academicJournals

Vol. 4(3), pp. 60-68, May, 2013
DOI: 10.5897/IJEL12.120
ISSN 1996-0816 © 2013 Academic Journals
http://www.academicjournals.org/IJEL

International Journal of English and Literature

Review

Planning out pre-writing activities

Mogahed M. Mogahed

Faculty of Education, Mansoura University, Egypt.

Accepted 6 May, 2013

This article tackles a very important stage of the process of writing, namely pre-writing. This stage helps students find ideas and arrange them properly. A framework is suggested that divides the pre-writing stage into two sections: invention and arrangement. The former deals with coming up with ideas whether they are relevant to the topic of writing or not. The latter has to do with organizing the ideas in a meaningful way to write a well-developed composition. There are some activities accompanying each section. The article takes a closer look the previous studies that focused on mainly on the pre-writing stage. Pre-writing activities need much practice for students to be good at writing. Actually, mastering pre-writing facilitates the later stages of writing, such as drafting and revising, and encourages students to write more and more.

Key words: Writing, pre-writing, writing activities.

INTRODUCTION

Starting writing is a problem for many, especially young writers. Tompkins (2001) noted that the most neglected stage is the prewriting stage. Blackburn-Brockman (2001) adds that many pre-service teacher education students in a composition methods course confess they did not pre-write seriously in middle and high school, and that many did not pre-write at all. However, it is an important stage in the writing process frequently overlooked by beginning writers. Thorne (1993) argues that prewriting is the most important skill to emphasize and practice extensively in basic writing classes. She describes basic writers as almost universally neglecting prewriting activities. She suggests some guidelines for teaching prewriting effectively.

The term "pre-writing" has two different meanings. It can mean the stage before children learn writing, which is referred to as hand skills. The other meaning, which is the concern of this article, points to the first stage of the writing process, followed by drafting, revision, editing and publishing.

The learner gathers information and plays with ideas during the prewriting stage. Research shows that learners who are encouraged to engage in an array of prewriting experiences prove greater writing achievement than those enjoined to get to work on their writing without this kind of preparation (Cotton, 1997). Therefore, pre-writing centers on engaging learners in the writing process and helps them discover what is important or true for them about any subject at any time. What is certain is that if learners are to become proficient writers they must develop pre– drafting activities.

For many writers, the difficult part of the writing experience is the very beginning. Prewriting deserves much time and attention as it helps solve a problem called "writer's block". Kozma (1991) found that expert writers spend more time during prewriting than in-experienced writers. Learners might think that they cannot come up with an idea. They literally have a blank page and keep writing and erasing. They cannot even get started because they have no clue how to start.

It might be some comfort that even professional writers suffer from writer's block from time to time. Some of the

E-mail: mogahed72@windowslive.com.

greatest writers in literature — Leo Tolstoy, Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, Joseph Conrad and Ernest Hemingway — were tormented by momentary lapses in their ability to produce text (Capital Community College Foundation, 2006). Therefore, pre-writing activities, especially invention activities, helps writers deal with and overcome writer's block.

Ramet (2007) provided a useful checklist for getting started:

1. Do you read extensively?
2. Have you set aside a time to write each day?
3. Do you keep a notebook of ideas?
4. Do you have a good dictionary, thesaurus and access to reference material?
5. Have you considered how the use of computers impacts on your own writing ambitions?
6. Are you writing about what you know?

It should be noted that the pre-writing stage is rarely discussed in textbooks. Most writing textbooks tackle the writing process beginning with the drafting stage as the first stage of writing. On the other hand, the pre-writing stage is much discussed on various websites, such as (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/673/1/).

The following is a discussion of the previous related studies that were done specifically on the pre-writing stage.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Out of the importance of the pre-writing stage, numerous studies were done on it. These studies were conducted from different angles. Reviewing these studies uncover certain points concerning this stage. Bailey (1993) focused on using commonly taught prewriting techniques. Go (1994) argues that teachers of English as a Second Language can use prewriting activities at the earliest stages of instruction to help their students acquire good language skills. Harrington (1994) employed an author's storyboard technique which elementary school students used as a prewriting strategy to roughly sketch out stories on the storyboard frames. Winter (1996) examined student perceptions of the value of a prewriting problem-solving plan. Zhang and Vukelich (1998) explored pre-writing activities and gender. Brodney et al. (1999) studied the influence of prewriting treatments on the quality of written discourse. Huang (1999) and Smith (1999) investigated students' use of ideas provided by peers during prewriting discussions. Worden (2009) explored prewriting and revision in timed essay. Schweiker-Marra and Marra (2000) LaRoche (1993) investigated the effects of prewriting activities on psychological factors such as attitude and anxiety. Many studies manipulated technology in using pre-writing activities as it is flexible is this regard, for instance Kozma (1991), Huang (1999), Roberts (2002), Woolley (2002), and Lorenz et al. (2009)

Bailey (1993) did a study to examine use of prewriting techniques among 11 students of English as a Second Language, of varying language backgrounds, enrolled in a pre-freshman composition class. It investigated use of both prewriting strategies and invention techniques taught in class, looking at: (1) whether they would be used when not specifically required; (2) the relationship between the way a heuristic was taught and the way it was used; (3) variety and frequency of use; (4) relationship between native-language (L1) writing experience, second-language (L2) proficiency, and use of various techniques; and (5) how content generated by invention writing was incorporated into a draft. Data were gathered from students' pre-draft writing and first drafts of a total of 22 essays. Results indicate that ESL writers use various invention techniques productively, and that these were apparently unrelated to L1 writing experience or high L2 proficiency. However, L1 experience and L2 proficiency may have limited impact on specific use of the techniques. Subjects clearly preferred techniques that lend themselves to approximating and translating the inner dialogue of the composing process, and it appeared they instinctively adapted invention techniques to conform to the psychological reality of the composing process when the technique, as taught, varied from this.

LaRoche (1993) developed a practicum to address deficiencies in students' writing skills. The program goals were to assess the students' abilities to use prewriting strategies, to use supportive elements in writing, and to evaluate students' progress using pre- and post-attitude surveys and writing samples. The target group was 20 eighth-grade journalism students with mixed socio-economic backgrounds. During the 12-week implementation period, journalistic skills, geared towards producing an issue of the school newspaper, were the focal point of the students' writing efforts. Students worked individually and in small groups to complete activities which focused on writing skills at the prewriting stage. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the program included analyses of data, a comparison of the writing samples using the rubric designed by the Florida Writing Assessment program, and attitudinal surveys completed by the students. Results indicated improvements in writing skills achievement and attitudes.

Go (1994) argues that teachers of English as a Second Language can use prewriting activities at the earliest stages of instruction to help their students acquire good language skills. Prewriting involves energizing student participation in thinking, talking, group interaction, and skeletal writing activities that become components of a writing task. Prewriting activities not only help students acquire the target language more effectively, but they build interpersonal, thinking, and planning skills that can

be utilized in other fields.

Harrington (1994) describes an author's storyboard technique which elementary school students used as a prewriting strategy to roughly sketch out stories on the storyboard frames. She suggests that the technique helps students to plan and organize their stories and helps reluctant writers find the motivation to write.

Winter (1996) attempted to determine student perceptions of the value of using a prewriting problem-solving plan and its relationship to their success in writing. The business communication students in the study felt that the plan was beneficial, particularly for persuasive messages, individual writing, and small-group writing. In addition, participants seemed to feel that the plan was worth preparing even when not required as part of the assignment. The results suggest that the problem-solving plan can be a useful tool for complicated assignments and group work but that it should probably be optional for simple assignments.

Zhang and Vukelich (1998) explored the influences of prewriting activities on the writing quality of male and female students with varying academic achievement across four grade levels. Participants were public school students in grades 4, 6, 9, and 11. At each grade level, students were assigned to one of two groups: writing with prewriting activities or writing without prewriting activities. Teams of appropriate grade level teachers developed a pool of writing tasks, with one for each grade. The study was embedded into the 1996 Delaware large-scale writing assessment field test. Students in the prewriting group had a prewriting session in which they were encouraged to select a subject, collect information, list their ideas using a graphic organizer, prepare a first draft, and consult with peers for input. Researchers rated each student's writing piece holistically and on five quality aspects of writing. Results indicated that on average, students who wrote with prewriting activities performed better than students who wrote without prewriting activities in grades 4, 6, and 11. In grade 9, students who wrote without prewriting activities received higher scores. Students' gender and academic achievement level had strong influences on the effectiveness of prewriting, with females consistently scoring higher than males.

The influence of prewriting treatments on the quality of written discourse produced by fifth-grade students was the central focus of the study of Brodney et al. (1999). Students received one of four prewriting treatments: reading paired with prewriting, prewriting-only, reading-only, neither reading nor prewriting. Differences in the quality of the students' compositions were examined on the basis of scores obtained from a T-unit measure, a holistic rubric, and an analytic measure. The study included five classes of 5th-grade students randomly assigned to classes at the beginning of the school year. Four classes (n = 96) were randomly designated as treatment groups, and the fifth class (n = 24) served as a pilot group. A significant ($p < .001$) multivariate F-ratio indicated that type of prewriting treatment significantly affected scores on expository compositions. Reading paired with prewriting before composing was found to be the most effective prewriting instructional strategy.

Huang (1999) investigated the extent to which English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) writing students in a Taiwanese university used ideas provided by their peers during computer-mediated prewriting discussions, and the quality of the peers' comments. Subjects were 17 students in four writing groups. Transcripts of discussions preceding the first drafts of two writing assignments were analyzed, and students were then surveyed about the comments they incorporated into their writing processes. Results indicate that students did use some of the ideas discussed during computer-mediated prewriting discussions, but not very often. Some students did not use any of the ideas presented to them. Almost half of the ideas used were concerned with macro-level composition issues such as topic appropriateness or overall essay structure or content, and about one-fourth of the ideas concerned paragraph-level issues, suggesting that the quality of the comments was good. Activities or resources that students perceived as useful in idea generation included, in descending order of importance, textual information from the school library or students' homes, the students' own ideas, ideas from friends, textual information from the textbook and teacher handouts, and computer-mediated prewriting discussions. Instructional and research implications are considered briefly.

Smith (1999) argued that communicative language teaching (CLT) is compatible with cooperative learning as both promote interaction through peer exchange. Co-operative education can take group work one step further and should therefore be incorporated into English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) writing classrooms. In English writing classes in a Japanese junior college, formal and informal types of group work were employed. Students first wrote on a theme for a real purpose--an essay, letter, poster, or article--which is then shared with classmates. Second, the tasks followed recognized cooperative task strategies, such as three-step interview, think-pair-share, roundtable, blackboard share. Through cooperative learning (CL), the teacher carefully plans a theme-based task which takes group work one step further into inter-dependent learning, where each student is accountable for writing together with his or her peers. By encouraging students to pool knowledge and background resources, they think more critically and synthesize information to develop a more in-depth understanding of a particular topic, as well as the sharing process. To ensure effective group work, the teacher has to monitor groups carefully to keep the conversation in English and be sure that the group does not rely on any single dominant or more advanced student. Teachers who want to maximize cooperative EFL learning need to become well versed in

cooperative techniques, as well as language acquisition and group interaction.

Schweiker-Marra and Marra (2000) describe a program where at-risk fifth-grade students were treated to a writing program that utilized prewriting activities to see if their written expression and writing anxiety would improve. They compare students' before and after papers utilizing their holistic scores on written expression. They demonstrate that student writing anxiety can be lowered through a writing program that emphasizes prewriting activities.

Roberts (2002) pointed out that taking technological paths to prewriting can be a new, exciting, and needed innovation. An important rationale for using technology is that the real goal of prewriting, in many ways, is to rehearse or try out a great quantity of ideas. Later writing stages focus on the quality of ideas and the refinement and clarification of those, but poetry prewriting moves the writer forward in preparation for the first draft. This paper offers a strong rationale for the idea that the journey of writing good poetry begins on a path that infuses technology into the first stage of the writing process. This study reminds us that technology should be considered a tool because the quality of writing did not significantly increase, but students using word processors actually wrote more. Therefore, using technology for prewriting activities makes absolute sense because the goal is to create a bulk and range of ideas. No doubt, using technology as a tool during prewriting activities with poetry does abolish the fear of the blank page, because the once-paper page is transformed into a less linear, ever-changing blank or semi-blank screen. Prewriting activities can be done anywhere and anytime because much of what needs to happen in prewriting is pulling up and organizing ideas, as well as ruminating, rehearsing, and mulling over ideas. A student poet may do some of his or her best prewriting while walking to the parking lot or when bored in a school assembly. However, the guiding organizational features and the nonlinear aspects of technological applications make poetry prewriting efficient, productive, and exciting. Technological applications that use brainstorming software, databases and spreadsheet applications, presentation software, CD-ROM software, and the Internet show the variety of technological paths one may wander in the prewriting process. In conclusion, technology is indeed an appropriate and powerful partner in providing intermediate students with experience in poetry prewriting. Second, the process necessary for writing: good poetry can start with prewriting and be maintained through technological paths. Hence, both the quality and the quantity of poetry writing may be improved by integrating technology with the prewriting stage. Ultimately, neither computers nor flashy software can write poetry; however, taking a technological path can engage learners in an interactive and motivating manner that enhances poetry writing.

Woolley (2002) designed lessons that use the informational power of the Internet for a prewriting activity. Through various Internet sites, students gather information about the history and celebration practices associated with Veterans Day. Following the prewriting activity, students write content-rich poems that honor veterans. During the 45-min prewriting session, the 30 min of class discussion, and the three 30-min writing sessions, the grade 6 to 8 students will: effectively use their reading skills to identify main ideas and accurately record information from numerous resources; develop content-rich notes to use for a poetry writing assignment; and learn about the origins of holidays and cultural practices in the United States.

Lorenz et al. (2009) investigated the use of multimedia graphic organizer software and how it influenced the prewriting process for primary school children were evaluated. An analysis of writing samples generated by second-grade students with diverse writing abilities was carried out. Students were given two opportunities to participate in prewriting activities--one without and one with the use of multimedia graphic organizer software. The results indicated that the use of multimedia graphic organizer software can provide some benefits to writing for elementary school children.

Worden (2009) argued that it is widely assumed that the constraints of timed essay exams will make it virtually impossible for students to engage in the major hallmarks of the writing process, especially revision, in testing situations. This paper presents the results of a study conducted at Washington State University in the spring of 2008. The study examined the occurrence of prewriting and revision in 890 timed essay responses as well as the impact of writing process on student scores. It was found that both prewriting and revision occur more frequently in timed essays than was previously realized. While prewriting corresponded to higher scores, revision corresponded to lower scores. These results encourage composition scholars to reevaluate their assumptions about both the validity of timed writing exams and the efficacy of current practices in teaching the writing process.

Conclusions drawn from previous studies

Based on previous studies the following conclusions can be reached.

1. ESL writers use various invention techniques productively.
2. Learners prefer certain activities to others according to their learning style and the nature of the topic.
3. Prewriting strategies indicated improvements in writing skills achievement and attitudes.
4. Prewriting activities not only help students acquire the

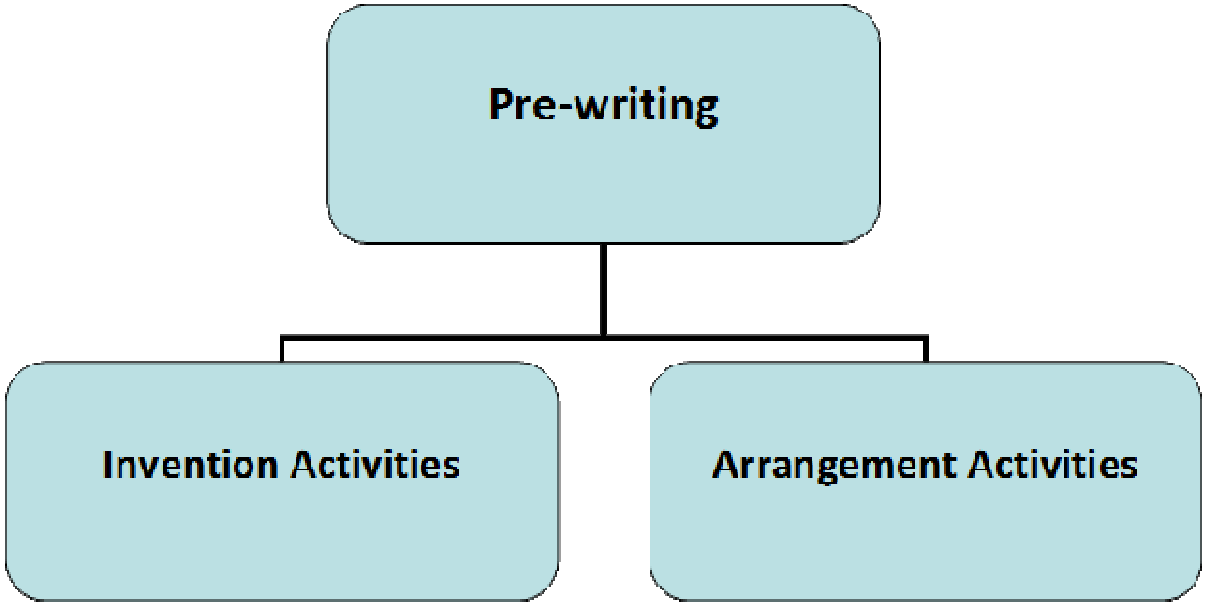

Figure 1. The suggested framework of the pre-writing stage.

target language more effectively, but they build inter-personal, thinking, and planning skills that can be utilized in other fields.
5. Prewriting activities help students to plan and organize their stories and help reluctant writers find the motivation to write.
6. Students felt that using a prewriting problem-solving plan was beneficial, particularly for persuasive messages.
7. Students' gender and academic achievement level had strong influences on the effectiveness of prewriting, with females consistently scoring higher than males.
8. Technology, particularly the computer and multimedia, provide a great venue for using pre-writing activities as it is highly flexible, motivating and interactive.

Still, a framework encompassing the pre-writing stage comprehensively is much needed. This framework divides this stage into two sections and each section has various activities for the writers to choose based on their learning styles and the nature of the topic of writing. Writers should have the freedom to choose among the different pre-writing activities.

Based on the previous theoretical background and previous studies, the following framework of pre-writing is suggested.

The suggested framework

Actually, prewriting could be divided into two steps: invention and arrangement. The former is concerned with activities that can be employed in order to come up with good ideas and gain inspiration. The learner should try different invention activities until he finds those that work best for him. He should be open to other options. Sometimes the learner may find the usual activities do not work for a particular piece of writing. Therefore, he should be ready to be flexible. The latter has to do with arranging those ideas that the learners came up with in the invention stage. Figure 1 shows the suggested framework.

Invention activities

There are several invention activities available to the beginning writers to choose what is suitable for them. Out of nonsense and ramblings, something good will come, some idea will catch fire right there on the page, there will be sparks, patterns will emerge. The following are some invention activities.

Brainstorming

Most problems are not solved automatically by the first idea that comes to mind. To get to the best solution it is important to consider many possible solutions. One of the best ways is brainstorming. Brainstorming is a useful way of getting started or generating new ideas. Once learners are familiar with the process, they can use this activity on their own when they are stuck, revising their work, or moving on to a new phase. Bobb-Wolff (1996) argues that brainstorming can be a useful and enriching tool in the EFL classroom and a means of showing learners that they are collectively capable of generating

more ideas to improve their learning process than they believed possible. This, in turn, leads to an increase in their autonomy of learning and self-responsibility. But most importantly, it improves the quality of learner participation and learner production in class.

Free writing

Obviously, free writing helps the writer gets in touch with the big picture without getting sidetracked with details. It is a non-linear activity, using the right side of the brain, which deals with concepts and abstractions. As soon as you begin to organize, edit and censor your ideas, you have moved over to the left side of the brain, where the linear thinking happens. That is where thoughts get blocked (Mouser, 2000). Additionally, Darling (2004) notes that many writing instructors use a free writing exercise at the beginning of each class as a way of getting the brain in gear. Free writing helps learners to understand that not all writing they do is equally good and not all writing must be kept. Writers must learn to discard. By the end of writing, they may have a different focus on the topic or even a completely new topic and keeping earlier words and phrases might ruin the final product. On the other hand, during free writing learners will often come up with ideas and phrases that lead them to an imaginative new direction. Because learners are not focusing on a product, they take risks in free writing without realizing it. This can result in the discovery of something new, perhaps a new idea, skill, or insight (Saskatchewan Education, 1997).

Listing

Listing is prewriting activity writers find useful. It means doing just what its name suggests: listing possible topics and then sublists of things the writer could say about each topic. To illustrate, Sloane (2004) points out that a list could consist of the main topic of regional dialects and then sublists would be regional dialects you know or have experienced. Additional sublists might be particular words of each of those dialects, things you have noticed about those dialects (that is New Yorkers speak fast), what you think those dialects sound like. Scholes (1989) adds that writers may use listing to jot down quickly all ideas they can think of on a particular topic. Later, the writer may group related ideas and write summary statements. The writer may also use items from lists and summary statements as prompts to explore new ideas.

Questioning

The most familiar way of coming up with a topic is to ask questions. Journalism refers to very simple questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Answering these questions initially does not seem very hard. However, it is precisely when the writer has difficulty answering a "why" that a real paper is beginning. Learners focus upon audience as they consider what the reader needs to know. The answers to these questions will form the basis of the composition. Thus, the journalists' questions are a powerful way to develop a great deal of information about a topic very quickly. Learning to ask the appropriate questions about a topic takes practice, however. In addition, Gorrell (1996) makes a case for students' using a focused, carefully phrased question as the basis for prewriting and writing, as opposed to a thesis sentence which can more easily lead them astray.

Clustering

Clustering is an activity developed and named by Rico (1983) for accessing that state of consciousness often called the right side of the brain in which we pattern, design, connect and deal in complex images. Rico defines clustering as "a generative, open-ended, non-linear, visual structuring of ideas, events, feelings. It is a way of mapping an interior landscape as it begins to emerge". Further, according to Tomlinson (1998) clustering is a pre-writing activity in which the writer free-associates strings of ideas around a central word or idea. It is a way of tricking the left brain into silence and using the right brain to come up with unique overview of a subject. Scholes (1989) adds that clustering, or grouping ideas is a good way for writers who think spatially. In addition to illustration using circles and lines, writers can also construct clusters with either tree diagrams or balloons and strings.

Interviewing

Interviewing means talking with people who know something about a certain topic. Learners take on the role of an interviewer as they interview. This experience helps them learn to analyze people and events accurately. The teacher may choose to model and demonstrate the interview process by "talking aloud" a simulated interview. Consequently, learners as interviewers need to begin thinking of questions to ask (Wood and Fisher, 2001).

Looping

Looping is a free writing activity that allows the writer to focus his ideas in trying to discover a writing topic. The

writer loops one 5-10 min free writing after another, so he/she has a sequence of free writings, each more specific than the other. The same rules that apply to free writing apply to looping: write quickly, do not edit and do not stop. Looping goes like this: free write on an assignment for 5-10 min. Then, read through your free writing, looking for interesting topics, ideas, phrases, or sentences. Circle those you find interesting. A variation on looping is to have a classmate circle ideas in your free writing that interests him or her. Then free write again for 5-10 min on one of the circled topics. You should end up with a more specific free writing about a particular topic. Loop your free writing again, circling another interesting topic, idea, phrase, or sentence. When you have finished four or five rounds of looping, you will begin to have specific information that indicates what you are thinking about a particular topic (UKWC, 2004).

Arrangement activities

At this point, the writer needs to consider the organization of content. Arrangements activities build on invention activities developed earlier. Once the writer put forward some ideas during an invention activity, he/she moves to arranging them in certain manner acceding to the nature of the topic. One of the most widely used ways of arranging ideas is graphic organizers.

Graphic organizers

Visual thinking can be expressed in many ways. Graphic organizers are many ways for visual thinkers to arrange ideas. There are unlimited ways to express these visual ideas. Actually, graphic organizers have many names including visual maps, mind mapping, and visual organizers. Graphic organizers can be used in all phases of learning from brainstorming ideas to presenting findings. They can be used individually or in large groups. A study by Robinson and Kiewra (1995) shows that two experiments involving 153 college learners indicated that, given enough time, learners studying graphic organizers learned more hierarchical and coordinate relations. As a result, they were more successful in applying the knowledge and in writing integrated essays than were learners studying outlines or text alone.

Graphic organizers can be used in various forms at the teacher's or learner's disposition including charts, tables, webs, venn diagrams and flow charts. Hence, the form of the graphic organizer is chosen according to the nature of the topic the learner is going to write on. Here are the most common examples.

Spider map: Is used to describe a central idea: a thing (a geographic region), a process (meiosis) or a concept (altruism). This activity uses such key questions: What is the central idea? What are its attributes? What are its functions? (NCREL, 2000).

Series of events chain: Is used to describe the stages of something (the life cycle of an animal); the steps in a linear procedure (how to neutralize an acid); or a sequence of events (how feudalism led to the formation of nation states). Key questions include: What is the object, procedure, or initiating event? What are the stages or steps? How do they lead to one another? What is the final outcome? (NCREL, 2000).

Fishbone map: Is used to show the causal interaction of a complex event (an election, a nuclear explosion) or complex phenomenon (juvenile delinquency, learning disabilities). Key questions consist of: What are the factors that cause X ? How do they interrelate? Are the factors that cause X the same as those that cause X to persist? (NCREL, 2000).

Charts: Good for writing directions of how to do something, or for keeping a lot of different ideas in categories (The Oracle Education Foundation, 2003).

Story maps: Good for retelling books, plays or stories (The Oracle Education Foundation, 2003).

Cause and effect diagrams: Good for explaining how something happened (The Oracle Education Foundation, 2003).

Timelines: Good for telling the order of how things happen in time (The Oracle Education Foundation, 2003).

Webbing: This activity provides learners with a visual picture of how words or phrases connect to a concept or a topic. The teacher lists the target topic and builds a web-like structure of words, phrases and verbs that learners offer as being connected with the central topic. Class discussion may follow to argue against or to defend the perceived relationships of the called out words to the topic and eventually a consensus is reached as to what the class believes constitutes a "web" for that concept. Web-centered activities encourage learners to make the bridge from the abstract to the concrete. The use of webbing also provides opportunities for the visual learner to recall the connections for later use (Bada, 1996).

Concept mapping: It is a graphic organizer activity that shows the relationships among concepts. Usually the concepts are circled and the relationships are shown by connecting lines with short explanations. To use this activity, the teacher selects a main idea to be focused on during the discussion. The teacher assists the learners in identifying a set of concepts that are associated with the

main idea. Related concepts are then connected and the links labeled with verbs or short phrases. The main difference between the concept mapping activity and webbing is that in this activity concepts are ranked in related groups from most general to most specific, whereas in webbing the concepts are not ranked, but only linked. As in webbing, this activity assists learners in visualizing how ideas are connected and how knowledge can be organized (Bada, 1996).

Flowcharts: This activity assists learners in representing position, role and order relationships among group elements. Learners draw a representation of a sequential flow of events, actions, character roles or decisions. Flowcharts foster logical and sequential cognitive development and help the learner to focus on connections, relationships and interdependence of things and events. It can also direct the learner to flesh out details and specific points of reference; it hones learner organizational skills, aids in planning and can be used for writing outlines (Bada, 1996).

Venn diagrams: They can be used to create a visual analysis of information that represents similarities and differences among concepts, peoples and things. This organizer is constructed by using two or more over-lapping geometrical figures (i.e. circles, squares, rectangles) that share an area in common. This style of visual organizer helps learners manage their ideas and plan out a writing assignment. The use of Venn diagrams with learners is specially beneficial, since it offers an alternative non-verbal form to process complex information and at the same time moves the learners' minds to higher cognitive levels (Bada, 1996).

Conclusion

Therefore, it is vital for learners to plan out prewriting correctly, whether invention activities or arrangement activities within the proposed framework. In such a way, prewriting would become a key stage in the writing process. Besides, learners should try more than one activity until they know what works well for them. It goes without saying that writing instructors should be fully aware all these activities and how to teach them. There is a need for the suggested framework as beginning writers usually mix the invention section for generating ideas with the arrangement section for organizing these ideas.

REFERENCES

Bada A (1996). Language Arts through ESOL: A Guide for ESOL Teachers and Administrators. Florida Department of Education, Office of Multicultural Student Language Education. Online available at: http://www.fldoe.org.

Bailey L (1993). Inventing writing: How ESL writers use commonly taught prewriting techniques. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. 27th, Atlanta, GA, April 13-17.

Blackburn-Brockman E (2001). Prewriting, Planning, and Professional Communication. English J. 91(2):51-53.

Bobb-Wolff L (1996). Brainstorming to Autonomy. Forum 34(3).

Brodney B, Reeves C, Kazelskis R (1999). Selected prewriting treatments: Effects on expository compositions written by fifth-grade students. J. Exp. Educ. 68(1):5-20.

Capital Community College Foundation (2006). Overcoming Writer's Block. Retrieved from: http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/ grammar/ composition/brainstorm_block.htm.

Cotton K (1997). Teaching Composition. Research on Effective Practices. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon, USA.

Darling C (2004). Guide to Grammar and Writing. Hartford, Connecticut

Go AS (1994). Prewriting activities: Focus on the process of writing. Eric, ED369257.

Gorrell D (1996). Central question for prewriting and revising. Teaching English in the Two-Year College 23(1):34-38.

Harrington SL (1994). An author's storyboard technique as a prewriting strategy. Read. Teach. 48(3):283-85.

Huang S (1999). EFL students' use of ideas provided by peers during prewriting discussions conducted on networked computers. Eric, ED428563.

Kozma RB (1991). Computer-based writing tools and the cognitive needs of novice writers. Comput. Compos. 8(2):31-45.

LaRoche KM (1993). A focus on using prewriting and knowledge level strategies and skills to improve the attitudes and writing skills of middle school students. Eric, ED366974.

Lorenz B, Green T, Brown A (2009). Using multimedia graphic organizer software in the prewriting activities of primary school students: What are the benefits? Comput. Sch. 26(2):115-129.

Mouser S (2002). Style Guide. Alexander Communications.

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) (2000). Process Writing. East Diehl Road, Suite 200, Naperville, Illinois.

Oracle Education Foundation (2003). Process Writing. Online available at: http: www.thinkquest.org.

Rico G (1983). Writing the Natural Way. Los Angeles: JP. Tracher, Inc. Online available at, http://www:volcan.und.edu/vwdocu/vwdocs /msh/llc/is html.

Roberts SK (2002). Taking a technological path to poetry prewriting. Read. Teach. 55(7):678-87.

Robinson D, Kiewra K (1995). Visual Argument: Graphic Organizers are Superior to Outlines in Improving Learning from Text. J. Educ. Psychol. 87(3):455-67.

Saskatchewan Education (1997). English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Secondary Level. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Education. Online available at: http://www.sasked.gov.skca/

Scholes R, Comely N (1989). The Practice of Writing, 3rd Ed. New York: St. Martin's.

Schweiker-Marra K, Marra W (2000). Investigating the effects of prewriting activities on writing performance and anxiety of at-risk students. Read. Psychol. 21(2):99-114.

Sloane S (2004). Brainstorming and Listing Exercise Student Instructions. Colorado State University.

Smith AF (1999). Generating ideas cooperatively in writing class: Prewriting activities for junior college students. Eric, ED437850.

Thorne S (1993). Prewriting: A basic skill for basic writers. Teaching English in the Two-Year College 20(1):31-36.

Tomlinson S (1998). English on the Internet. Online available at: http://www.delmar.edu.

Tompkins GE (2001). Literacy for the 21st century: A balanced approach. Columbus, OH: Merrill Prentice Hall.

University of Kansas Writing Center (UKWC) (2004). Prewriting Strategies. Online available at: www.writing.ku.edu/.

Winter JK (1996). Student perceptions of the value of a prewriting problem-solving plan. Bus. Commun. Quart. 59(4):47-55.

Woolley J (2002). Honoring our veterans through poetry prewriting. Eric,

ED480630.
Wood K, Fisher C (2001). Building Assets in the Classroom through Creative Response. National Middle School Association, USA.
Worden DL (2009). Finding process in product: Prewriting and revision in timed essay responses. Assessing Writing 14(3):157-177.
Zhang L, Vukelich C (1998). Prewriting activities and gender: Influences on the writing quality of male and female students. Eric, ED422297.