By providing students with multiple learning activities, each student had fulfilled his/her own needs. From providing collaborative activities to playing games, ESL students felt motivated to learn and to take more risks toward success in writing. The extra time that had been spent to explain unfamiliar terms, phrases, or concepts was appreciated by the ESL students who believed in their teachers' patience and their ability to unveil difficult words. Also when teachers shared their life stories and experiences or shared humor as a modeling strategy they were encouraging their ESL students to open their hearts and minds and translate their feelings and life stories into written words. Teachers' special skills to handle Arab ESL students' strengths and challenges supported their teaching experiences and expanded their knowledge of other languages and cultures.

Another impressive conclusion of this study is that the writing process approach was a social process. Writing occurred in this approach after going through several stages that engaged people other than the writer, such as peers and teachers. In the writing process approach, students socially interacted with their peers and teachers to share their ideas with them seeking help and suggestions for writing improvement. This action is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) sociolcultural theory. In this theory, Vygotsky proposed that children learn through interactions with their surrounding culture. He also stated that the cognitive development of children and adolescents is enhanced when they work in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP). To reach this zone, children need the help of others such as adults or more competent peers to support or scaffold them as they learn new things. According to Vygotsky (1978), children can do more with the help and guidance of an adult or other person more experienced than they can do themselves.

All these facts strongly applied to this study where Arab ESL students enhanced and improved their ability to write in English as a second language by the help, guidance, and support they obtained from their peers and teachers. Their teachers modeled and scaffolded instruction when they provided motivation, feedback, suggestions, and guidance. As the study progressed, the scaffolding level decreased though in different levels fpr each student's level of writing development. The writing process itself progressed from teacher facilitated instruction to socially interactive learning, toward independent writing.

Implications for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gain a deeper understanding of the role of four ESL teachers when using the writing process approach in teaching writing in English as a second language to five fifth grade Arabia Saudi ESL students and the strategies, techniques, skills they incorporated when teaching this approach. It also aimed to identify the impact of using the writing process approach on five fifth grade Saudi Arabian's writing development. This study was not intended to generalize to other contexts. Collecting and analyzing data for this study led to several findings for enlightening productive guidelines for future research.

Expand the study to include writers from other Middle Eastern countries. This study was planned to be implemented on United Arab Emirates' elementary ESL students. However, students of U.A.E. nationality were not available in the state where this study took place. Nevertheless, the closest sample to the U.A.E. students was the Saudi Arabian students who shared the same language, cultures, religion, and attitudes. For further research, exploring the effects of utilizing the writing process approach on the writing development of a large sample of students from different Arab countries would add richness and depth to the findings of this study.

Conduct this research in the U.A.E. or Saudi Arabia with children who return from the U.S. Since employing the writing process approach has become one of the most popular and successful methods in the United States, I would presume that many Saudi and U.A.E. children returning to their countries had developed their skill of writing through process writing. A comparative study between these students and local students looking at the similarities and the differences between the two groups will be informative and

illustrative of the benefits of implementing process writing to the discipline of writing in Arabic, too.

Introduce concepts such as the writing process approach (Williams,1998) to English teachers in the Arab countries and monitor the impact on student writing development. Writing is the most difficult skill English language teachers in the Arab world try to teach and develop for elementary level students. Teachers applying such an approach and teaching them its stages and how it could be a successful technique in teaching writing in English language could provide an extended study. The writing process approach would be the tool through which teachers might evaluate their students' writing improvement.

Implement the writing process approach in the Arabic language to determine the effectiveness of using the writing process approach in improving attitude and writing development. Since this approach has been successful in developing ESL writing abilities, the same impact may very well occur if it is utilized in Arabic language. As writing in English, writing in Arabic is not an easy task. It requires especial skills and knowledge in order for a student to successfully produce a well-written text.

Implement the writing process approach with lower elementary levels to determine its impact on writing. The skill of writing needs to be worked on and developed starting from very low elementary grades. Writing itself is a skill that requires a long period of time to develop. It also needs to start at an early age to be internalized and practiced by young writers. Young children need to become very familiar with the process of writing as much as the correct surface structure of a sentence and a paragraph,

Implement this study with newer Middle Eastern students to the U.S. schools with low English proficiency level. I do not think teaching writing to low proficiency level elementary students in U.S. schools will be significantly more difficult. On the contrary, for students to work with writing and try to learn it as they are beginning to speak, listening to and reading the language is going to be an effective task. Teachers might need to exert more effort with these students, but the fruits of their work will be realized by both student and teacher.

Conduct this study in U.A.E. elementary and/or Saudi Arabian schools teaching U.S or British curricula. This study will continue to include Saudi and U.A.E. elementary students enrolled in private schools in either or both countries teaching U.S. or British curricula. If these curricula teach writing using the writing process approach, the researcher would explore its effectiveness within that context and also conduct a comparative study with writing indicators in regular schools teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Apply the Writing Process Approach using Arabic language and determining its impact on Arab student in their native language and in their home countries. Since teaching writing in Arabic curricula is still very much product-oriented, applying a process-oriented approach will be a huge shift in the field of teaching writing. Such an approach will change teachers' perspectives of writing as a linear, one-way procedure where a student composes one draft with no intervention of any kind neither from his/her teacher nor peers. The writing process approach will provide the U.A.E. teachers with new insights and opportunities to employ it as a new technique in their teaching and to enjoy its effectiveness on their students' writing development.

Implications for ESL Teachers of Arab Students

This study was conducted in one elementary school that served ESL students from December 2007 to the end of April 2008 with four ESL teachers and five fifth grade ESL Saudi Arabian students, a male and four females. The contextual features were exceptional to this case study. ESL policy makers, curriculum designers, administrators and teachers may use the findings of this study to enhance their knowledge about teaching writing to Saudi Arabian ESL students in collaborative, enjoyable, and socially - oriented classroom. Moreover, the findings of this study may provide further information about the effectiveness of using the writing process approach when teaching English as a second language to Saudi Arabian students and the role it plays in improving their ESL writing ability.

Learning about ESL Arab students' background, home language, and culture. Arab students bring to their class different language, background, customs, and culture. The more a teacher learns about where her students are coming from and what language they speak, the easier her job will become. If the ESL teacher learns few words of Arabic and used them in her classroom, it may mean a great deal for the students. Learning some Arabic will improve teacher's communication with her Arab students. At the same time, by going through the process of learning another language, the teacher will better understand what challenges her students face when learning English as a second language. Knowing more about students' countries, customs, and cultures will likely raise their self-esteem, self confidence, and motivation, and, consequently, will generate great respect from their classmates.

Developing professionalism by earning an ESL endorsement. Earning an ESL

endorsement is a key part in working as a professional ESL teacher. ESL teachers should

gain high quality knowledge to develop their teaching skills through a combination of ESL

courses and programs. Becoming qualified to teach English as a second language is an

exciting and rewarding experience which develops the necessary skills, confidence, and

ability to teach ESL students effectively.

*Monitor continuing published research on the writing process as professional

growth.* In order for ESL teachers to be effective in teaching English as a second language,

it is essential to keep up with professional research about second language acquisition

theories and obtain knowledge on how second language learners acquire an L2. This

knowledge of second language acquisition helps to plan teaching activities appropriate to

students' English proficiency levels. Likewise, awareness of language research enables

teachers to anticipate certain challenges ESL learners might encounter. Moreover, reading

in the ESL arena provides teachers the kind of knowledge they use when evaluating their

students' language development.

Sharing ESL teaching experiences. The field of ESL/EFL is young, and that of ESL

writing as a separate discipline is even younger (Blanton & Kroll, 2002). To gain

knowledge about ESL teaching strategies, skills, and techniques, ESL teachers can share

their teaching stories, how they struggle with teaching ESL, what strengths or weaknesses

they have, what mistakes they make, and how teaching writing to their ESL students never

ceases to be an ongoing learning experience. Sharing experiences can be formally and

informally exercised. ESL teachers can meet with each other on a regular basis, within a

school environment or off - campus meetings to share and talk about their ESL stories.

School administration can participate in this event by scheduling two hour conferences after school or coffee-hour meetings where a principal meets with her ESL teachers to listen to their experiences, challenges, frustrations, or any other positive or negative feelings and issues they have. These conferences can be expanded from a model school to reach other schools and districts to generalize the benefits of ESL teaching.

Expand the writing class period to at least one hour five days a week. The writing class period in which this study was undertaken was only 30 minutes, including teacher's instructions and explanations, four days a week. This means Saudi Arabian ESL students spent no more than two hours a week writing. Neither teachers nor students had enough time to practice writing. As a result, writing on a topic would last three to five weeks to be completed. A report from The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, *The Neglected "R", The Need for a Writing Revolution* (2003), proposes three main points: 1) the amount of time students spend writing (and the scale of financial resource devoted to writing) should be at least doubled; 2) writing should be assigned across the curriculum; and 3) more out-of -school time should also be used to encourage writing, and parents should review students' writing with them.

Conduct professional developmental seminars in the U.A.E. to teach educators the writing process approach and its effectiveness. Introducing the writing process approach to policy makers, educators, and teachers in the U.A.E. will surely be the new trend all concerned professionals will want to experience. Likewise, the rapid development in all sectors in the country, the U.A.E. government provides the education system with continuous support in order to make it an international system that works in accordance

with international standards and raises the U.A.E. schools as modern international academic models.

Final Thoughts

My final thoughts about this study are strongly driven from the knowledge I gained about teaching writing to Saudi Arabian ESL students in general, and using the writing process as a tool to improve their writing development. All students are capable of becoming excellent writers if they are given enough practice and time. The writing process method values the talent and growth of individual writers and makes them want to continue writing because they feel confident about their writing abilities. The writing process method is an approach that has helped the documentation of how five fifth grade Saudi Arabian students were on their way toward becoming wonderful writers.

Success in the ESL learning process can be remarkably contributed to teachers' roles in applying appropriate strategies, techniques, and approaches. If teaching regular students requires special skills and ability, teaching ESL students will certainly require even more time and effort. It is important for ESL teachers to recognize that becoming an effective writing teacher involves creating a motivated climate for students to freely express their ideas and thoughts.

In the same vein, establishing social rapport with students has its impact in encouraging students to write and to become members of the classroom community. Respecting their backgrounds, home language, and cultures is necessary to build this relationship. Celebrating students' differences helps to introduce them as individuals to their peers and gain respect for their diversity. It is also a given that by utilizing efficient

writing activities that meet every student's needs and challenges, ESL teachers will be successful. ESL teachers and the way they view writing as an ongoing process invite their students to relax and not feel under pressure when writing in English. The purpose of writing via the writing process approach is to practice this task in different stages in an enjoyable and productive manner. Students' writings are valued and never criticized by teachers nor peers. Within this approach, teachers are integrated in the process as scaffolds to help students move forward in the process of producing their best texts.

As I conducted this study, I experienced living its every component. My beliefs about writing and how it can be a challenging skill for second language learners has been definitely realized and internalized. Being a second language learner myself, I encountered several writing challenges conducting this research. I also employed the writing process approach (Williams, 1998) by all means. Each stage took a long time to be completed effectively from the prewriting stage in which I practiced to the publication of my final draft. The multiple conferences I had with my major advisor directed me and provided valuable feedback in order to produce a well - written research paper. The writing atmosphere my advisor provided me along side with her continuous support and encouragement were huge motivators to me as an ESL student to complete this research. When a second language learner is dealt with as a "special case" that needs more respect, care, encouragement, and support, then the goal of ESL teaching will be accomplished.

During this study, I learned numerous lessons about writing. I realized that writing is a complex process through which a writer expresses his/her thoughts and ideas and transforms them into a visible and expressive written format. Writing is recursive in nature. A writer moves from one stage to another and then goes back to the beginning or to a

previous part through a natural occurrence. The basic components of the writing process are the same for all students; however, the approach and way each student utilizes these components are diverse and different. A most significant element I learned in this research is that encouraging students to write in the form of a whole is preferable to focusing on a specific part of the language such as spelling or grammar. Another lesson I learned is that creating collaborative and social writing activities, in which students share and participate in group work, can effectively be applied when teaching the writing process approach.

Teaching writing to second language Arab elementary level students can be challenging and frustrating to some teachers, especially when their students are new arrivals with low level or no English proficiency. However, creating an attractive atmosphere for those students in which to work and celebrating their diversity by respecting their home language and background will make teachers' job more fulfilling. In addition, when ESL teachers expand and increase their knowledge in learning more about second language acquisition (SLA) theories and how they can translate them into research-based practices, then their teaching will be professional and more sufficient.

This writing process study will journey with me back to the Middle East to impact the teaching of writing in Arab language nations. Sharing the strengths and advantages of the writing process approach from the American educational culture will provide a foundation for instruction of writing in both Arabic and English for my country and others.

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APPENDIX A

ESL Teacher Observation Guidelines

Teacher Observation Guidelines

Teacher Observation Guidelines

Background Information

Date of Observation_____

Grade Level_____

Number of Students in the Class_____

Subject Observed_____

Length of Class_____ Class Began_____ Class Ended_____

Length of Observation_____

What stages of the writing process are introduced by the ESL teacher?

Pre-writing	Planning	Drafting	Pausing	Reading	Revising	Editing	Publishing

What strategies and skills does the ESL teacher employ when teaching writing?

1. Is the ESL teacher introducing cooperative, collaborative writing activities which promote discussion?

Evidence_____

_____

_____

2. Is the ESL teacher encouraging contributions from all students and promoting peer interaction to support learning?

Evidence_____

_____

_____

3. Is the ESL teacher designing writing assignments for a variety of audiences,

   purposes, and genres, and scaffolding the writing instruction?

Evidence_____

_____

_____

 4. Is the ESL teacher offering comments on the strength of the paper, in order to

   indicate areas where the student is meeting expectations?

Evidence_____

_____

_____

5. Is the ESL teacher making comments explicit and clear (both in written response

and in oral responses)?

Evidence_____

_____

_____

 6. Is the ESL teacher giving more than one suggestion for change so that students

   still maintain control of their writing?

Evidence_____

_____

_____

 7. Is the ESL teacher assuming that every learner understands how to cite

   sources or what plagiarism is?

Evidence_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

Student Observation Guidelines

Student Observation Guidelines

Background Information

Date of Observation_____

Grade Level_____

Number of Students in the Class_____

Subject Observed_____

Length of Class_____ Class Began_____ Class Ended_____

Length of Observation_____

Students' Strategies and Techniques

What strategies does the ESL student employ when writing in English?

1._____

Evidence_____

2._____

Evidence_____

3._____

Evidence_____

Students Reactions to the Writing Process

How are the students engaging in class writing activities? (Positively/ Negatively)

Evidence_____

_____

_____

How are the students interacting with the teacher? (Positively/ Negatively)

Evidence_____

_____

_____

Student Participation in the Writing Process

Student's Name	Pre-writing	Planning	Drafting	Pausing	Reading	Revising	Editing	Publishing
Nasser								
Naseema								
Noof								
Najah								
Nadia								

APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board application at Kansas State University

IRB Approval Letter

K·STATE
Kansas State University®
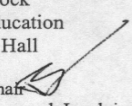
University Research
Compliance Office
203 Fairchild Hall
Lower Mezzanine
Manhattan, KS 66506–1103
785-532-3224
Fax: 785-532-3278
http://www.ksu.edu/research/comply

TO: Marjorie Hancock   Proposal Number: 4399
             Elementary Education
             246 Bluemont Hall

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
             Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: October 11, 2007

RE: Approval of Proposal Entitled, "Utilizing the Writing Process Approach with English as a
             Second Language Writers: A Case Study of Seven Arab 5th Grade Students."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects has reviewed your proposal and has granted full approval. This proposal is **approved for <u>one year</u> from the date of this correspondence, pending "continuing review."**

APPROVAL DATE: October 11, 2007

EXPIRATION DATE: October 11, 2008

Several months prior to the expiration date listed, the IRB will solicit information from you for federally mandated "**continuing review" of the research**. Based on the review, the IRB may approve the activity for another year. **If continuing IRB approval is <u>not</u> granted, or the IRB fails to perform the continuing review before the expiration date noted above, the project will expire and the activity involving human subjects must be terminated on that date. Consequently, it is critical that you are responsive to the IRB request for information for continuing review if you want your project to continue.**

In giving its approval, the Committee has determined that:

      ☒   There is no more than minimal risk to the subjects.
      ☐   There is greater than minimal risk to the subjects.

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file as written. Any change or modification affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. All approved proposals are subject to continuing review at least annually, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Announced post-approval monitoring may be performed during the course of this approval period by URCO staff. Injuries, unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB and / or the URCO.

APPENDIX D

Letter to Study Site Principal

Letter to Study Site Principal

September, 13, 2007

Dear Principal,

      My name is Najwa ALhosani. I am a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University. I am writing you to ask for your permission to conduct my dissertation research study in your school. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using a process-oriented approach in elementary ESL writings. It is aimed to determine the influence the process approach has on elementary ESL students' writing development.

      The study will take place in your ESL writing class. My research will involve three data collection methods: class observation of both teacher and students, interviews of the ESL teacher and her fifth grade Arab students. In order to carry out this research, I will also collect writing samples from ESL fifth grade Arab students during 16 weeks of the fall 2007 semester. My role as a researcher will be a non-participant observer. I will not apply or oppose any teaching instructions. The ESL class will not be interrupted in any way. Kansas State University will approve the study. Please feel free to contact my major professor Dr. Marjorie Hancock at (785) 532-5917, or e-mail her at mrhanc@ksu.edu. You can also contact me at (785) 550-6601, or e-mail me at nma4747@ksu.edu. Thanks you for your consideration of my request.

Respectfully,

Najwa Alhosani, Ph. D. Candidate
Curriculum and Instructions
Kansas State University
College of Education

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent Letter for Classroom Teacher

Informed Consent Letter for Participants

Classroom Teacher

September,17, 2007

Dear Participating Teacher:

       I am a doctoral student at Kansas State University, interested in conducting a research in second language writing pedagogy. My research will involve class observation of both teacher and students. In order to carry out this research, I would like you to assist me in the following ways:

       1. Allow me to observe your class, and take field notes through out your writing lessons.
       2. Allow me to access the students' compositions, which you will ask them to be keeping during the semester.
       3. Allow me to interview you and your students.
       4. Think-aloud protocol.

       I expect to conduct this research during the semester of Fall 2007. The data gathered will be kept confidential and personal anonymity will be maintained. Let me also assure you that this research is not meant to cause you any professional embarrassment. On the contrary, I expect that you and I stand to gain experience toward better understanding of how ESL students from different backgrounds develop their skills in writing.

       If you are interested in participating in this study, please feel free to contact my major professor Dr. Marjorie Hancock at (785) 532-5917, or e-mail her at mrhanc@ksu.edu. You can also contact me at (785) 550-6601, or e-mail me at nma4747@ksu.edu. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Participant Name: _____   **Date:** _____

Participant Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

Witness to Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

     Sincerely,

     Najwa Alhosani, Ph. D. Candidate
     Curriculum and Instructions
     Kansas State University

Appendix F

Parent Consent Form

Parent Consent Form

September, 13, 2007

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am writing to ask your permission to allow your child to participate in a research project titled, "Writing in English: The Journey Towards Proficiency in the English Language among Elementary Second Language Writers." This research will be conducted by Najwa Alhosani, a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using a process-oriented approach in elementary ESL writing. It is aimed to determine the influence the process approach has on elementary ESL students' writing development. This project will take place in your child's regular classroom. Therefore, your child's instructional program will not be interrupted by anyway. Your child's participation will take 16 weeks. Your child will only participate in this study if you grant your written permission. All the data that will be collected for the purpose of this research will be anonymously used and your child's right to privacy will be highly protected.

Permission is requested for your child to participate in this study through three phases:
1.   Allowing me to observe your child in the writing class and take notes on his/her activities.
2.   Allowing me to access and collect his/her writing during the semester.
3.   Allowing me to interview him/her at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester.

I am assuring you that there are no risks involved for students' participating in this study. The school and the school district will benefit from your child's pariticpation in this project. This study may provide ESL administrators, teachers, and policy makers with valued feedback about the best strategies and approach to be utilized in teaching writing to ESL students. There is no cost to your child to participate in this study. You and your child have the right to withdraw from this study at any time. Your child has the right to refuse to answer any question in the interviews.

If you have any question regarding this study and your child's participation, you may contact Jerry Jax, Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, or by telephone to (785) 532-3224. You can also contact my principal investigator, Dr. Marjorie Hancock, Professor of Elementary Education at mrhanc@ksu.edu, or by telephone at (785) 532-5917, or contact me, Najwa Alhosani at 785-550-6601 or e-mail me at nma4747@ksu.com.

If you agree to have your child participate in the study, please sign the attached form and return it with your child to the principal's office at his/her school as soon as possible.

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in this study. I am confident your son or daughter will find the experience fun.

Sincerely,

Najwa Alhosani, Ph. D. Candidate
Curriculum and Instruction
Kansas State University

Parental Informed Consent Form

I have read the foregoing letter from Najwa Alhosani and understand the project in which she will be researching the written language of ESL Saudi Arabian students. I choose to allow my child to be part of the study. I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

Name of Child_____

Name of Parent of Legal Guardian
(printed)_____Date_____

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian
(printed) _____Date_____

Signature of Researcher_____Date_____

Signature of Witness/Teacher_____Date_____

APPENDIX G

Interview Questions for ESL Teachers

Interview Questions for the Teacher

1. Tell me about your self, your name, your education, your country, etc.
2. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
3. What subjects have you taught?
4. When did you start teaching English?
5. When did you become an ESL teacher? Why?
6. How did you find teaching ESL students?
7. Did you face any problems teaching ESL students? If so, what are they?
8. What are your strengths and weaknesses as an ESL teacher?
9. Describe your ESL teaching experience? Good, or bad? Frustrating, or interesting? Why?
10. What part of language arts do you like to teach the best? Why?
11. What writing activities, strategies, and approaches do you use with your ESL students? Describe the process from beginning to end.
12. Are there any effective ones you usually use? Why?
13. What kinds of writing methods do you find to be the best instructional practices?
14. How do your ESL students respond to your writing activities?
15. How do you encourage your ESL students to write?
16. How do you build a rapport with your ESL students? Why?
17. In what ways you know your ESL students' home languages?
18. How do you try to understand, communicate in, or speak with your ESL students?
19. How do you know that a student is a good language learner?
20. How do you evaluate your ESL students' writing performance? Give me an example?
21. What are the most challenges you find in teaching ESL?
22. What is your educational philosophy?

Appendix H

Interview Questions for ESL Students

Initial Interview Questions

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where are you from?
4. How long you lived in the US?
5. Do you like English?
6. Do you like to write in English?
7. Did you write in English before you came to the US?
8. Did you learn English back home?
9. Who taught you English back home?
10. How did the teacher teach you English?
11. What activities did she/he use to teach you English?
12. Did you write in your English class when you were back home? If yes, what did you write? Who chose the topic? Do you write first draft? Do you edit your writing? Did the teacher teach you how to write? Did the teacher correct your writing? How?

Follow-up Interview Questions

1. How did you feel about the writing class?
2. How did your teacher help you when you needed help?
3. When you have difficulties, do you ask your teacher to help you?
4. What steps/stages do you use when you write?
5. Do you write first draft? If yes, how many times?
6. Do you edit and revise your first draft? If yes, how many times, and in what ways.
7. In what way does your ESL teacher teach you how to write?
8. Is writing fun? Why?
9. How do you feel about writing in English?
10. Do you feel comfortable when you write in English? If yes, why?
11. Do you like the writing activities your teacher practice? If yes, why?

APPENDIX I

Naseema's Think-Aloud Protocol Transcript

Naseema's 29 Minutes Think-Aloud Tape Transcript

Transcription of Tape of Naseema 29 minutes of Composing Aloud. (Underlined sentences indicated when she was writing while she was talking). I divided this transcription according to the writing process stages she used while composing aloud:

I am gonna write a story about my mother the title is <u>I love my mother because</u>…

Prewriting

umm I am going to brainstorm for some ideas about my mother and how I love her so much…and umm I am gonna draw a circle and then put some lines so it looks like a spider…umm and in the middle circle I am gonna write <u>my mother</u> and now I am gonna brainstorm some stuff about my mother….I am gonna write an introduction.. My first reason i love my mother because <u>she's nice and kind</u>… second reason is <u>she gives me a lot of stuff.</u> And my third reason is <u>she buys me a lot of stuff</u>…now I am going to have to write a conclusion and a...umm and an introduction… my introduction is <u>I am writing a story about my mother..</u>and I am gonna add some more…which is and this is going to be my introduction. I am writing about my mother <u>and how much I love her</u> .. and then I am going to write <u>I have three reasons why I love my mother</u>…and umm….in my conclusion I am going to write <u>now that you know about my mother and how nice she is, and how much I love her. …this is the end of my story.</u> ….and so that I have three reasons , and introduction umm…

Drafting

I am going to write my first draft...first draft…I am gonna start out with introduction which is I...no…I am going to write a title first…<u>I love my mother because</u>…ok...and now I am gonna write the introduction first…the introduction is <u>I am writing about my mother and</u>

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how much I love her…I have three reasons why I love my mother…ok that was my introduction and now I am going to write my first reason...this is how I am going to start with it…my first reason is that my mother is nice and kind…she always helps me with my homework, …..she always helps me with my home work…she loves me so much and she is nice to me…ok now I am done with my first reason, and I am going to my second reason.. and my second reason is that she gives me a lot of stuff…umm...like...umm she gives me nickels and some of hers when she was small and stuff and ….and she gave me bracelets…. Silent….and …umm and my third reason is she buys me a lot of stuff…umm silence….like when we go to the store, she buys me some clothes, bracelets, necklaces, and rings….umm she buys me a lot of clothes and bracelets, necklaces, and rings…and my conclusion is umm…now that you know about my mother...now that you know about my mother, and how she is nice….umm how nice she is and how much I love her. this is the end of my story…

Reading

umm now I am done with my final ..umm draft...umm first draft…umm I am going to go over it just in case there're any misspelled words or periods or like that...i am writing about my mother and how much I love her...I have three reasons why I love her…how I love my mother…my first reason is that my mother is nice and kind. She always helps me with my home work and she loves me so much…umm she always help me with my with my home work, I should probably take off the "and"...she loves me so much and I can put the and after (she loves me so much) I can put that and she is nice to me…my second reason is she…I should put that after she ...that she gave me a lot of stuff...she gives me her necklaces and bracelets...I spelled bracelets wrong…I spelled it (b, r, a, c, e, l,e,t,s) and the

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right spelling is (b,r,a, c, l, e, t, s)…umm and nickels that belong to her when she was small…my third reason is she buys me a lot of stuff...when we go to the store she bus me a lot of clothes and bracelets ..after clothes I should take the and out and put a comma after bracelets and rings…and for my conclusion I wrote…now that you know about my mother and how nice she is and how much I love her...this is the end of my story.

Editing

now I am gonna write my final copy …my title is <u>I love my mother because</u>…I am writing about my mother and how much I love her...<u>i am…writing about my mother and how much I love her</u>…I have three reasons why I love my mother…<u>I have …three….reasons...why…I …love…my mother….</u>.ok…<u>my first …reason...is that my mother is nice and kind</u>…..she always helps me with my home work...<u>she …always…helps…me…with...my homework</u>…umm <u>she</u> loves me so much, and she is nice to me…<u>loves…me…so ..much…and…she…is...nice...to</u> me…ok...and umm <u>my second reason is</u> …<u>she gives me a lot of stuff…she gives...me her necklaces , and bracelets that belong to her</u> ..<u>when…she …was…small.</u>..and <u>my third reason is she buys</u> me a lot of stuff…<u>a lot of stuff…when we go to the store…she buys...me a lot of clothes…necklaces, bracelets, and rings.</u> …silence…<u>now that you know about my…mother….and…how nice…she.. is</u> …and how much I love her….<u>how much…i ..love…her…</u>this is the end of my story…the end…

Appendix J

Naseema's Think-Aloud Protocol Coding

Naseema's Think-Aloud Protocol Coding

Pre-writing

PI RT W R W R W   R W R W R W

— — — — — —   — — — — — —

Drafting:

R W RW RW RW RW RW   RW   W   S W   S C R E W C W   W

— — — — — —   — — — — — —   — — — — — —

Revising:

C R R R R RV E R RV E R RV E W   R R R

— — — — — —   — — — — — —   — — —

Editing:

R W C W R RE W   W RE W   W RE W   W W W S W RE W C

— — — — — —   — — — — — —   — — — — — —

Appendix K

Transcript of Mrs. Cook's Interview

Transcript of Mrs. Cook's Interview

1. The researcher: tell me about your self, your name, your education, your country, etc.

Mrs. Cook: My name is Cook Segar. I grew up in St. Louis, Missouri and moved to Lawrence in 1976. When I first visited my brother here, I was quite taken with the diversity of the town & ended up moving here and eventually going to school. I earned my first degree in Anthropology. My second degree was in Education, as well as my Master's, which is in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on Teaching English as a Second Language. I am currently certified in 5-12 Social Studies, 5-9 General Science, K-12 ESL, and K-6 Elementary Education. My family loves to travel and experience new cultures, but often cannot afford trips that involve flight. Until the last few years when my husband's second job has given him lots of frequent flyer miles to use. We have been to Mexico 5 times, his aunt is from there and we have been to several different parts, but avoid the touristy areas. We have been to several provinces in Canada on our 5 trips there, including 2 trips to the Maritime Provinces of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland twice. These areas definitely have a different culture, especially Newfoundland which didn't become part of Canada until 1949. We've also been to Hawaii and Ireland. In 2003, I was the lucky recipient of a Fulbright-Hays grant that allowed me to study for 5 weeks in Costa Rica. This allowed me to improve my Spanish considerably, while also learning a lot about the culture there. We stayed with host families mine was wonderful, and coincidentally closely-related to students I had here in Kansas.

2. The researcher: Why did you decide to become a teacher?

Mrs. Cook: This is the response you're never supposed to give during an interview, but it's true, I loved learning, but I had some terrible and terribly cruel teachers as a child. I knew education didn't have to be that way that it was possible to make learning interesting, engaging and fun. My teachers were Catholic nuns, who are often notoriously mean.

3. The researcher: What subjects have you taught?

Mrs. Cook: I have taught 7th grade World History and Study Skills, 9th grade Physical Science, 10-12th grade World Geography for 2 years, then moved to teaching strictly ESL as a paraprofessional to grades K-6 meaning teaching only English, separated from curriculum appropriate to the student's level When I got the teaching job, I began the incorporation of curriculum as I worked with K-6 students. Later, we reorganized the program and I began teaching 4-6 grade Integrated ESL/Curricular Studies meaning incorporating Math, English reading, writing, speaking and listening, Social Studies and Science. The last few years, I have taught 5th and 6th grade only. Depending on the year, I have taught SIOP Math, and am currently teaching 5th and 6th grade ELL students in the areas of Writing, Reading, Social Studies and Science. I hold current certifications in all of these areas.

4. The researcher: When did you start teaching English?

 I started in the Fall of 1987 as a paraprofessional ½-time, then got the full time teaching position in the Fall of 1990.

5. The researcher: When did you become an ESL teacher, why?

Mrs. Cook: When is the same answer #4. I started teaching ESL students because I fell in love with the "mission." When I started as a paraprofessional, it was just a lucky coincidence that the principal called me to see if I'd be interested in working with ESL students. At the time, I knew nothing about it, but somehow knew it would be a good fit. While I was a para, I worked hard to take all the classes and earn the endorsement to become an ESL teacher. An endorsement is how it's termed. It's added to a current certification. I petitioned to get the endorsement to cover elementary, since at that time my certifications were both 5th grade and above. For me, it was the perfect combination of my interest in other cultures, teaching, and the love of and curiosity about other languages and different ways of viewing the world. The "mission" of which I spoke is the idea however lofty that I can effect a change in the way students feel about each other and people from other countries. What I really want is to enhance understanding among all of various cultures we teach here so that when they go home & someone for example from Korea makes a disparaging remark about someone from Japan and, historically, they have good reason to do so, the student will be able to say, "I knew someone from Japan and you can't judge them all like that. My friend was really nice". I have some wonderful examples of how changes have occurred in some of our students and their outlooks towards others often prejudicial at first, then they open up and become accepting of those they previously would have never allowed themselves to become friends with.

6. The researcher: How did you find teaching ESL students?

Mrs. Cook: I have the best students in the world. With very few exceptions, they are interested in learning, motivated, curious and fun. They are also much more respectful of teachers than many American students, so this makes my class both easy to teach and fun. Since there are so few discipline problems, we can spend a lot of time learning in interesting ways.

7. The researcher: Did you face any problems teaching ESL students?

Mrs. Cook: I don't feel I have any problems teaching the students. However, it has been a struggle to get other teachers to understand that we are all responsible for their learning not just the ESL teacher. That has changed markedly these past few years in our school, but from what I hear from other ESL teachers, it's a constant struggle. Many teachers are not willing to adapt curriculum to make it comprehensible, and it's not that difficult to do. The same approaches that help ESL students are also approaches that help all students, since everyone has different learning styles. The only other issues have been teachers and parents with unrealistic expectations of how long it takes to learn a language and be successful in a regular classroom without adapted curriculum. If so, what are they.

8. The researcher: What are your strengths and weaknesses as an ESL teacher?

Mrs. Cook: Ooh, that's a tough one. I hate to talk about my strengths, but since you asked, here goes... I feel that I'm empathetic and can put myself in the position of the kids to understand what they're experiencing. I'm very analytical and am constantly listening to what comes out of my mouth that could cause confusion for the kids. I feel it's more

important that they understand something rather than cover a topic. I think my constant attempts to become more proficient in Spanish have helped me immensely to develop some of these skills empathy, linguistic analysis, and so on. I am also truly and constantly curious about other cultures. I've been doing this for 20 years, so I feel that I've tried to develop the skills that will help my students, so it's harder still to talk about weaknesses. I tend to be tangential in my thought processes, sometimes out of necessity for things that arise during our discussions. This can drive some students crazy. I also wish I were much more adept at learning other languages. It is not something that comes easily to me. I also feel that, if I had more money so that I could have more travel experience, it would help me as a teacher. I don't like giving grades for what is often not truly curricular learning, but is frequently a measure of a student's ability to learn a language. I don't think this is fair. I can generally explain this to the satisfaction of the parents, but some do want more graded work.

9. The researcher: Describe your ESL teaching experience? Good, or bad? Frustrating, or interesting? Why?

Mrs. Cook: Except for the few negatives I've mentioned earlier like other teachers who don't really understand what it's like to learn another language, there's been nothing but good to say. I've loved my experiences doing my job. As one student put it, "I'm in my happy place." It's true. I do get very frustrated when trying to explain the language acquisition process to a classroom teacher in an attempt to help him/her understand why the student can't perform at the level they expect and the distinct response I receive is that

I'm "making excuses" for the student, rather than explaining a valid reason for the inability to comprehend or perform at the expected level.

10. The researcher: What part of language arts you like to teach the best? Why?

Mrs. Cook: I love teaching writing. I also very much enjoy teaching figurative language and poetry I really think I can make it fun, which is evident by the poems my students produce after they initially groaned about studying poetry. I also like teaching reading, grammar, etymology, helping the students understand the connections between words, prefixes & suffixes, cognates & false cognates, and the general inexplicable craziness of English.

11. The researcher: What writing activities, strategies, and approaches do you use with your ESL students?

Mrs. Cook: I use a wide variety of techniques. We all use the writing process: Prewriting, First Draft, Revising Proofreading/Editing and a couple of times a year Publishing. We also teach using the 6-Traits method as part of instruction, as well as scoring. Some of our students who may struggle greatly with Conventions or Sentence Fluency may really shine through in their Voice. This gives them a chance to see how writing can be broken apart into different aspects and makes it easier for them to compartmentalize a certain aspect on which to work. I modify everything and give lots of examples, play games with them to help them different forms of Figurative Language similes, metaphors, idioms, onomatopoeia, etc, all of which are on the state reading assessment they must take, and incorporate a lot of what they need to learn in reading into their writing class. Since those 2

feed into/off of each other so well, I think it really helps. If they can write compare/contrast or sequencing paragraphs, they'll have a much easier time identifying them.

I also try to get them to understand that writing is like speaking; they just have to put in on paper. Also, I want them to gain an appreciation for the fact that they really are learning how to play with words to arrange them/use them in ways to excite the reader and try different ways to express themselves. Of course, everything I teach is presented with words written on the board, pictures, and examples which I usually require the students to copy; since it takes an average of 9 times USING a word to remember it, and since there is a connection between the writing of something and how well it's remembered, I make the kiddos write down a lot of information.

12. The researcher: Are there any favorite ones you usually use? Why?

Mrs. Cook: One of my favorites and I think I gave you a copy of this, but if I didn't let me know is to get them to try writing different beginnings and different endings for stories. First I have them write a story. Then, I give out the example list, which is printed on cardstock, folded and glued so that Beginnings are one side & Endings are on the opposite side. Then, I explain and they take notes about what each one is. We also brainstorm other examples of each to give them more practice and heighten comprehension. Then I take a story beginning of my own and use each one of the new beginning forms they have to demonstrate how I could start MY story with a different style of beginning. The cards give good examples, but they are all beginnings/endings for different stories; I think it's more effective if they see how the beginning can be different for the same story. They are then required to pick 3 different styles of beginnings and rewrite the beginning of their story

using those 3 different styles. There are 11 styles of beginnings and 6 styles of endings. It's truly amazing what they're able to do when they start experimenting. Some of the ones they come up with are incredible, and show them that they are capable of developing some very good writing skills even though they're ESL students, which sometimes makes them feel inadequate as writers. In a similar vein, I like to have them try their hand at writing different types of figurative language. While we don't try to develop our own idioms, some of the student-developed examples of similes, personification, and alliteration are great. Last year, someone wrote "Timothy took his Toyota to Texas to buy tacos. This is then carried over into our poetry unit. One of the haikus (a form of Japanese poetry) from last year was

> "We can't eat that bread. 5 syllables
>
> It's not good enough for us. 7 syllables
>
> Let's eat something else." 5 syllables

The number of syllables is a strict requirement for the haiku. It was written by a Swedish boy in reference to white bread.

The researcher: What kinds of writing methods you find to be the best to be taught?

Mrs. Cook: I like to have the kids do lots of experimenting with their writing. I also like to have them pair up and write things together. Another of everyone's favorite activities is, after they've written a story, they exchange it with someone else. The other person has sticky notes and writes questions for the writer. The questions can be related to things that are not clearly explained, things that sound interesting that they'd like more information about, or anything they find confusing. Then the students must use the questions to rewrite/add to their original piece. I also teach them how to diagram sentences. While some

people question the value of this, my students seem to enjoy it a lot many of them come from countries where the English or other subjects they've studied were learned in a very analytical way. In diagramming sentences, they can see how the parts fit into the whole. I truly believe this makes them better writers. Since I start at a very basic level and build sequentially, even students who struggle with English a lot are able to experience success in this. I've seen a great improvement in their syntax after doing this. However, our time is so limited, that we often are unable to spend as much time on it as I feel would be helpful.

13. The researcher: How your ESL students respond to your writing activities?

Mrs. Cook: They don't particularly care to take notes, especially if they feel I've given them something with the information included, but they generally learn to appreciate how it helps them.

Other than that, they seem to enjoy the variety of activities and the chances to experiment with different with different approaches/styles. They truly seem to gain satisfaction from the process of learning that they can develop as writers, even when they have certain areas with which they struggle (like conventions, word choice due to limited vocabulary and sentence fluency.

14. The researcher: How do you encourage your ESL students to write?

Mrs. Cook: I try to make it as fun as possible, as well as having them write about things they know and/or care about. Our persuasive writing pieces are usually lots of fun, because they must pick something important to them. This really shows in how invested they are. We often start with a lot of brainstorming to develop ideas. When kids are really stuck, I'll have them tell me answers, and then explain that they need to just pretend they're telling

me again; use the same words, only this time write them on paper. Don't fret about spelling at first, just do your best to guess.

15. The researcher: Do you believe you should build a rapport with your ESL students? Why?

Mrs. Cook: I believe it is absolutely crucial to build a good rapport with my students. Even when they can't understand what I'm saying, they can tell if I care about them. If they don't feel comfortable, welcomed and appreciated, they won't be open to listening to my instruction. I use a lot of humor, especially in disciplinary situations. It's important for them to understand that it's not them I don't like; it's the behavior that's inappropriate and needs to change. I then take the first opportunity to give the student a chance to turn things around with me & have a fun, positive interaction. Also, if they know I care about them and am interested in them, their families, their activities outside of school, and their culture, it demonstrates that I truly respect them. This is the best way for me to gain their respect.

16. The researcher: In what ways you know your ESL students' home languages?

Mrs. Cook: I know what all of my students' home languages are. For example, my Burmese students speak Chin, which is a dialect spoken in their part of Burma They're cousins. He doesn't speak Burmese. This is one example that helps them understand that I am interested in and respect their cultures. I also make sure I know a lot what is going on in their countries both politically and otherwise at least as much as possible.

17. The researcher: How do you try to understand, communicate in, or speak with your ESL students?

Mrs. Cook: I speak a lot of Spanish, but am not fluent by any means. As you know, it takes a LONG time, a lot of practice, and an extended period living in a country where the other language is spoken to become fluent. It is obvious, though, that they appreciate my efforts. I also can say Hello and Goodbye in about 12 languages, and Thank you in about 7. I am always trying to expand my knowledge in this area, but am somewhat limited by my own abilities and time. I do make sure that I learn as much as I can about linguistic rules in my students' languages. For example, there are no articles in Chinese and Korean. This makes it even more difficult for those students to learn when and how to use articles in English. There are also no verb tenses in Chinese. The time something occurred is conveyed by the context of the remainder of the sentence. Chinese uses characters, each conveying its own meaning. The Korean language has an alphabet.

18. The researcher: How do you know that a student is a good language learner?

Mrs. Cook: A lot of my ability to ascertain if a student is a good language learner comes from observation and working with the student. While we do give certain tests developed for the ESL population, the one currently in use the KELPA, developed thanks to the No Child Left Behind Law is probably the least effective one I've seen. There are many problems with it both with the questions and what they expect as responses, and the rubric with which it is scored.

19. The researcher: How do you evaluate your ESL writing performance? Give me an example?

Mrs. Cook: Personally, as a writing teacher, I evaluate their writing performance using the rubric that is normally used for scoring the 6-Traits model. I am also required to score their KELPA Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment with a rubric I consider significantly problematic.

20. The researcher: What are the most challenges you find in teaching ESL?

Mrs. Cook: In some semesters, my students are often not given the support they need to succeed, and I am not given adequate help in my classroom to effectively teach the large group that I often must work with. You have seen me in a writing group, which is of manageable size as long as I have Beth there to help me. For many years, I have had no help. Also, my groups are frequently considerably larger than what is considered optimal for English Language Learners. My last group of the day, which also has Beth in here to help, includes 10 6th graders and 10 5th graders. Not only do they barely fit in the room, but they're studying different curriculum. It is extremely difficult to keep them focused in this kind of environment and difficult for them to learn as much as they are capable of with so many distractions.

21. The researcher: What is your educational philosophy?

Mrs. Cook: I sort of feel that in my other answers, you've gained quite an insight into my educational philosophy. I believe it's of vital importance for the students to be happy and have a good rapport with the teacher. They must know the teacher cares about them and their lives, as well as their learning. They must also know that the teacher has high

expectations and believes all of them are capable of learning whatever information is presented to them, if presented in a way that makes it comprehensible.

Only when it's obvious that a student has not been paying attention repeatedly or has been goofing off repeatedly, do I blame the student for the lack of learning It is so easy for a student to become distracted, which can occur frequently, especially when they first start working in my classroom. When I don't understand what someone is saying in Spanish, or it's very difficult and I have to concentrate very hard to follow their Spanish conversation, it doesn't take long at all for me to get frustrated and bored and start thinking of other things. Most of my students can learn difficult concepts when presented appropriately to them. If my students don't understand something, even when presented with pictures, actions and simple words, I just try to find another way to explain it or another example to illuminate it. That's my job and I really do love it It's a constant challenge, and with new students every year, and also with the students changing constantly and watching their progress or trying to find a way to help them progress, it never gets boring.

Appendix L

Coding of Mrs. Cook's Interview

Coding of Mrs. Cook's Interview

QUESTION	CATEGORIES Responses to the question were sorted into:
1. Tell me about your self, your name, your education, your country, etc.	Certification (C) Year of teaching ESL (YE) Subjects being taught (S) Grades being taught (G)
2. Why did you decide to become a teacher?	Loving teaching (LT) Learning is fun (LF)
3. What subjects have you taught?	Writing (W), reading (R), social studies (SS) and science (S).
4. When did you start teaching English?	Fall of 1987 as a paraprofessional ½-time Fall of 1990 as a full time teacher
5. When did you become an ESL teacher? Why?	Love for teaching (LT) Love for other languages (LOL) Love other cultures (LOC) Change students feeling about each other (CSF)
6. How did you find teaching ESL students?	Interesting (I) Fun (F)
7. Did you face any problems teaching ESL students?	No problems teaching ESL students (NP)
8. What are your strengths and weaknesses as an ESL teacher?	Strengths: Empathetic (E) Analytical (A) Linguistic (L) Love other cultures (LOC) Weaknesses: Frustrated to explain the language acquisition process to other teachers to help them understand ESL students' performance levels (F)
9. Describe your ESL teaching experience? Good, or bad? Frustrating, or interesting? Why?	Good experience (G) Love teaching (LT) Frustrated to explain the language acquisition process to other teachers to help them understand ESL students' performance levels (F)
10. What part of language arts you like to teach the best	Teaching writing (TW) Teaching figurative language (TFL) Teaching poetry (TP)
11. What writing activities, strategies, and approaches do you use with your ESL students?	writing process (WP) Six-Traits method (STM) Giving examples (GE)

	Playing games (PG)
12. Are there any favorite ones you usually use? Why?	writing different beginnings and different endings for stories (DBDE) Developing writing skills (DWS)
13. What kinds of writing methods do you find to be the best instructional practices?	Peer conference (PC)
14.How your ESL students respond to your writing activities?	Enjoy the variety of activities (E) Gain satisfaction (GS)
15. How do you encourage your ESL students to write?	Giving them chances to choose topics they like (C) No spelling worries (NS) Jot down ideas (JD)
16. Do you believe you should build a rapport with your ESL students? Why?	Good rapport (GR) Students must feel comfortable, welcomed and appreciated (S emotions)
17. In what ways you know your ESL students' home languages?	Classroom conversations (CC)
18. How do you try to understand, communicate in, or speak with your ESL students?	Speak Spanish (SS) Speaking some words from other languages (SW)
19. How do you know that a student is a good language learner?	Observation (O) Tests (T)
20. How do you evaluate your ESL writing performance? Give me an example?	Six trait model (STM) Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment KELPA
21. What are the most challenges you find in teaching ESL?	No support for ESL students (NS) Large groups (LG)
22. What is your educational philosophy?	Happy students (HS) Good rapport (GR) Giving examples (GE)

Appendix M

Transcript of Naseema's Interview

Naseema's Interview Transcript

Initial Interview

The researcher: what's your name?
Naseema: Naseema Mohammad

The researcher: How old are you?
Naseema: I am ten years old.

The researcher: Where are you from?
Naseema: Saudi Arabia.

The researcher: How long you lived in the U.S.?
Naseema: For five years.

The researcher: Do you like English?
Naseema: Yes.

The researcher: Do you like to write in English? Why?
Yes I like to write at school because my friends helping me a lot with my writing. I like it when my friends help me.

The researcher Do you like to write in Arabic? Why?
No, it's like really hard I have not really learned it a lot …
Yes …like a teacher...she's a friend of my mom… she comes and teaches us …me and my sisters at home at my house…I can write some words and sentences in Arabic …but it's easier for me to write in English. sometimes there are a lot of parts…like if you can read in Arabic…it's like lots of parts…and like you got confused if this is with this or this like separate.

The researcher: Did you learn English back home?
 No.

The researcher: Thank you Naseema for this interview
Naseema: Thank you.

Follow up interview

The researcher: How did you feel about the writing class?
Naseema: I love writing class.

The researcher: When you have difficulties, do you ask your teacher to help you?
Naseema: Yes, I do.

The researcher: How did your teacher help you when you needed help?
Naseema: She would help me to organize my ideas, she would give me suggestions and never critique me

The researcher: What steps/stages do you use when you write?
There are many stages…umm like first we do brainstorming with the whole class, the teacher would ask questions and we answer these questions…and then we write… I write my first draft and make revision with a friend or my teacher…and then I write my final draft.

The researcher: Do you write first draft? if yes, how many times?
Naseema: Yes. One time.

The researcher: Do you revise and edit your first draft? if yes, how many times, and in what ways?
Naseema: Yes. One time…I do this with my friends or with the teacher.

The researcher: In what way does your teacher teach you how to write?
Naseema: She teaches us how to start a story for example by asking a question or so…and she teaches us how to write five paragraphs, first introduction and then three paragraphs with details and then the conclusion.

The researcher: Is writing fun? Why?
Naseema: Yes it's fun…because writing helps me learn more.

The researcher: How do you feel about writing in English?
Naseema: It's easier for me to write in English than Arabic.

The researcher: Do you feel comfortable when you writing English? if yes, why?
Naseema: Yes, because I know how to write and I understand how I put the English words together..i mean I know what goes with what…like the nouns and the verbs..like this.

The researcher: Do you like the writing activities your teacher practice? If yes, why?
Naseema: Yes, I like writing activities because it's fun when you work with groups…we talk with each other and share our stories and ask questions about our drafts if we don't understand some difficult words or sentences…I think it helps a lot.

Appendix N

Coding of Naseema's Interview

Coding of Naseema's Interview

QUESTION	CATEGORIES Responses to the question were sorted into:
1. What is your name?	Naseema
2. How old you are?	Ten years old
3. Where are you from?	Saudi Arabia
4. How long you lived n the US	Five years
5. Do you like English?	Yes
6. Do you like to write in English? Why?	Yes Friends help (Fr. H)
7. Do you like to write in Arabic? Why?	No It's difficult (D)
8. Did you write in English before you came to the US?	No
9. Did you learn English back home?	__
10. Who taught you English back home?	__
11. How did the teacher teach you English?	__
12. What activities did she/he use to teach you English?	__
13. Did you write in your English class when you where back home? If yes, what did you write? Who chose the topic? Do you write first draft? Do you edit your writing? did the teacher teach you how to write? Did the teacher correct your writing? How?	__

Follow-up interview questions:

1. How did you feel about the writing class?	Love writing class (LW)
2. When you have difficulties, do you ask your teacher to help you?	Yes
3. How did your teacher help you when you needed help?	Organizing ideas (OI) Giving suggestions (GS)
4. What steps/stages do you use when you write?	Writing process stages (WPS)
5. Do you write first draft? if yes, how many times?	One time
6. Do you edit and revise your first draft? If yes, how many times, and in what ways.	One time, peer conference, teacher conference. (PC) (TC)
7. In what way does your teacher teach you how to write?	Asking questions (AQ) Organization (O)
8. Is writing fun? Why?	It's fun (F)

	Help to learn (HL)
9. How do you feel about writing in English?	It's easy (E)
10. Do you feel comfortable when you write in English? If yes, why?	Yes Knowing the language structure (LS)
11. Do you like the writing activities your teacher practice? If yes, why?	Yes Team work (TW) Sharing stories (SS)

Appendix O

Six Traits Writing Rubric

Six Traits Writing Rubric

	6 Exemplary	5 Strong	4 Proficient	3 Developing	2 Emerging	1 Beginning
Ideas & Content *main theme* *supporting details*	• Exceptionally clear, focused, engaging with relevant, strong supporting detail	• Clear, focused, interesting ideas with appropriate detail	• Evident main idea with some support which may be general or limited	• Main idea may be cloudy because supporting detail is too general or even off-topic	• Purpose and main idea may be unclear and cluttered by irrelevant detail	• Lacks central idea; development is minimal or non-existent
Organization *structure* *introduction* *conclusion*	• Effectively organized in logical and creative manner • Creative and engaging intro and conclusion	• Strong order and structure • Inviting intro and satisfying closure	• Organization is appropriate, but conventional • Attempt at introduction and conclusion	• Attempts at organization; may be a "list" of events • Beginning and ending not developed	• Lack of structure; disorganized and hard to follow • Missing or weak intro and conclusion	• Lack of coherence; confusing • No identifiable introduction or conclusion
Voice *personality* *sense of audience*	• Expressive, engaging, sincere • Strong sense of audience • Shows emotion: humour, honesty, suspense or life	• Appropriate to audience and purpose • Writer behind the words comes through	• Evident commitment to topic • Inconsistent or dull personality	• Voice may be inappropriate or non-existent • Writing may seem mechanical	• Writing tends to be flat or stiff • Little or no hint of writer behind words	• Writing is lifeless • No hint of the writer
Word Choice *precision* *effectiveness* *imagery*	• Precise, carefully chosen • Strong, fresh, vivid images	• Descriptive, broad range of words • Word choice energizes writing	• Language is functional and appropriate • Descriptions may be overdone at times	• Words may be correct but mundane • No attempt at deliberate choice	• Monotonous, often repetitious, sometimes inappropriate	• Limited range of words • Some vocabulary misused
Sentence Fluency *rhythm, flow* *variety*	• High degree of craftsmanship • Effective variation in sentence patterns	• Easy flow and rhythm • Good variety in length and structure	• Generally in control • Lack variety in length and structure	• Some awkward constructions • Many similar patterns and beginnings	• Often choppy • Monotonous sentence patterns • Frequent run-on sentences	• Difficult to follow or read aloud • Disjointed, confusing, rambling
Conventions *age appropriate, spelling, caps, punctuation, grammar*	• Exceptionally strong control of standard conventions of writing	• Strong control of conventions; errors are few and minor	• Control of most writing conventions; occasional errors with high risks	• Limited control of conventions; frequent errors do not interfere with understanding	• Frequent significant errors may impede readability	• Numerous errors distract the reader and make the text difficult to read

Adapted for Regina Public Schools from Vicki Spandel, Creating Writers.Regina,

SK Canada

Appendix P

Nasser's Writing Sample

Nasser's Writing Sample

A new family member

2007

After a long day at School, I came home to an empty house! So I called my dad and he said he was at the hospital. Why are you at the hospital?" I asked, he told me my mom was having a baby. And he'd be right home to get me.

When we finally got to the hospital, my mom was in her room. I was so anxious to see her. I asked my mom what the baby's name was. She annouced it was sham. When I went home my mom didn't come with becaused she had to stay at the hospital.

The next day I went to the hospital. After two days in the hospital, My mom finally came home. She wasn't alone though. I was so anxious to hold her and play with her.

It seemed like She was growing bigger and bigger everyday. Now that she is 6 and ½ months old She is getting ready to crawl. I wonder what she'll be like when she is older.

Appendix Q

Naseema's Writing Sample

Naseema's Writing Sample
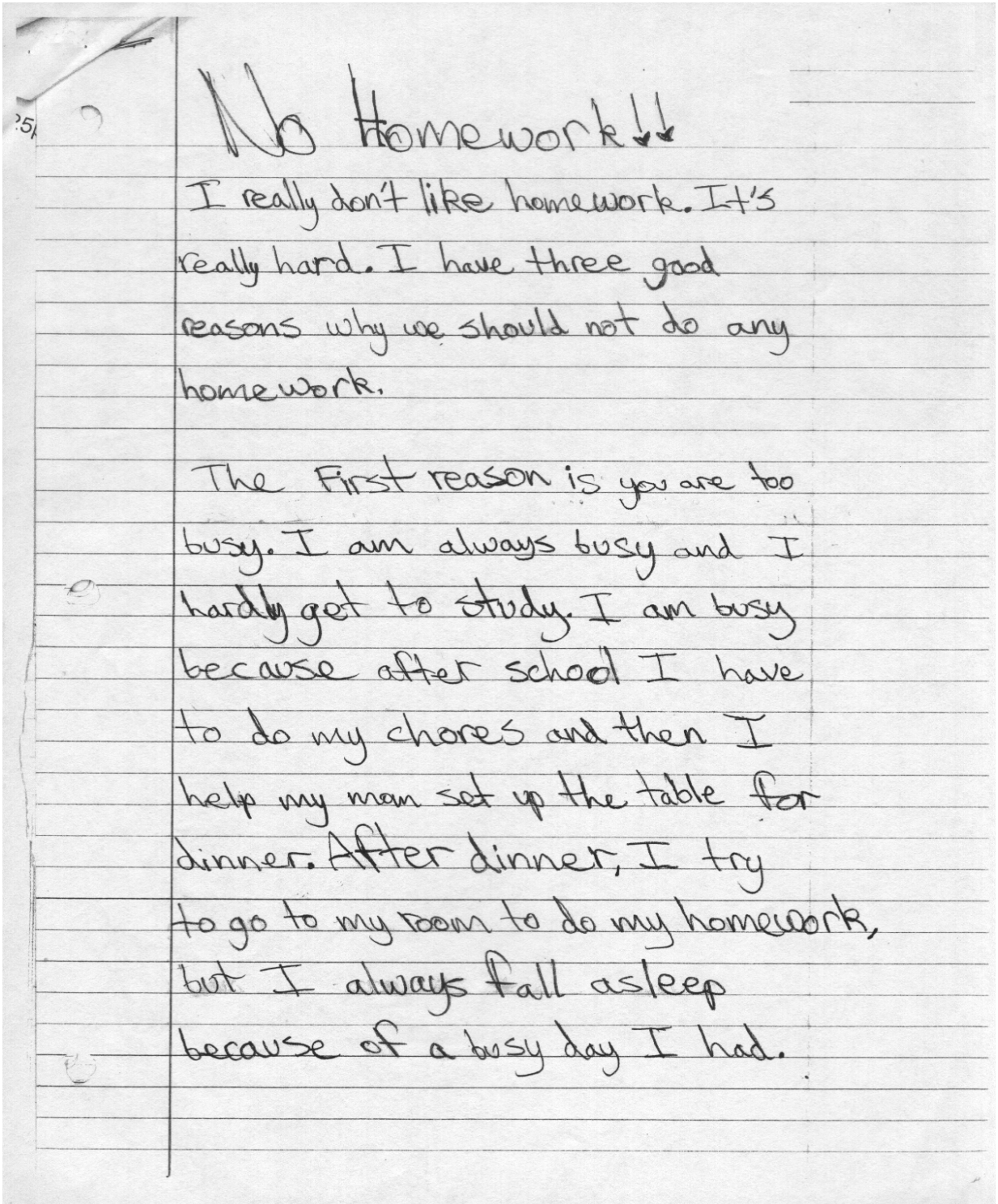
No Homework!!

I really don't like homework. It's really hard. I have three good reasons why we should not do any homework.

The first reason is you are too busy. I am always busy and I hardly get to study. I am busy because after school I have to do my chores and then I help my mom set up the table for dinner. After dinner, I try to go to my room to do my homework, but I always fall asleep because of a busy day I had.

Another reason is excuses.
Sometimes kids are telling the
truth but the truth sounds like
a lie. For example, lets say
someone did not do their
homework so they tell the teacher
that their dog ate it, but the
teacher ~~did~~ does not believe him/
her. So that's what I mean by
excuses. The teachers don't
believe ~~it~~ them.

My last reason is your mind is
somewhere else, I mean
what's the point of studying
and homework when your mind

is thinking of a diffrent
thing? Like if you are thinking
of tomorrow or yesterday or
even what you are going to do
right now!

You understand what I am
saying? Sometimes you are
too busy or sometimes your
mind is somewhere else, and
the teachers don't believe
in excuses. So what's the
point?

Appendix R

Noof's Writing Sample

Noof's Writing Sample

I dreamed of my grama. She was blind then I dreamed That Somebody killed her. My dad and mom and i were crying in my dream. Then I woke up crying. And then i went to sleep with my mom. When my mom woke up we went to the mosque. Then my uncle in my county called my dad. Then he Said that my grama had died because She was getting old. My mom dad and I were crying agian. I remembered when i walked her to the bathroom. She died because She was old. She died about 3 years ago.

Appendix S

Najah's Writing Sample

Najah's Writing Sample

The Dragon Dream

HAVE you ever seen dragons?
I dreamt that I was in school. I saw
in my Classroom the dragon were
eleven years old, they were Playing tag
I was screaming when I saw the dragons
Playing tag, then when they saw me,
They Screamed and ran away.

Appendix T

Nadia's Writing Sample

Nadia's Writing Sample

Sumer time

to day is the first day for sumer. the family wint to have som picnic becus to day is The first day for sumer.

Thy are 5 f PeoPle in the family they have 3 chibrins 2 Pous and 1 grow.

They have evre thing they wint