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**The Effect of Brainstorming Strategy on Developing the  
Students' Writing Performance.**

**The Case of Third Year Students at Bouhrin Cherif and Laabani Ahmed  
Secondary Schools in Jijel.**

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### ***Dedication***

*In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate.*

*I dedicate this work:*

*To my beloved **father**; my first teacher who taught me to always have faith in God  
in hard times,*

*to my dear **mother** whose prayers and love helped me to reach my goals.*

*May **ALLAH** bless and protect them,*

*to my brother **Omar**. I wish him all the best,*

*to my fiancé, **Samir** who stood by my side all the way, and pushed me  
towards success,*

*to my lovely sisters **Mouna** and **Rima** who stood by my side in every moment in  
my life and supported me to become who I am now,*

*to my lovely nephews **Abd Raof** and **Mohamed Lakhdar** who always kept the  
smile on my face, and to my cute niece **Malak**, the little angel of the family  
and to all those who love me.*

**Wafa**

### ***Dedication***

*In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.*

*I dedicate this work to:*

*To the light of my eyes, my beloved parents, for their encouragement, sacrifices, prayers,  
financial support and endless love,*

*to my sisters: **Loubna, Sarah and Aya,***

*to all my friends with whom I shared the university life with its lights and shadows,*

*to all my teachers and*

*to all those who love me.*

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### **Abstract**

This study aims at investigating the effect of brainstorming strategy on developing the students' writing performance. It also seeks to unveil the way teachers use this strategy during the writing sessions and how their use will help students to develop their writing skills and sustain their motivation to write. In the study it is hypothesized that if brainstorming strategy is used effectively, students will develop their writing performance. To reach the underlined objectives, two tools of research were adopted: 1) A questionnaire administered to 40 teachers from different secondary schools of Jijel and 2) classroom observation conducted in third year classes at Laabani Ahmed and Bouhrin Cherif secondary schools from April 21<sup>st</sup> to April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (a total of six sessions). Based on the analysis of both teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation, it can be deduced that brainstorming strategy plays a vital role in enhancing the students' writing performance if used effectively by teachers. Some pedagogical recommendations are highlighted on the basis of the obtained results.

## **List of Symbols and Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**L2:** Second Language

**WH questions:** Who, What, Where, When and Why

**n:** Number

**Q:** Question

**T:** Teacher

**Ss:** Students

**/:** Or

**%:** Percentage

**&:** And

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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

There are four language skills that are classified into two main categories; the productive skills (speaking and writing) and the receptive skills (reading and listening). Listening and speaking are naturally acquired, whereas, reading and writing must be learned at school. Writing has always been regarded as an important skill in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. It stimulates thinking, compels students to concentrate and organize their ideas and cultivates their ability to summarize and criticize.

Nevertheless, students find composing in English difficult and challenging because the writing process with all its stages demands that they utilize many cognitive and linguistic strategies of which students are uncertain. In this respect, Nunan (1999, 271) argued that “producing coherent discourse is an effort for many English mother tongue speakers...for second [or foreign] language learners the challenges are innumerable”. In schools, even though teachers teach their students the different steps of writing (prewriting, planning, drafting, revising and editing), they find that students still face problems in writing, such as limited knowledge of writing strategies, grammatical structure, and low interest in writing. Hence, it is the teacher’s role to act as a guide and facilitator in order to help students to develop more effective writing strategies. According to Silva (1993, p. 658), those strategies are “finding the topics, generating ideas and information, focusing and planning structure and procedure”.

Back and forth the literature, brainstorming strategy is considered as an important part of the writing process, in general and the pre-writing stage in particular. It plays an important role in the construction of writing. In this respect, Harmer (2001) argued that teaching students brainstorming can help them enrich their writing through beneficial

ideas. Brainstorming also helps students to organize their ideas and decide text structure. Moreover, brainstorming can enhance the students' thinking and it can lead them to build up a well-structured composition with accepted cohesion and coherence. Consequently, brainstorming has a role to play in developing the students' writing capacities and skills when write.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Writing is one of the biggest challenges that most students face when learning English as a foreign language because it is one of the main criteria used to measure academic progress. Students are often required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through various forms of writing, including paragraphs, essays, reports, projects and exams. In Algerian secondary schools and though writing is considered a key to success in foreign language learning especially in the Baccalaureate exam, the majority of third year students exhibit poor writing skills instead of showing a higher mastery of writing. Teachers of English at the secondary level may bear some of the blame for that problem because they should adapt innovative strategies to teaching writing in order to enhance their students' performance in writing.

## **3. Aims of the Study**

Writing is considered a fertile area of research in different subjects and disciplines of education. The current research, in its turn, aimed at investigating the effect of using brainstorming strategy on developing the students' writing performance at two secondary schools: Bouhrin Cherif and Laabani Ahmed in Jijel. It also aims to unveil the way teachers use this strategy during the writing session and how their use will help students to develop their writing skills and sustain their motivation to write.

#### **4. Research Questions**

There are many strategies and techniques that are used to develop the students' writing skills such as brainstorming. This strategy seems to be effective in enhancing the students' writing performance. So, this research was guided by four main questions:

1. Do teachers use brainstorming strategy in their teaching of writing?
2. What brainstorming techniques are used by teachers in their teaching of writing?
3. Are teachers aware that brainstorming strategy may increase the students' writing abilities?
4. How can the use of brainstorming strategy helpful in developing the students' writing performance?

#### **5. Research Hypothesis**

For the sake of finding an appropriate and effective way of generating ideas and structures for students to perform better in writing, It is hypothesized that:

- If brainstorming strategy is used effectively, students will develop their writing performance.

#### **6. Research Tools**

To investigate the effect of brainstorming strategy on students' writing performance, and to meet the research aforementioned aim, two research tools are used. First, for collecting data necessary for this research, a questionnaire administered to 40 teachers in different secondary schools of Jijel. Second, in order to obtain realistic data from the teaching/ learning, a classroom observation was carried out in third year classes at Laabani Ahmed and Bouhrin Cherif secondary schools from April 21<sup>st</sup> to April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (a total of six sessions).

## **7. Structure of the Study**

The present study is composed of three chapters: two theoretical chapters and a practical one. The first chapter is entitled “The Writing Skill”. It covers the main information about the writing skill. The second chapter, “Brainstorming Strategy”, discusses different aspects of the ‘brainstorming strategy’ and its use by teachers and students in the writing sessions. The third chapter is entitled “Field Work’, it is devoted to the practical part of this study. It presents the following main headings: Administration and the description of both the teachers’ questionnaire and classroom observation, in addition to the analysis and interpretation of the obtained results. Finally, a general conclusion will sum up the main elements in the whole study and will present the most significant findings comparatively.

## **Introduction**

Writing is an important productive skill in learning any language. However, it is considered by many students as difficult or even challenging, particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts. Therefore, the process of learning English becomes slow and it could be interpreted as a series of challenges to be faced. This chapter is an overview of writing. It begins with a definition of writing and its approaches. It also tackles the types and stages of the writing process. After that, it explains the students' major difficulties while assigned to write. Finally, the assessment of the writing performance is discussed followed by the importance of this skill.

### **1. Definition of Writing**

Writing has been with us for several thousands of years, and nowadays it is even more important than ever. Different views about the definition of writing could be reported according to various researchers and linguists. Some of them like River (1968), Byrne (1988), and Hyland (1996) considered writing as translating one's thoughts through the use of graphic symbols. For instance, in River's (1968) own words, writing can be defined as "the act of putting in a conventional graphic form what has been spoken" (p.12). This view was shared by Byrne (1988, p.1) who contended that writing is the act of forming graphic symbols and it, therefore, involves the conventional arrangement of letters into words and words into sentences.

Writing is a "complex, recursive and creative process or a set of behaviours that is very similar in its broad outlines for first and second language writer" (Kroll, 1990, p.15). Furthermore, Hyland (1996) noted that "writing is among the most important skills that second language students need to develop and the ability to teach writing is central to the expertise...Learning how to write is one of the most challenging aspects of second language learning" (p1). In addition, Rymond (1980, p.2) went further to say, "writing is



more than a way of medium of communication that is based on visual marks system, but it is also a means of idea and emotional writing and expression; it is a way of finding out what people and what they really need to learn”.

That is to say, writing is used by human beings as a tool for recording, conveying and sharing information and stories with readers beyond the immediate moment. Based on to the above mentioned definitions, it can be said that the writing skill is not merely limited to the use of symbols.

## **2. Approaches to Teaching the Writing Skill**

Educationalists in the field of language teaching who are mainly concerned with the writing skill have provided different approaches to teaching writing, each approach was built on the limitations of the preceded approach. Four approaches are to be discussed below: the product approach, the process approach, the genre approach, and communicative approach.

### **2.1 The Product-oriented Approach**

The product-oriented approach to teaching writing consists of three main elements: grammar, syntax, and mechanics. It gives great importance to grammar, that is, and in which learners do not focus on establishing texts but how to form grammar sentences. They can also learn to link words in order to combine sentences. Nunan (1991) recognized that the product approach emphasizes “the end result of the learning process- what is it that the learner is expected to do as a fluent and component user of the language” (p86). What has been stated by Nunan is that in the final product, the learner should realize well the grammatical and the lexical patterns of the language. As Harmer (2001) explained, “the concentration on the product means that the concentration is on the aim of the task and in the end product” (p.257).

The product approach enhances the students writing proficiency. For instance, Badger and White (2000) stated that writing involves linguistic knowledge of texts that students can learn partly through imitation. The students follow rules and achieve technical mastery of formal conventions and modes, yet the instructors must work individually on writing tasks without forgetting the technical aspects of the text such as grammar and sentence structure.

This approach has been criticized on the weaknesses that are provided, and its consequences on language teaching and learning. Raimes (1983) disapproved of such an approach and stressed the lack of the communicative side and the absence of the significance of the expressions involved in the written text. This approach makes the learner aware only of linguistic knowledge.

## **2.2 The Process-oriented Approach**

This approach comes as a reaction against the weaknesses and the limitations of the product approach. The process-oriented approach is concerned with the process of writing, which means the way to produce writing not the final outcome. According to Harmer (2007), "writing as a process refers to the different stages that learners follow when constructing any piece of writing and among them, pre-writing phase, editing, redrafting and finally producing a final draft"(p.326). This means the focus is on how to write and not on what to write. Hence, constructing well-formed sentences is the main focus of writing as a process.

The process approach encourages learners to understand themselves. Likewise, Brown (2001) claimed that writing is generated through the thinking process, when a writer is thinking, writing will be produced. In addition, writing as a process requires much more time from the learners since they need to pass through different activities. Therefore, the process approach takes into consideration the learners' needs, goals, learning style, and

knowledge. It also provides them with enough time and motivates them to feel comfortable during writing in order to express their ideas effectively. This approach includes some stages such as prewriting, drafting and rewriting.

However, there is no perfect approach, and the process approach is no exception. The process approach has been criticized because it does not give much importance to grammar and structure. Accordingly, Reid (2001) mentioned that:

[In the 1980s, they developed] a false dichotomy between process and product classrooms in the L2 pedagogy. Process teachers encourage students to use their internal resources and individuality . . . they neglected accuracy in favour of fluency. In contrast, it was suggested that product teachers focused solely on accuracy, appropriate rhetorical discourse and linguistic patterns to the exclusion of writing processes. . . In reality, most L2 students were being taught process writing strategies to achieve effective written communication (products), with differences occurring in emphasis (p. 29)

It is truthful to mention, then, that ESL students need to acquire accuracy further as fluency, so as to improve their language skills and become perfect communicators in English. Therefore, accuracy is not the only thing that will be minimized in learning; by neglecting accuracy or grammatical components, the process approach does not serve the learners' purpose.

### **2.3 The Genre-Based Approach**

Over the 1980s, early attention has been given to the genre-based approach in order to teach the writing skill. The main principles of this approach are based on providing specific 'genres' in teaching writing to the learners in order to accomplish specified 'purposes' in some 'contexts' (Hyland, 2003).

In the same line of thought, Richards (2003, p.18) affirmed that "the central belief here is that we don't just write, we write something to achieve some purposes: it is a way of getting something done". What is meant by purpose, here, is the social action that is linked to the situation. Consequently, the learner determines his objectives, among so many 'genres' such as letters of application, apology, recipes, reports...

However, that approach has many negative sides. In this context, Byram (2004, p.236) pointed out that the genre-based approach ignores self-confidence, and self-sufficiency of the students, on the one hand. On the other hand, it minimizes the needed abilities to assemble the content. In addition, Hyland (2003) stated that:

A salient criticism of the genre model is that its emphasis on the direct transmission of text types does not necessarily lead on to a critical reappraisal of that disciplinary corpus, its field or its related institutions, but rather may lend itself to an uncritical reproduction of discipline. Thus, teaching genres may only reproduce the dominant discourses of the powerful and the social relations which they construct and maintain (p. 314).

#### **2.4 The Communicative Approach**

The main aim of this approach is to let the learners be aware of their audience. Selman (2006) claimed that "students would raise questions like: who will read this? What is the aim of this piece of writing? Those kinds of questions, which precede writing, will help students to choose the appropriate words for their audience, making them feel the passion for writing their papers, whether they will argue, entertain, defend, explain, etc" (p.45).

This approach will let students behave like real-life writers when the teacher diverse the situation and topics; for example when the teacher asks his students to write role-plays. Weir (1993) explained that:

the performance task candidates are faced with in communicative approach tests should be preventative of the type of task they may encounter in their own real-life situation and should correspond to normal language use where an integration of communicative skills is required with little time to reflect on, or monitor language input and output (as cited in Selman, 2006, p.46).

### **3. Types of Writing**

Writing is done for a number of different purposes and for different audiences, which is why paragraphs and essays can be written in different types or styles. Generally speaking, there are four types of writing that must be known by any writer: Narrative, descriptive, persuasive and expository writing. Each type is briefly defined below.

#### **- Narrative writing**

Narrative writing is one of the most basic types in writing which involves novels, poetry, and biographies. This type of writing tends to tell a story or to report a sequence of events and it can be either fiction or non-fiction (real). Reinking and Osten (2000) stated that "a narrative essay like other kinds of writing makes a point or has a purpose. The point can be either stated or left unstated, but it always shapes writing. Some narratives simply tell what happened or establish an interesting or useful fact." (p. 145). In other words, the narrator tends to convey something in this type of writing. He aims to select his words either directly or implicitly just to let the reader interpret.

#### **- Descriptive Writing**

Descriptive writing is the style in which the writer explains a bright picture for the reader about the thing that is being described. It uses all five senses; touch, smell, sound...to help the readers see the place, the person/ things the writer is about to introduce. Savage & Shafiei (2007) claimed that "using specific language in descriptive writing helps

give the reader a mental image of what something looks, feels, sounds, or smells."(p.39).This type of writing has more freedom and creativity if compared to other types.

### **- Persuasive Writing**

Also known as argumentative writing, persuasive writing is a piece of academic writing where the writer uses opinions, arguments to make justification that makes the reader believe in the point the writer is writing about. These arguments can be statistics, facts, proofs, etc. The main goal of this form of writing is to convince someone to do something the reader thinks it is right. Reiking & Osten (2000) stated that "in writing, an argument is a paper, governed on logical structured evidence that attempts to convince the reader to accept a claim, take some action or do both. They added that "arguments are also a process during which you explore an issue fully, considering a different perspective, assumption, reasons to reach your own information."(p. 269).

### **- Expository Writing**

Unlike persuasive writing, expository writing explains or informs the readers on a subject, without giving an opinion. It is found in the textbooks, recipes or instructions books; when trying to repair something for example. It is often equipped with facts and figures. Carman (2016) further explained:

An expository essay is an essay that informs or explains the subject to a reader, such as teaching someone how to create a facebook account or how ice is formed from water. Expository essays are not very common types of writing, but it is good to understand what they are and how to write them. You probably read expository writing daily, but do not realize that (p. 252)

#### **4. Different Stages of the Writing Process**

There are different views concerning the stages that students go through in producing a piece of writing, but a typical model identifies four main stages: prewriting (planning), drafting, editing, and publishing.

##### **4.1 Prewriting**

It is the initial stage where learners need to get ready to write. At this level, students are stimulated to create and gather a large number of ideas. Richard and Renandaya (2003, p.316) defined the prewriting stage as “an activity in the classroom that encourages students to write. It stimulates thoughts for getting started. In fact, it moves students away from having to face a blank page towards generating tentative ideas and gathering information for writing”. At this stage, the learners collect all sorts of information about the purpose of writing, the identification of the audience, gathering information and ideas and discover what is needed to be written about the topic.

##### **4.2 Drafting**

After planning, learners now need to move to another stage that is “drafting”. There are different views concerning drafting. For instance, Hedge (1988) considered it as a phase moving from thinking to writing known as “composing”. Donohue (2009) referred to drafting as “the stage where the students draft their own writing” (p.12) whereas Harries (1993, p.55) defined it as “a point at which the writer begins to translate plans and ideas into the provisional text”. At this stage, students translate their ideas and thoughts (plan) into a meaningful text. That is to say, they give more organization and order to their plan and develop it regardless of spelling mistakes, grammar accuracy, and others.

To clarify, the initial draft is not the final product. When drafting their first draft, learners focus on content with little concern on punctuation, spelling and other mechanics

(Tomkins and McKensie, 1984. p116). In a few words, in this stage, there is a free flow of ideas.

### **4.3 Editing**

It is a crucial step in the writing process. Learners at this stage focus carefully in their writing on punctuation, spelling mistakes, paragraph development and so on. Mather and Juffe (1899, p.507) stated that, “in editing, the students proofread and correct errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage”. Furthermore, Smith (1986) noted that, “editing which is the refinement stage of the writing process, is the cleaning up and correcting of a piece of writing” (p.19). However, Hedge (1988) believed that good writers place greater emphasis on content first and leave punctuation, spelling, and grammar later on. However, Harmer (2004) suggested that “revising of one’s writing by another reader helps the writer improve to quality of his writing” (p.5).

### **4.4 Publishing**

It is the final stage of the writing process. Learners are ready to present their final writing product to the intended audience. At this phase, students generally share their work with their peers, classmates or the teacher by reading aloud, reading in groups or by means of technological devices. Gurra (2011) noted, “publishing may also be seen as a declaration that the project is finished and ready to be read by its audience” (p.13). Donohue (2009) concluded that “the final stage of writing process includes sharing, reflection and assessment of the student’s writing” (p.14). He further explained that sharing can help students to enhance their writing skills.

## **5. Students’ Main Difficulties and Problems in Writing**

Writing is one of the most important skills which need special attention in foreign language classes. It is also highlighted as one of the most difficult skills to master. Hamzaoui (2006, p.12) stated that “writing has been defined as the activity of transforming



thoughts into language what makes it a difficult skill". Because it is complex in nature, students encounter a set of difficulties to develop and master their writing. In the words of Kroll (1990), "writing is frequently a difficult skill for any language user". (p. 140).

Moreover, Hedge (1998) briefly defined common problems that EFL students encounter when writing a task. He said:

Compared with speech, effective writing requires a number of things; a high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information; a high degree of accuracy so that there is no ambiguity of meaning, the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis, a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures to correct a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual (p.81).

In sum, academic writing is considered as one of the most difficult skills to teach and learn. In this perspective, researchers as Harmer (2001), Banchara (2013), Frith (1980), and others provided a list of the most common problems faced by EFL students in learning the writing which are further detailed as follow:

### **5.1 Problems with Grammar**

Grammar is considered as the core of any language in the world. Harmer (2001) defined grammar as "the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language" (p.12). Grammar mistakes are among the most frequent reasons why many students fail to perform the writing task. Therefore, EFL students usually face problems in sentence construction, how to join words into a coherent sentence... They make frequent errors in tenses, subject-verb agreement, propositions, pronouns, etc. Thus, knowing the rules of grammar helps the students avoid mistakes and to produce effective writing.

## **5.2 Problems with Vocabulary**

Poor vocabulary is one of the main difficulties that the majority of EFL learners encountered while writing. These difficulties are related to the students' failure to use the appropriate words in their piece of writing. Seely (2013, p.224) distinguished two types of vocabulary and stated that:

All language users have an active and passive vocabulary:

- Active vocabulary includes all the words that the person knows and can use confidently in speech and/or writing.
- Passive vocabulary includes words that the person can understand when listening or reading.
- The vocabulary is the process of moving from being passive to being active.

In other words, it is a difficult task to choose the appropriate vocabulary in writing. Therefore, students need to learn words as part of the context in which they are expected to have a positive attitude towards learning new vocabulary in order to enhance their writing.

## **5.3 Problems with Mechanics**

Mechanics is the ability to use convention correctly in writing any language. Mechanics are addressed by Starkey (2004) in some different terms namely: spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. These mechanics /conventions of language are very significant to formulate a good quality of writing. Therefore, spelling and punctuation are two main mechanics which lead to good writing, but EFL students may face some difficulties to find out the right spelling words and punctuation.

### **5.3.1 Spelling**

Spelling is a common difficult aspect in writing. Saddlen (2006), Tomas and Snow (2002) said that "learning to spell in a language like English is not an easy task, and many students have difficulties generating the correct spelling of the words they want to use in

their writing” (As cited in Westwood, 2008, p.62). So spelling mistakes have many reasons; this is may be interrelated with reading as Frith (1980) argued, “ learning to read should imply learning to spell and learning to spell should imply learning to read” (p.496). Additionally, they can result from the absence of the correlation between the word and the way it is spelled. In this respect, Harmer (2001, p.256) stated that “...the correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelled is not always obvious”. Furthermore, Bancha (2013) illustrated that “when students are not concentrated, a lot of spelling mistakes may happen due to tiredness or carelessness to the correctness of the words”. (p.4). Another reason is that American English words and British English words are not spelt in the same way; for example: color (British), color (American). In this sense, Harmer (2001) suggested extensive reading as a solution to overcome spelling difficulties.

### **5.3.2 Punctuation**

Punctuation presents an obstacle in writing. According to Carroll and Wilson (1993, p.191), “learners encounter punctuation problems as there are no universal rules of punctuation”. Poor punctuation is mostly because students do not understand the meaning of sentences and ideas, and sometimes because they use complex sentences and compound ones. Thus, ESL/EFL students should have some knowledge about this skill and to pay attention to the way they punctuate, because it can change the meaning completely. Grelot (1996, p.8) claimed that punctuation makes writing clear and easy to read. However, defective punctuation can make a text very difficult to understand, and even lead to miss understanding.

## **6. Assessing the Students' Writing Performance**

Assessing the students' writing performance is a significant element in the teaching of writing. It is a means of identifying the students' knowledge, understanding, and skills. By means of assessment, teachers are also able to identify the degree at which their students

are progressing. According to Chapelle and Brinley (2002), assessment in language teaching and learning referred to the "act of collecting information and making judgments about the learners' knowledge of a language and ability to use it (p.267).

Assessment of writing is not only concerned with rules of language and respecting stages of writing but also with the information included within students' writing. Harmer (2004) suggested that "when responding to students' work, we are not only concerned with a way of their performance but also –and this is crucial- with the content and design of their writing". (p.108). Thus, assessing writing is an important stage that involves gathering information about the students learning to see what extent their writing performance develops and monitoring their progress.

In order to enhance their students' writing performance, teachers should encourage them to assess themselves (peer assessment); students in peer assessment exchange their piece of writing and comment on each others' products and provide feedback. More importantly, this type of assessment helps students know what their weaknesses are and what they need to develop their writing performance. Therefore, in this kind of assessment, students become more active and anonymous in the classroom.

## **7. The Importance of Writing**

Learning a foreign language requires learning to write it. Writing plays an important role in the teaching/learning process of English due to the fact that it conveys social connections via discourse and other means. Accordingly, Hyland (2003, p.69) claimed that "writing is one of the main ways that we use to create a coherent social reality through engaging with others". Therefore, writing is concerning the students' lives and its importance lies upon its power. According to Mc Arthur, Graham & Fitzgerald (2008), "the power of writing is so strong that writing about one's feelings and experiences can be

beneficial psychologically and physiologically because it can reduce depression, lower blood pressure, and boost the immune system”( p.1).

Writing is considered a basic skill that has to be mastered by EFL learners. In the classroom, it is the teachers' responsibility to prepare the students, as much as possible, to be able to write in English and improve their writing performance. Therefore, teachers should be very attentive in teaching it. Qiyi (1993) claimed that “many people would agree that teaching composition is much more difficult than teaching other language skills” (p. 30). For instance, Byrne (1988) argued that “writing is a skill which is both limited in value and difficult to acquire, we should be very clear about our purpose in teaching it” (p.6). Moreover, learning writing, rather than speaking skill, needs more attention and consciousness. Harmer (2004) asserted that“...the ability to write has to be consciously learned” (p. 3). He agreed that writing should be learned because it could not be naturally acquired like speaking. In this respect, the importance of the writing skill should not be neglected especially in teaching and learning English as a foreign language because it gives another kind of discourse that is built up through individuals creation of their pieces of writing. The connection between social relationships and writing, according to Hyland (2003, p.69), is “one of the main ways that we create a coherent social reality through engaging with others”.

To sum up, writing has got different roles to play in daily life; it can make the person eager to write and boost his/her willingness to improve this skill in order to succeed in transmitting ideas and messages in a correct and meaningful way.

## **Conclusion**

Writing plays a vital role in conveying and transforming information to create new knowledge and it is of central importance for students in learning a second and/or foreign language. This chapter aims at defining writing, then it explains the four approaches to

teaching writing followed by types of writing. Additionally, this chapter devotes some space to the different stages of the writing process and students' main difficulties in writing. Finally, assessing the writing performance was briefly explained followed by the importance of writing.

## **Introduction**

Writing is a complex and a difficult skill in learning English as a foreign language. The process of learning requires the mastery of language rules, structure and organization of ideas in order to communicate effectively. Therefore, selecting the most appropriate strategies to teach this skill is something primordial. This chapter provides the theoretical background of the second research variable which is 'brainstorming strategy'. It presents an overview of the brainstorming strategy; by clarifying the concept of brainstorming, its basic rules and the different types that can be used in a brainstorming session. Then, it explains the brainstorming techniques and the procedures that should be followed. More importantly, brainstorming in teaching writing and its role in writing classes is tackled followed by the benefit of brainstorming.

### **2.1. The Concept of Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is an effective strategy to generate ideas around a specific topic in order to solve a problem. It is mainly the starting point of the prewriting stage during the writing process. Brainstorming is defined by many scholars such as Brown and Hood (1989) who said that brainstorming is when "you storm or search your brain for ideas, write them down very quickly...They do not have to be in English" (p.7).

Today, brainstorming seems to be a catchall word for "a group of people coming together and throwing out ideas until the boss chooses the best one" (Scannel & Mulhivill 2012.p.5). Similarly, Oshima and Hougue (1997) defined brainstorming as a prewriting stage in which students generate as many fast ideas as possible, either individually or collectively.

## 2.2. Basic Rules of Brainstorming

Gaining a lot of diverse ideas may lead to a successful brainstorming session. In this respect, the function of brainstorming is bringing people to express their ideas without anxiety and fear of being criticized. To achieve the function of brainstorming, Osborn (1953) created four main rules that should be followed in every brainstorming session. These rules are: focus on quantity, welcoming freewheeling ideas, no criticism is allowed and expanding and elaborating on the existing ideas.

- **Focus on Quantity**

This is the main aim of brainstorming, i.e., providing a large number of ideas. Scannel and Mulvilhill (2012, p.16) stated that the purpose of this rule is to generate a great number of ideas without evaluation. Moreover, when focusing on quantity, the greater number of ideas is generated, the greater chance to solve the problem. In the same line of thought, Jain (2010) added that this rule aims to encourage and help participants in generating a large number of ideas that may provide a radical and effective solution.

- **Freewheeling is Welcomed**

It means unusual and strange ideas are welcomed. Scannel and Mulvilhill (2012) said that “ideas that may seem crazy can often trigger a whole new volley of ideas from the rest of the team and may lead to your best solution ever” (p.16). So, no idea is too ridiculous and students may state any outlandish one that can help to provide a better solution.

- **No Criticism is Allowed**

During the brainstorming session, every idea is acceptable; no participant can suggest that an idea will not work or that it has a bad side-effect. Jain (2010) stated that refusing criticism is the main aim to generate ideas when brainstorming. Hence, all ideas are potentially good and teachers had better not judge them until the screening session. Scannel and Mulvilhill (2012, p.16) claimed that people will stay calm when sharing ideas.



- **Expanding and Elaborating on the Existing Ideas**

This means that any participant should suggest how ideas of others can be turned into better ideas; or how two or more ideas can be joined into still another idea. So, it is a way to combine ideas in order to make them better. Jain (2010) stated that the combination of ideas is needed as an idea generation to better results.

### **2.3. Brainstorming Types**

The brainstorming strategy is one of the most important strategies in provoking creativity and generating ideas in the educational field. Thus, when brainstorming ideas, teachers use two different ways; either collectively or individually.

#### **2.3.1 Collective Brainstorming**

Collective brainstorming takes place when the teacher invites his students to brainstorm together by exchanging their ideas and sharing information about a specific topic. Accordingly, Osborn (1953) argued that the average person can think up twice as many ideas when working with group members. This view is shared by Jain (2010) who asserted that group brainstorming can be very forceful by exchanging the full experience and creativity of all members of the group. When individual group members are stuck with an idea, other members can help the group to move forward to reach the final solution.

The use of this type may encourage students to generate small and big thoughts about a topic based on their prior knowledge. In addition, learners may profit from each other ideas and this will give a chance for slow learners to interact and express ideas.

#### **2.3.2 Individual Brainstorming**

While group brainstorming is said to be the more effective type of generating ideas in problem-solving situations, several studies have shown that individual brainstorming produces a lot of better ideas than group brainstorming. Paulus and Nijstad (2003) stated

that group brainstorming process can curb the gathering of ideas in different ways. Individuals may forget their own ideas while waiting for others to speak theirs. Therefore, individual brainstorming is more effective at generating thoughts. This happens because groups are not following the principles of brainstorming and some individuals are more interested in other people and while they wait for their turn to speak, they forget their own ideas.

Hence, when students brainstorm individually, they can be more creative. So, it is a useful method in creating good pieces of writing. Individual brainstorming typically includes such techniques as free writing and questioning and so on, in which people diagram their thoughts and come up with ideas for writing by asking themselves questions and later on answer them.

#### **2.4. Brainstorming Techniques**

Different brainstorming writing techniques can be used by an EFL teacher and his/her students during the brainstorming stage to generate as many ideas as possible and to provide background information about the intended writing topic.

##### **2.4.1 Mind Mapping**

Mind mapping is one of the most popular brainstorming techniques in writing to share and generate more ideas. It helps students to create a number of thoughts from the main topic and learn how to connect different ideas together. This technique is a visual tool to enhance brainstorming. In essence, students are drawing a picture of the relationships between ideas. Carman (2016) claimed that “students who learn visually will be more drawn to using a mind map. Additionally, being able to “see the entire layout of their brainstorming helps them visualize what their writing paper will look like” (p.264).

Moreover, this technique will give the teacher a sense of students' understanding, how their ideas are connected, and any gaps or misconceptions they may have. Buzan (2006,

p.139) stated that the use of mental maps enhances the students' confidence that they are on the right path for realizing their goals.

There are more organized ways to mind mapping. For this reason, students should follow these steps to get the same results:

- Write the topic in the centre of their paper and draw a balloon around it.
- Then, draw several branches and on each branch write whatever ideas, words come to their mind in the balloons.
- Think about each of these ideas and include them by drawing extra branches for them.
- When they finish, they can select the needed ideas and try to combine these ideas together.

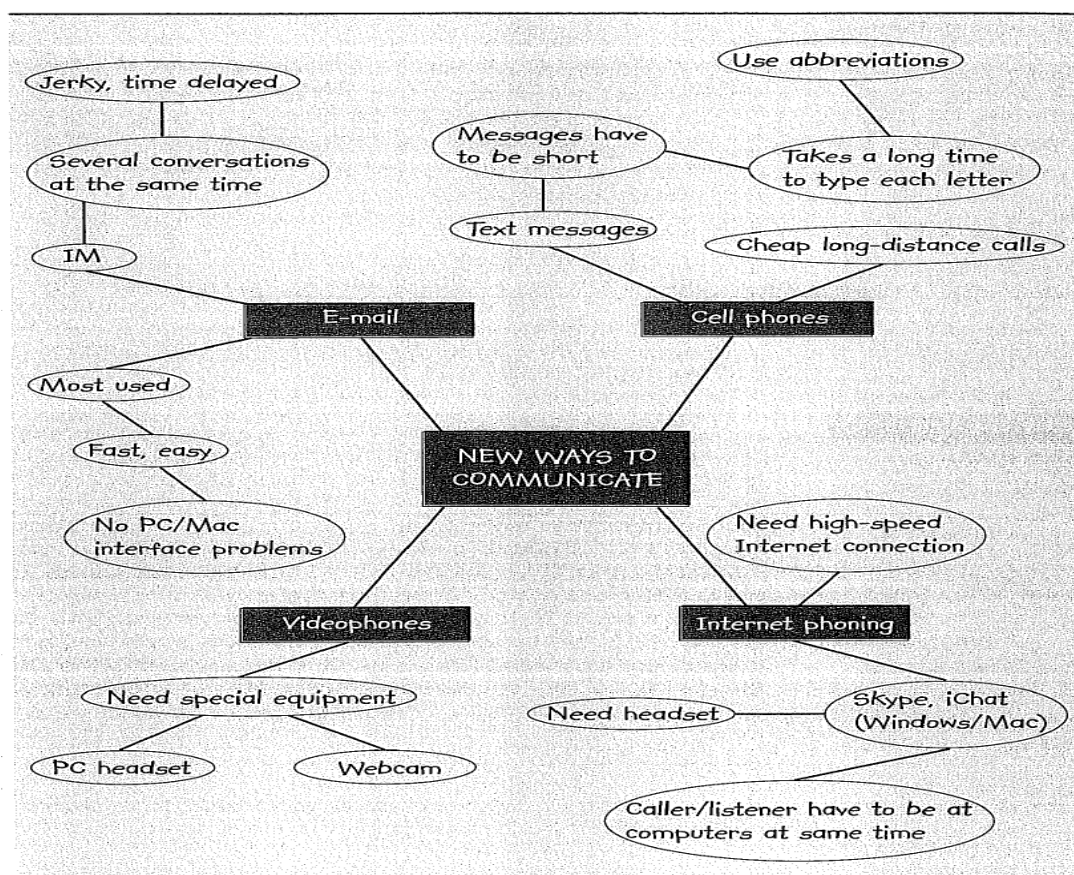


Figure1. Example of Mind Mapping (Adapted from Oshima & Hogue (2006, p. 270))

### 2.4.2 Free Writing

Free writing is a brainstorming writing technique by which students write all the ideas that come into their minds about a specific topic without stopping. Davis (2012) maintains that free-writing means to write freely to find out and develop topics content. It is a helpful technique in collecting ideas for novice writers who seek to find the right word, to use the correct grammar and spelling. Furthermore, when free writing, learners write continuously for a set period of time without regard to spelling, grammar, or topic. In this respect, Oshima & Hogue (2006) said:

Free writing is a brainstorming activity in which you write freely about a topic because you are looking for a specific focus. While you are writing, one idea will spark another idea. As with listing, the purpose of free writing is to generate as many ideas as possible and to write them down without worrying about appropriateness, grammar, spelling, logic, or organization. Remember, the more you free write, the more ideas you will have (p. 268).

In the same line of thought, Carmen (2016) demonstrated that free writing means to write continuously for a certain amount of time and ignore spelling and grammatical rules. Although this technique is not organized, it assists them to generate their ideas. The key to this technique is speed thinking and writing without stopping.

-As a first step to making free writing, students should write down the subject at the top of their paper.

-Then, they try to come up with as many ideas they possibly can to assist them to write more information about their topic.

-After they finish, they reread their first draft and circle the main ideas that they want to develop.

-In the end, students take each main idea with its supporting items and they rewrite the final production.

### **2.4.3 Listing**

Listing is another great brainstorming tactic, also called bulleting, where students make a list of words or phrases under a particular topic. This type of brainstorming encourages students to produce many ideas and helps them to organize their information in a suitable way. Carman (2016, p.267) claimed that listing or bulleting is a new technique for brainstorming writing which is helpful for students to organize their information usefully. Chesla (2006) claimed that listing is a workable technique with the individual or in a group. It is used before starting any piece of writing; to link all the previous ideas.

Chesla (2006, p.34) put forward some suggestions on how to use the listing technique:

- Set time for at least 15 minutes.
- Write any idea that comes to your mind about the topic.
- Do not correct or censor any idea and ignore mechanics rules.
- When you finish, organize your ideas and cross out the ideas and information that do not serve our top.

### **2.4.4 Questioning**

Questioning is another way of brainstorming writing where students ask themselves as many questions as they can around a particular topic (by interviewing themselves). Davis (2012) wrote that by asking the WH questions: what, which, why, where, and when, then answering these questions, participants will naturally attempt to think of the answers. Chesla (2006, p. 37) argued that asking the five WH 'questions (who, what, where, when and why) can offer students great benefits in gaining a lot of ideas, but students should be carefully aware in asking the questions; even though they are going to take a lot of time, but they are going to form accurate information that sustains them in their writing. Thus,

questioning technique creates a large number of ideas that are needed for future plans. However, it is not important to order the questions or answers, students just write down what comes in their head. The figure below shows a student who asks many questions associated with “television” that she/he applies the 5 “WH” questions.

Who watches TV?

What kinds of shows are people watching?

What happens to kids who watch too much TV? (Affects schoolwork, relationships with others?)

What about people who have no TVs? Are they more informed? Less informed?

What do people expect from TV? Relaxation? Information? Entertainment?

Where do people place TVs in their homes? Kids' rooms? (Effect on family relationships, socialization?) Bedroom? (Effect on sleeping/relaxation?) Kitchen? (Effects on the conversation during meals?)

Figure2: Questions about the ideal place of television in our lives (Chesla, 2006, p. 37)

#### **2.4.5 Group Passing Technique**

The group passing technique is used when the teacher gives the students a topic that the group is going to brainstorm about it. In a piece of paper, each student will write down one idea that comes to his mind and pass it to the student next to them who adds some thoughts and so on. If a student does not have an idea they must say "pass" and allow the session to continue. In the end, all ideas are collected and the teacher should select the needed ones.

In sum, all these brainstorming writing techniques help students to generate ideas spontaneously without wasting time and create a positive environment for them to

participate. Moreover, students are motivated and enthused to generate more ideas when using these techniques.

## **2.5. Procedures of Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is a strategy used to create a lot of ideas in order to solve a particular problem. Although the technique varies, there is a general structure that conducts the brainstorming session effectively.

- **Defining the topic**

The teacher states the topic to which the students are trying to solve. Scannel and Mulvihill (2012, p.11) noted that it is necessary to show group members what they are going to brainstorm about.

- **Selecting the Teams' Members**

The teacher picks a group of 5 to 10 participants with different background. Scannel & Mulhivill (2012) said that, "a group that's too small will not bring enough breadth of perspective... A group that's too large will be hard to manage (p.11). Therefore, brainstorming in a group facilitates and encourages students to generate more ideas.

- **All ideas are welcomed**

In this step, students come up with as many ideas as they can even the strange and unusual ones can lead to a creative solution. At that time, they choose an appropriate technique that serves the topic.

- **Record all ideas**

After the students gathered ideas and information, they share them with the teacher. The latter should record all ideas on the board without evaluation. In this phase, all students must participate so all voices are to be heard and they do not have the right to criticize others' ideas.

- **Organizing the generated ideas**

Teachers with their students should start to order and organize all ideas that were generated and select the needed ones and as a final step, the teacher asks the students to write the first draft.

## **2.6. Brainstorming Writing in EFL Classes**

Brainstorming in EFL classes plays a very important role in helping students creating a large number of ideas about the writing topic. Harmer (2001) argued that teaching students brainstorming can help them enrich their writing through beneficial ideas. He added that brainstorming is a useful technique in developing the students' ideas before they start their piece of writing. Morton (2014) supported the same view by stating that brainstorming is an effective way of generating ideas by jotting down everything that comes to the students' mind even the ideas that look strange and unusual. Pottle (2000) stated that “whenever we think about any writing assignment, the sensation of fear stops us from creating any advances” (p.8). Thus, Brainstorming helps students to develop their writing and eliminate the feeling of fear. Moreover, Pottle (2000, p.3) noted that brainstorming is the starting point within the writing process which is very crucial when several ideas are created from very general to particular writing topic that helps the students to supply the ultimate draft. Hence, brainstorming is vital and it is the first phase in the writing process that students need in order to reach their purpose of writing.

During the brainstorming session, the EFL teacher has to be the facilitator. Scannel and Mulvilhill (2012) noted that a facilitator has to maintain the flow of ideas, stimulate students, manage time, and to keep the cohesion of students in EFL classes by making each one participate. That is to say, the teacher plays the role of a guide or facilitator in a brainstorming a piece of writing. He is the one who puts on the board the key item which



invites writers' ideas. Along this process, he manages to encourage students and to create a joyful atmosphere in EFL classes.

## **2.7. Benefit of Brainstorming Strategy**

Brainstorming is a beneficial tool to find solutions to a particular topic by generating as many ideas as possible. It motivates students to express their ideas by gathering as much information. In addition, the moment that the teacher announces the topic to be written about, students are likely to start writing down what they think about the topic.

The brainstorming process helps students to create a long list of ideas with no risk to be blocked; especially shy and introvert students who are given the opportunity to share and to participate their thoughts without inhibition since there is no difference between correct and wrong ideas.

Furthermore, this strategy generates better results when working in groups. It encourages all members to be creative by ensuring interaction between them. The interaction in group participation creates a freethinking atmosphere that lead students to develop their thoughts.

In sum, brainstorming is one of the most effective prewriting techniques students may use. It is a key step in the writing process. It helps bringing new ideas on how to solve a particular problem. Therefore, it enhances the students' writing performance, skills and sustains motivation.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter closes the theoretical part of this research. It focused mainly on brainstorming as a strategy of teaching writing that helps EFL students to develop their writing performance. Hence, by reading this chapter, one can conclude that brainstorming is an important and effective strategy for both teachers and students in teaching and learning the writing skills.

## **Introduction**

This study is conducted to investigate the effect of brainstorming strategies on the students' writing. In order to answer the research questions, and help confirm or refute the hypothesis, two major tools were used to collect data and test the hypotheses: a questionnaire addressed to teachers of English from different secondary schools in Jijel and classroom observation. Therefore, this chapter is devoted to the field work of the study. First, the research method is described. Then, the data gathering tools, the sample, the administration, the description, and data analysis and interpretation of both the questionnaire and classroom observation are provided. In the end, the chapter is concluded by putting forward some suggestions and recommendations for both students and teachers.

### **3.1. Research Methodology**

As long as the aim of the present research is to investigate the benefits of using brainstorming strategy in writing and to show the extent to which the brainstorming strategy affects the students' writing performance, the most appropriate method is the descriptive one. This method seems to be suitable for this piece of research because it tests the hypotheses and helps obtain accurate data that the researcher can easily be processing for the first time.

### **3.2. Data Gathering Tools**

Teachers' questionnaire and classroom observations are the tools used to gather information needed to answer the research questions and test the underlined hypothesis. These two instruments are also used for the sake of accuracy and convenience in obtaining qualitative data.

### **3.2.1 Teachers' Questionnaire**

#### **3.2.1.1. Sample**

Teachers of English from different secondary schools in Jijel are selected the sample for this study. The reason behind this selection is because the core of the topic of research is to consider teachers' opinions and perception when investigating about the effect of brainstorming strategy on developing the students' writing production. The questionnaire also aims at investigating teachers' awareness of using this strategy and its importance in promoting the students' writing skill needed for a successful performance. The questionnaire was submitted to 40 teachers, out of a total population of 168 of third year teachers. The administration of the teacher questionnaire was during the examination period of the third term of the current academic year (2018/2019), which made it difficult to look for teachers and resulted in returning back thirty seven questionnaires instead of forty. Thus, only thirty-seven teachers were involved in this study.

#### **3.2.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire was introduced by a short text explaining the purpose of the study and giving some instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire. It consists of twenty-five questions which are divided into 1) closed questions that require the participants to respond by "yes" or "no" or to pick up the appropriate answer(s) from a number of choices, and 2) open-ended questions through which the researchers intended to elicit information from the participants about the issue of research.

The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section is entitled "Background Information" and consists of two questions. It is primarily concerned with obtaining some personal information about the respondents. Such information will help in gaining insights into the respondents 'years of experience and their current level of teaching. Section two is entitled "Teaching Writing" and it contains eleven questions that

inquire about the teachers' perceptions about writing. The third section is entitled "Brainstorming Strategy". It comprises fourteen questions that aim at investigating the teachers' views about the use of brainstorming strategy and its importance in writing.

### 3.2.1.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation of the Teachers' Questionnaire

#### I. Background Information

##### Q1: How long have you been teaching English?

Table 1

##### *Teaching Experience*

Years	Participants (n)	Percentage (%)
1-5	14	38%
5- 10	8	22%
+10	15	40%

This question aims at getting information about the teachers' experience in teaching English at the secondary level. The results shown in table 3 indicate that 14 (38%) teachers have a teaching experience ranging from 1 to 5 years; while 15 or 40% of them have spent more than 10 years in teaching English. The rest of the teachers (22%) have an experience of 5 to 10 years. That is, the majority of the target teachers (23 of them) are experienced teachers (five years or more). What can lead to say that they are familiar with the different strategies and techniques that may enhance their students writing.

##### Q2: Which levels are you currently teaching?

- a. First-year
- b. Second-year
- c. Third-year

Table 2

*Levels Taught by the Target Teachers*

<b>Levels Taught</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>b+c</b>	14	38%
<b>a+c</b>	12	32%
<b>a+b+c</b>	11	30%

From the answers of our informants, the results in table 2 show that 30% of the teachers are teaching all levels (first, second and third year), whereas 32% of them are teaching first and third year. However, the majority of teachers 38% do teach both second and third year. This may imply that they are aware of the different writing difficulties their students encounter in writing and how to deal with them.

**II. Teaching writing****Q3: How would you assess your learners' level in writing?**

Table 3

*Students' Proficiency in Writing*

<b>Learners' level in writing</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Very good</b>	0	0 %
<b>Good</b>	4	11%
<b>Average</b>	27	73%
<b>Bad</b>	6	16%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

Teachers are asked to evaluate their learners' proficiency level in writing. The above results clearly show that a large number of teachers 73% estimated their learners' level as

being average, 16% of the informants declared that their learners' writing is bad. Whereas, only 11% of the teachers claimed that their learners are successful writers and produce good writing. The results may imply that secondary school students are struggling when it comes to writing and the difficulties they face are due to many factors.

**Q4: How much time do you devote to teach writing in a unit?**

When asked about the time they devote to teaching writing in a unit, teachers stated that this depends on the teaching of the unit itself. Some of them devote one to two hours per unit, others devote only one hour because of time constraints, and the rest of them devote from two to four hours to writing.

**Q5: Do you think learners have enough practice in writing?**

Table 4

*Students' Practice of Writing*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	7	19%
<b>No</b>	30	81%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

The results that is shown in the table 4 above indicates that 30 (81%) of the respondents affirmed that learners do not have enough practice in writing, while 7 (19%) of them claimed that writing practice is sufficient. Those teachers who responded by “no” suggested that about eight to eleven hours per unit would be sufficient to practice writing.

A quick look at third year curriculum of English (designed by the Ministry of Education) will show that students are required to write four times per unit (2 rubrics of “*think, pair, share*”, one rubric of “*Say it in Writing*” and one rubric of “*Writing*”).

*Development*”), i.e., Two hours per rubric, makes a totality of 8 hours per unit. This is somehow sufficient if used appropriately.

**Q6: Do you assign learners to write essays in class?**

- **If yes, how often are they assigned to write in relation to each unit?**

Table 5

*Written Assignments*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	34	92%
<b>No</b>	3	8%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

This question probes to know whether learners are assigned written essays in class and how often they do so. Table 5 above reveals that 34 participants (92%) assign learners to write essays in class; while 3 participants who represent 8% asserted that learners are never assigned written essays. Those teachers who responded by “yes” declared that they assign their students to write more than twice, from three to four times in relation to each unit.

These results may contradict with the teachers’ answers to Q4 and Q5, so one can probably say that those teachers neglect the importance of teaching writing and thus its practice; for them time constraints is the main cause for writing problems and low performance.

**Q7: In which stage do you think students encounter difficulties when writing?**

Table 6

*Difficulties in Stages of Writing*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Planning</b>	13	35%
<b>Drafting</b>	10	27%
<b>Planning /revising/ editing</b>	09	24%
<b>Revising /editing</b>	05	13

The results show that 13 teachers (35%) said that planning is the stage where learners encounter the main difficulties in their writing, while 10 (27%) teachers thought it is at the drafting stage that students face their writing difficulties. Nine of them (24%) said that all stages (Planning, revising and editing) are challenging for their students, whereas the rest of teachers (13%) said that students struggle more in the revising and editing stage. This suggested that due the lack of vocabulary items and lack of training in stages of writing, students struggle to produce a well structured piece of writing.

**Q8: Do you encourage your students to use more than one draft in a writing task?**

Table 7

*Encouraging Students to use More than One Draft in Writing*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	24	65%
<b>No</b>	13	35%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%



The surveyed teachers provided different answers: 65% of them said yes; they encourage learners to use more than one draft when producing a piece of writing, while 35% of them said no; they do not encourage their learners to use more than one draft as one draft seems sufficient.

Teachers who said “yes” justified their answer by stating that a second draft may help students to get more ideas about the topic, to correct and revise the mistakes made in the first draft and to encourage them to produce a coherent piece of writing. However, the few teachers who said “no” said it is because there is no sufficient time and that they focus only on the final output.

**Q9: Do you observe the written production of your students while writing?**

Table 8

*Observation of Students' Written Production*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	34	92%
<b>No</b>	3	8%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

According to the results obtained in the table 8, 34 teachers who represented 92% of the participant affirmed that they observe the written production of their learners while writing, whereas 3 of them (8%) asserted that they do not do so. This implies that those teachers focus on the process of writing rather than the product.

**Q10: As a teacher, are you interest more in?**

- a. The final product of writing and how it is grammatically correct.
- b. What influences the process of writing and how learners go through it?

Table 9

*Teachers' Interest when Students Write*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a</b>	11	30%
<b>b</b>	19	51%
<b>a+b</b>	7	19%

As shown in table 9, 51% of the addressed teachers focus more on what influences the process of writing and how learners go through it, while 30% of them are mainly interested in the final product of writing and how it is grammatically correct. The rest 19 % of them admitted they both focus on what influences the process of writing and the final product. These results may confirm what was deduced from the teachers' answers on Q9.

**Q11: What do you suggest to improve your students' writing performance?**

Teachers in this question provided a variety of suggestions including:

- Reading stories and books because students acquire new language to use in their production.
- Teaching writing techniques and structure (starting with a sentence, a paragraph, and an essay).
- Topics should be related to the students' real-life in order to attract the students' attention.
- A good brainstorming of the topic.
- Students should give more importance to punctuation, capitalization and the form of paragraphs.
- Communication in English in the classroom.

### III. Brainstorming Strategy

#### Q12: Do you use brainstorming strategy in the writing session?

Table 10

##### *Use of Brainstorming Strategy in Writing Sessions*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	37	100%
<b>No</b>	00	0%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

As it is shown in table 10, all teachers 37 affirmed that they use the brainstorming strategy in the writing sessions. This can suggest that brainstorming is very important before writing.

#### Q13: In your opinion, do you think that brainstorming strategy is important to enhance the students writing?

Table 11

##### *Importance of Brainstorming in Writing*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	37	100%
<b>No</b>	00	0%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

In this question, all teachers (100%) thought that brainstorming strategy is important to enhance the students writing that is why they use it as they reported in Q12. The teachers provided the following explanation:

- Brainstorming strategy gives a general insight about the topic that the learners are dealing with.
- It helps to break the ice and prepare learners to be ready for writing.
- It helps to collect as much ideas as possible.

This result revealed that brainstorming strategy may make the task easier for all students and it helps EFL students to generate more ideas and to gather the needed vocabulary about the writing assignment.

**Q14: As a teacher, do you help your students to make a plan before they start writing?**

Table 12

*Assisting Students in the Planning Stage*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	36	97%
<b>No</b>	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

With regards to this question, the great majority of teachers, i.e. 97%, asserted that they help their learners to make a plan before they start writing, whereas, very few teachers (3%) declared that they do not help their learners in the process of planning.

When teachers who responded by “yes” are asked to explain how, they stated that:

- Through brainstorming discussions.
- Jotting down the most important ideas about the topic and organizing them.
- Developing ideas into paragraphs with a good introduction and conclusion.

This result suggested that students cannot have the ability to come up with ideas individually, and the assistance of their teachers may stimulate them to participate and jot down ideas.

**Q15: what are the different brainstorming techniques that you use in brainstorming**

Table 13

*Techniques of Brainstorming Used by the Teachers*

<b>Techniques</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Mind mapping</b>	31	84%
<b>Listing</b>	29	78%
<b>Questioning</b>	25	67%
<b>Group-passing</b>	15	40%
<b>Free writing</b>	11	30%
<b>Others</b>	7	19%

As shown in table 13, teachers were asked to select the different brainstorming techniques that they use when brainstorming a topic. Thirty one teachers (84%) use mind mapping in their brainstorming, while 29 teachers (78%) use listing. The other technique of brainstorming which was used by 25 teachers (67% of the selected sample) is questioning, whereas, 15 teachers (40%) selected group passing, 11(30%) of them preferred to use free writing and only 7 (19%) used other techniques such as spider maps, videos, games, and pictures. This revealed that the use of these techniques (mind mapping and listing) reflects that the teacher have an enough background knowledge about the topic and how to brainstorm it.

**Q16: How do you make your brainstorming?**

Table 14

*Types of Brainstorming Used by Teachers*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Collectively</b>	31	84%
<b>Individually</b>	2	5%
<b>Both</b>	4	11%

As it can be noticed from table 14, the highest percentage of teachers (84%) replied that they brainstorm collectively, while 4 teachers, who represent 11% of the participants, reported that they make brainstorming both collectively and individually. However, only 2 teachers (5%) said that they brainstorm ideas individually.

- Those teachers who responded by “collectively” explained that:
  - Collective brainstorming is an effective way to encourage slow and shy students to participate and to take part of the lesson.
  - It is because students may profit from each others’ ideas and experience and help the less-able students to improve their writing.
- Those teachers who preferred “individual brainstorming” declared that:
  - It is more effective because, in collective brainstorming, the individuals may forget their own ideas while waiting for others to speak theirs.
  - It is because every student has his own way of writing.
  - It is because time does not allow them to make collective brainstorming.
- While teachers who use both collective and individual brainstorming declared that both types are very useful and it depends on the topic.

**Q17: According to your teaching experience, is collective brainstorming superior to individual brainstorming?**

Table 15

*Teachers' Perception about the Superiority of Collective Brainstorming over Individual Brainstorming*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	34	92%
<b>No</b>	3	8%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

Generally speaks, the answers to this question express different viewpoints. Most of the respondents (92%) affirmed that collective brainstorming is superior to individual brainstorming and claimed that students learn better when they learn together. According to some of them, collective brainstorming encourages interaction among students so they are able to express their ideas freely. Others said that collective brainstorming builds the students' confidence to make a well-organized plan. However, three teachers (8%) declared that collective brainstorming is not superior to the individual brainstorming without providing any justification. This suggested that collective brainstorming make students collect and gather more ideas and share them.

**Q18: Have you introduced the different types of brainstorming to your students?**

Table16

*Teachers' Introduction of the Different Types of Brainstorming to their Students*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	23	62%
<b>No</b>	14	38%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

Teachers' answers to this question did not vary. More than half of the teachers, with a percentage of 62 %, affirmed that they introduced the different types of brainstorming to their students. Interestingly, as can be seen in table 16, only 38% of teachers said that they do not introduce the different types of brainstorming to their students. This may imply that if students are aware of the different types of brainstorming, this may decide what type may fit their learning style so that they can develop their writing.

- Those teachers who responded by 'yes' justified that:
  - Each writing session requires its techniques.
  - To use them while writing in tests and exams.
  - To make students choose the easiest and the most suitable one for them.
  - To enhance their memory skills and to develop strategies for their writing.
  - To make them know what may help them in their writing.
- The teachers who responded by "no" said that:
  - It depends on the student level.
  - No enough time.
  - What matters is generating ideas, not the process itself.
  - This should be hidden, the teacher knows them and he is interested in the final result so no need to tell them.

**Q19: Do you give all students a chance to express their ideas before writing?**

Table17

*Students' Participation in Expressing Ideas*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	28	76%
<b>No</b>	9	24%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%



This question aims to show whether teachers give all students equal chance to express their ideas before writing. Teachers' answers to this question did not vary a lot because the majority of them (28 or 76%) affirmed that they give their students the chance to express their ideas. However, 24% indicated that they do not give the students any chance to express their ideas before writing due to many different considerations.

**Q20: Do you express your evaluation of any idea presented at this stage?**

- **If yes, do you think that the student is motivated to create more ideas?**

Table 18

*Teachers' Evaluation of the Students' Ideas in Generated from Brainstorming*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	30	81%
<b>No</b>	7	19%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

When the target teachers were asked whether they express their evaluation to any idea presented at this stage, the majority (81%) confirmed that they express their evaluation. While 19% of them reported that they do not express their evaluation of any idea presented at this stage. Those teachers who responded by 'yes' thought that the learners are motivated to create more ideas especially when their teacher praises on them in front of their classmates and when the topic is interesting to them.

**Q21: When brainstorming, you give priority to (order from 1 'the most important' to 4 'the least important')**

- a. Linking all the points and information.
- b. Writing and presenting ideas (proposed by students).

c. Getting ideas.

d. Warm up.

Table 19

*Brainstorming Priority*

	1	2	3	4
A	0	2	<u>18</u>	1
B	0	4	14	<u>17</u>
C	4	<u>28</u>	5	0
D	<u>33</u>	3	0	4

Since the participants were given a number of items to choose from, their answers were ranked according to the frequency of occurrence. According to a four-point scale; 1 is the most important and 4 is the least important.

It was noticed from the table that teachers give priority to ‘warm up’ (33 teachers). ‘Getting ideas’ was in the second rank (28 teachers) while 18 teachers chose ‘linking all the points and information’ to be ranked third. However, ‘writing and presenting ideas (proposed by students)’ was at the bottom ranking by 17 teachers. The results can suggest that priorities in brainstorming are dependent on the students’ level and needs.

**Q22: As a teacher, what are the difficulties that students face in brainstorming (pre-writing stage)?**

The teachers provided a variety of difficulties including:

- Problems of vocabulary and grammar use.
- Students have ideas and they cannot express them in English (they tend to translate ideas directly from Arabic to English).
- Students lack motivation and self-confidence.

- Most students have no desire to write and work.

This result revealed that the teacher plays an important role in facilitating and guiding the brainstorming session in order to overcome these difficulties.

**Q23: In your opinion, are your students satisfied when brainstorming their ideas?**

Table 20

*Students' Satisfaction when Brainstorming*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	36	97%
<b>No</b>	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

According to the answers obtained on this question, the majority of teachers (36; 97%) agreed that students are satisfied when brainstorming their ideas, while one teacher who represents 3% said that students are not satisfied when brainstorming their ideas. These results may tell how important brainstorming is for students.

**Q24: Do your students write better when using the brainstorming strategy?**

Table 21

*Effect of Brainstorming on the Students' Writing*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	37	100%
<b>No</b>	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	37	100%

Table 21 demonstrated the teachers' answers on whether their students write better when using the brainstorming strategy. It was noticed that all teachers (100% or 37)

confirmed that students write better when using the brainstorming strategy. It means that brainstorming is vital in developing the students' writing performance.

**Q25: What is the role that brainstorming can play in enhancing the students' writing performance?**

According to the respondents' different opinions concerning the role of brainstorming in enhancing the way students perform in writing, teachers explained:

- Brainstorming is the starting point and the key element for topic development.
- It creates an atmosphere of communication.
- It is a way to get new ideas and enrich students' vocabulary.
- It is essential because it encourages students to express themselves and become motivated.
- Brainstorming is a strategy which is crucial to improve the students' writing performance.

### **3.2.2 Classroom observation**

#### **3.2.2.1 Sample**

The classroom observation used in this exploratory case study took place in Bouhrin Cherif and Labani Ahmed secondary schools in Jijel. Third year classes of different streams (Literary and Foreign Language, Literary and Philosophy and Scientific streams) were addressed to be observed by the researchers. The classroom observation started from April 21<sup>th</sup> to April 28<sup>th</sup>, during the academic year 2018-2019 in six sessions with different teachers of English. The classes contain unreasonable number of students about ten to fifteen students in each class; the majority of them were absent while others just come late. In addition, female students were outnumbering male students (only 3 to 5 boys) in each class.

### **3.2.2.2. Description of the Classroom Observation**

Classroom observation is a systematic method that aims at measuring classroom behaviours from direct observation. The goal of using this instrument was to obtain information about whether or not secondary school teachers use brainstorming strategy when they teach writing, how well they use this strategy and how the use of this strategy can help to develop the students' writing performance. To get further data regarding the use of brainstorming strategy in EFL classes and to have an idea about the students' writing, it was important to attend many sessions to observe the process of teaching and learning. Classroom observation was supported by an observation checklist (see appendix B). It consisted of six headings: the use of brainstorming strategy, types of brainstorming, and techniques of brainstorming used by the teacher, the teacher role while brainstorming, the procedures of brainstorming in class and the effect of brainstorming strategy on the class in general and on writing in particular. In each of the previously mentioned sections, the researchers tried to cover some issues related to each section.

### **3.2.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation of Classroom Observation**

The observation was preceded without informing the teacher in advance in order to avoid any kind of preparation and thus, to get more valid data. During instruction, the researchers sat in the back of the classroom for the sake of monitoring all what was happening during the session. It was conducted without any kind of audio recording and without the use of a camera due to many considerations (teachers' refusal to be recorded, class management issues, time limits... Yet, it was supported by an observation checklist. The items that were observed are listed and analysed below:

- **The Use of Brainstorming Strategies**

In all sessions, the researchers observed that all teachers (T<sub>1</sub>, T<sub>2</sub>, T<sub>3</sub>, T<sub>4</sub>, T<sub>5</sub>, and T<sub>6</sub>) announced the topic by using the brainstorming strategy as a warm-up. Thus, teachers

introduced the problem to be discussed on the board when they gave their students some minutes (limited time) to think about the topic. For instance, T<sub>3</sub> introduced a topic entitled “Food Safety” after asking her students questions to introduce this topic; for example: What is your favourite food? What diseases recently appeared in our societies? Is there a relationship between the type of food we eat and those diseases? In your opinion, what is the effect of obesity? And many other related questions. Accordingly, students started to answer the different questions, linked them to their real life experiences until they reached the target topic.

#### ▪ **Types of Brainstorming**

During the sessions that were attended by the researchers, T<sub>2</sub>, T<sub>3</sub>, T<sub>4</sub>, T<sub>5</sub>, and T<sub>6</sub> did the brainstorming session collectively except for T<sub>1</sub> who asked his students to brainstorm individually. For example, T<sub>3</sub> after she had introduced the topic, she divided students into groups (five students in each group) then the students started to brainstorm together and exchange their ideas. That is, collective brainstorming may be more stimulating for students to produce a lot of ideas. In contrast, individual brainstorming may be more beneficial for unable and introvert students because they dislike to work and collaborate with their peers.

#### ▪ **Techniques of Brainstorming Used by the Teacher**

Concerning the brainstorming techniques, the majority of teachers T<sub>1</sub>, T<sub>3</sub>, and T<sub>4</sub> used mind mapping while brainstorming writing, whereas T<sub>2</sub> and T<sub>6</sub> used listing and only T<sub>5</sub> used group passing technique. For instance, T<sub>4</sub> drew a cluster on the board and wrote down every word or phrase that came to the students' minds about “Feeling and Emotions” expected from Algerian women and men in various situations (Rubric of Think, pair, share in Unit six: We Are Family...p. 180).

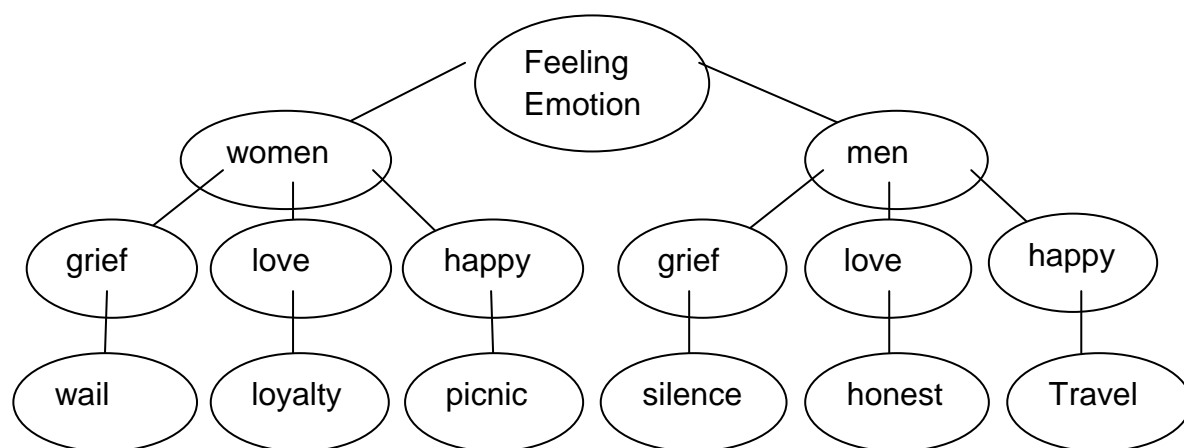


Figure 3: women and men feeling in various situations (The New Prospect, p. 180)

- **The Teacher's Role while Brainstorming**

After selecting the appropriate techniques, the researchers observed that most teachers pointed to students who did not participate at all to brainstorm ideas; for reinforcing and involving them in the lesson and making the whole class participate. In addition, they helped their students to brainstorm ideas before writing. This result shows that the teacher has an important role to guide students to think about the topic and generate ideas.

- **Procedures of Brainstorming in Class**

In all sessions, the researchers noticed that most of the students came up with as many ideas as they can about the intended writing topic. Additionally, in the class of T<sub>2</sub> when a low levelled student shared a strange idea (Topic: food safety), his partner criticized it, made fun of him and said that it was out of the topic. At this moment, the student blushed and his voice trembled but the teacher did nothing about that. In contrast, T<sub>1</sub> and T<sub>4</sub> gave freedom to students to come up with many ideas without any kind of criticism (Topic: the Moon).

In addition, the researchers noticed that the teachers selected the needed ideas after all the suggestions were recorded and some of them were expanded into new ideas. For instance, T<sub>6</sub> assigned his students to write a letter in which they describe their school by

using the five senses (Rubric of “Think, pair, share”: descriptive writing), the teacher asked them what they can perceive by using their five senses and what the effect of these senses was (seeing roses, flowers, beautiful designs in walls, the air filled with aromatic smelling... This might imply that this school is clean and the employers there are working to make it beautiful and beloved to the students).

Furthermore, what can be noticed in all sessions was that the interaction of students while brainstorming differed from class to class and from teacher to teacher. Some of them interacted directly with their teacher and others interacted with both their classmates and their teacher. As in the class of T<sub>6</sub> for example, at the beginning of the brainstorming, students interacted with their teacher then, they moved to interact with their classmates.

#### ▪ **The Effect of Brainstorming Strategy**

After the planning stage, teachers asked their students to use their notebooks to write about the intended topic using the ideas that were written on the board. Good students tried to write the first draft while the rest of them (average and weak students) wrote some sentences and stopped. They talked with each other and they made noise in the classroom.

In all six sessions, the researchers observed that only one teacher was walking around to check his students' writing, to explain some points related to the topic and his students called him from time to time to translate some words from Arabic into English.

At the end of the sessions, students brainstormed their ideas individually; whereas teachers wanted them to peer assess their writing. Students exchanged their drafts and made comments after reading the drafts. For example, some students read the draft carefully and correct the grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes...while some of them did not correct the draft, but they wrote some comments like “bad”, “stupid” etc especially girls.



An important thing that caught the researchers' attention was that some teachers had a kind of inactivity and indifference in the writing classroom; they did not encourage their students to speak up their ideas. Therefore, the students did not carry on their brainstorming and they became passive. Hence, students find writing more challenging. In contrast, other teachers create a positive environment for speaking that encourages students to be active and do not feel shy when they speak.

Consequently, the researchers noticed that in most sessions that were attended, brainstorming strategy enhances communication skills and at the same time is helpful for students to come up with ideas.

Furthermore, this strategy facilitates the students' flow of ideas, because it guides them to plan for their writing by generating the relevant ideas about the topic. It is a means of activating students' prior knowledge and making them feel safe and more self-confident. In addition, the researchers noticed that using brainstorming strategy makes students highly motivated during the writing process, because it shows them the elements that they can include in their writing. So, brainstorming can sustain students to improve their writing performance.

### **3.4 Discussion of the Main Results**

This section presents the findings obtained from the two research instruments employed to investigate the topic under study "the Effect of Brainstorming strategy on the Students' Writing Performance". These research tools are the teachers' questionnaire and classroom observations.

Concerning the teaching experience, the results indicated that the majority (60% of the surveyed teachers) has an experience of 5 years or more in teaching English, i.e., they have good experience in teaching at the secondary level and this is good for both teachers and their students. That is, teachers can have the opportunity to deliver a well-structured

brainstorming session without any difficulties because of their familiarity with teaching whereas students will be able to develop new learning strategies with the help of their teachers in order to cope with new writing challenges.

Furthermore, the results obtained from the teachers' questionnaire showed that time devoted to writing is not sufficient and students do not have enough practice in writing that is why many teachers (19%) seemed interested in the final product rather than the process of writing; that is to say, they only devote few minutes to each stage in the process, especially the planning stage where ideas should be brainstormed. This may result in poor production due to the students' lack of ideas and information. In contrast, the researchers noticed via classroom observation that for teachers, who focussed on the process itself, brainstorming ideas took more than twenty five minutes and the rest of time is for organizing and expanding those ideas in order to write the first draft. Hence, this could be the reason of students' high achievement in writing.

In addition, the results obtained from both teachers' questionnaires and classroom observation revealed that students found difficulties in the writing process, especially in the stages of planning and drafting, and they also lack of vocabulary necessary to express themselves in English. To clarify more, planning (pre-writing) is the stage where students encounter serious problems (35% of the surveyed teachers said so) in their writing and that is the reason why their performance is weak. In this sense, teachers would help them to make a plan through using the brainstorming strategy effectively which makes it easier for students to generate more ideas and use them in writing. Moreover, teachers confirmed that drafting is the second stage where students faced problems while writing. That is, students cannot translate their ideas and thoughts into a meaningful text. In this respect, it becomes clear through classroom observation that teachers fail in their brainstorming sessions (insufficient time, inappropriate techniques, misused procedures of brainstorming, etc). In

addition, vocabulary deficiencies are also a main cause behind students' low writing performance, this problem is related to students' failing to use the appropriate words in their piece of writing. This probably imply that using the brainstorming strategy helps students to make clear outline by generating useful and correct ideas as a way to increase vocabulary and, thus, to enhance students' production.

Furthermore, the results assembled from the classroom observation and the teachers' questionnaires revealed that the most suitable brainstorming technique used by teachers is mind mapping. Therefore, mind mapping can be a good technique to enhance the planning stage, especially to gain new vocabulary that will facilitate the flow of students' ideas.

As far as brainstorming types are concerned, most teachers made their brainstorming collectively (84%). Thus, collective brainstorming may help students to improve their ability in understanding what they did by the help of their classmates. Collective brainstorming can stimulate the students' motivation and self-confidence to be more interested in generating different ideas, and information; and this will help them to develop their writing skill.

Regarding to students' participation, the results obtained from the teachers' questionnaires showed that the majority of teachers (76%) give all students the opportunity to express their ideas before writing. Yet, this was not the case when attending some sessions; not all teachers gave the chance to their students to come up with ideas during the brainstorming stage and may be this is due time constrains as teachers reported earlier, their indifference about instruction, the students laziness and lack of motivation...

The results obtained from both teachers' questionnaires and classroom observation also revealed that almost all teachers evaluated ideas presented during the brainstorming phase. Teachers' evaluation, thus, might affect the students' writing performance either positively or negatively. For instance, when the teacher says "good", "excellent", or "yes", this may

stimulate students to create more ideas. Whereas when s/he says “no”, “out of the topic”, it may make students hesitate to participate.

Concerning the brainstorming priority, the results assembled from the classroom observation and the teachers’ survey revealed that the majority of teachers started their brainstorming with a warm up, and then they generate as much ideas as possible from their students. After that, they wrote down all presented ideas proposed by the students on the board. Finally, they linked all the points and information in a well organised piece of writing; it is only that way which lead to a successful brainstorming session and eventually a good writing production.

In addition, the results obtained from both teachers’ questionnaires and classroom observation showed that students write faster and better when using the brainstorming strategy effectively. This revealed that brainstorming strategy can make the writing process easier and it stimulates students to generate ideas and to develop more vocabulary about the writing topic. Therefore, brainstorming strategy plays a vital role in enhancing the students’ writing performance.

### **3.5 Recommendations**

In the light of the major results of this study, it seems important to say that brainstorming strategy is helpful for enhancing students’ writing performance. Therefore, the following are some pedagogical implementations and recommendations for both teachers and learners to make use of this strategy and to make it work better to develop the writing skill.

- **For Teachers:**

- EFL teachers should be encouraged to employ brainstorming strategy when teaching writing; it is a crucial step in the planning stage that should not be neglected for any reason.

- Teachers should teach students the basic elements and stages of writing.
- Teachers should place more emphasis on the brainstorming techniques and let them decide what technique would fit their learning style.
- Teachers should provide their students with opportunities to interact with each other and exchange ideas that would certainly help them build content and vocabulary for their writing.
- Teachers should place more emphasis on teaching writing as a process not a product.
- Teacher should assign students more homework to practice writing.
  - **For Students:**
- Students should follow certain steps when they write such as (planning, drafting).
- They should be active and involve in the classroom activities .This help them to sharpen the way of thinking and develop their writing quality.
- They have to practice reading to be more knowledgeable in their writing because writing is mainly based on reading.

### **3.6 Limitations of the Study**

Several limitations presented a real challenge for us to complete our study:

- Time constraint was the major obstacle that the researchers face when conducting this piece of research.
- As far as sources are concerned, the researcher found a difficulty in finding sources about the “brainstorming strategy”, because books were not free and could not be downloaded because of copyright issues.
- The classroom observation took only six sessions during the end of the second term because the country witnessed serious changes; a general mood of uncertainty and chaos, strikes, out of schedule holidays...

- The teachers' questionnaires were administered to teachers in the third term and during the examination period. Thus, some respondents did not submit the questionnaire.
- An additional and may be more efficient research tool would be more suitable for the topic of the research; the experimental study.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter was devoted to discuss and highlight the main results generated by means of teachers' questionnaire, and classroom observation. It begins with the presentation of the methodology used to investigate the topic under study; it presents the research methods, data gathering tools and the sample. Then, the description of both the teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation followed by data analysis and interpretation was provided. Finally, the main results were discussed followed by the some recommendations for both teachers and students, and the obstacles encountered by the researchers during conducting this research.

## **General Conclusion**

One reason for teaching writing is because it is a basic language skill, just as important as reading, speaking and listening. A successful piece of writing is based on knowing its stages and components from producing correct grammar, spelling, punctuation and appropriate vocabulary to composing. Yet, many EFL students face serious problems to fulfill writing tasks in a perfect way. Therefore, teachers keep adapting several and new strategies that assist students to develop their writing performance. Brainstorming, as one of these strategies, is considered by many teachers as effective since it helps students manage the interplay between thinking and writing. In this study, brainstorming is suggested as a solution to writing problems and enhancing the students' writing performance.

The main aim of this research is to investigate the effect of brainstorming strategy on developing the students' writing skills so as to enhance their performance. In an attempt to understand the causal relationship between the two research variables, it was hypothesized that by using brainstorming strategy effectively in EFL classes, students can develop their writing performance.

The research paper consists of three chapters. The first two chapters construct the theoretical part of the study, which reviews the literature and deals with the theoretical background about writing, brainstorming strategy and brainstorming writing in EFL classes. As far as the third chapter is concerned, it is entitled 'Field Work' and it presents the research methodology. Data collection procedures and analysis are also presented in this chapter followed by a detailed discussion of the main findings on the light of the research questions; 1) Do teachers use brainstorming strategy in their teaching of writing? 2) What brainstorming techniques are used by teachers in their teaching of writing? 3) Are

teachers aware that brainstorming strategy can increase the students' writing abilities? And

4) How can the use of brainstorming strategy helpful in developing the students' writing performance?

The analysis of the data obtained from both teachers' questionnaire and the classroom observation has confirmed that teachers (100% of participants in the study) from different secondary schools in Jijel do use brainstorming strategy in EFL classes. Also, the results obtained from teachers' questionnaires and classroom observation unveiled what techniques are mostly used by secondary school teachers when brainstorming writing; mind mapping, listing and questioning were the main techniques used by the target teachers in addition to some others like: group passing and free writing. Furthermore, the results show that teachers are indeed aware that brainstorming strategy increases the students' writing abilities (100 % of teachers confirmed its importance) and that this strategy plays a vital role in enhancing students' writing performance through motivating them to create and generate more ideas, build new vocabularies and trigger their creativity in writing. Thus, the more brainstorming session is successful, the more students write easier and better.

Consequently, the findings obtained from the questionnaire and the classroom observation confirmed the hypothesis that the researchers made earlier in the dissertation as the cause and effect relationship between brainstorming and writing does exist.





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# **Appendices**

## Appendix A

### Teachers' Questionnaire

**Dear Teachers,**

This questionnaire serves as a data collection instrument for our Master's research project that aims to investigate the effect of brainstorming strategy on the students' writing performance. Your answer will be of great assistance in the accomplishment of the research work. Thank you and we appreciate your collaboration.

#### Section One

##### Background Information

**Q1: How long have you been teaching English?**

- a. 1-5       b. 5-10       c. 10 year and more than

**Q2: Which level/levels are you currently teaching?**

- a. First year       b. second year       c. third year

#### Section two

##### Teaching Writing

**Q3: How would you assess your students' level in writing?**

- a. Very good   
b. Good   
c. Average   
d. Bad

**Q4: How much time do you devote to teach writing in a unit?**

-The time devoted to the teaching of the whole unit.....

-The time devoted to writing in a unit.....



**Q5: Do you think students have enough practice in writing?**

- a. Yes                       b. No

- If no, how much time would be sufficient for practice?

.....

**Q6: Do you assign students to write essays in class?**

- a. yes                       b. No

- If yes, how often are they assigned to write in relation to each unit?

.....

.....

**Q7: In which stage do you think students encounter difficulties in their piece of writing?**

a. Planning.

b. Drafting.

c. revising and editing.

**Q8: Do you encourage your students to use more than one draft in a writing task?**

- a. Yes                       b. No

-Why?

.....

.....

**Q9: Do you observe the written production of your students while writing?**

- a. Yes                       b. No

**Q10: As a teacher, are you interested more in?**

a. The final product of writing and how it is grammatically correct.

b. What influences the process of writing and how learners go through it?

**Q11: What do you suggest to improve your students' writing performance?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Section three**

**Brainstorming Strategy**

**Q12: Do you use the brainstorming strategy in the writing session?**

a. Yes

b. No

**Q13: In your opinion, do you think that brainstorming strategy is important to enhance the students writing?**

a. Yes

b. No

- If yes why?

.....  
.....

**Q14: As a teacher, do you help your students to make a plan before they start writing?**

a. Yes

b. No

-If yes how?

.....

**Q15: What are the different brainstorming techniques that you use in brainstorming?**

a. Mind mapping

b. Listing

c. Questioning

d. Group-passing

e. Free writing

Others.....

**Q16: How do you make your brainstorming?**

a. Individually

b. Collectively

why?.....  
.....

**Q17: According to your teaching experience, Is collective brainstorming superior to individual brainstorming?**

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

**Q18: Have you introduced the different types of brainstorming to your learners?**

- a. Yes                       b. No

Please justify

.....  
.....

**Q19: Do you give all learners a chance to express their ideas before writing?**

- a. Yes                       b. No

**Q20: Do you express your evaluation on any idea presented at this stage?**

- a. Yes                       b. No

- If yes, do you think that the learner is motivated to create more ideas?

.....  
.....

**Q21: When brainstorming, you give priority to: (order from 1 the most important to 4 the least important)**

- a. Linking all the points and information   
b. Writing and presenting ideas (proposed)   
c. Getting ideas   
d. warm map

**Q22: As a teacher, what are the difficulties that learners faced on the brainstorming(pre-writingstage)?**

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

**Q23: In your opinion, are your students satisfied when brainstorming their ideas?**

a. Yes

b. No

**Q24: Do your students write better when using the brainstorming strategy?**

a. Yes

b. No

**Q25: What is the role that brainstorming can play in enhancing the learners' writing performance?**

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

## Appendix B

### Observation Checklist

Date .....

Date.....

Observer.....

Time.....

Teacher.....

Class.....

Brainstorming strategy		Implemented in his teaching	Not implemented in his teaching	comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The use of brainstorming strategy</li> </ul>	1. The teacher (T) use brainstorming			
	2. Announces the topic of the lesson			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Types of brainstorming</li> </ul>	3. Teacher makes brainstorming - Collectively - Individually			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Techniques of brainstorming used by the teacher</li> </ul>	4. When brainstorming a piece of writing, T uses -Mind Mapping -Free writing -Listing -Questioning -Group- passing technique			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The role of teacher while brainstorming</li> </ul>	5. Teacher help their students to brainstorm ideas before writing			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Procedures of brainstorming</li> </ul>	6. Students came with as many ideas as they can about the intended writing topic			

in class	7.Avoid making judgment about students' ideas			
	8.Strange and unusual ideas are welcome			
	9.Expand on the existing ideas			
	10. Record all suggestion on the board			
	11.Select the needed ideas			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The effect of brainstorming strategy</li> </ul>	12. Students write the first draft			
	13. These ideas are use when writing the first draft			
	14. Ss assess themselves by exchanging their draft (peer assessment)			
	15. T checks their students' draft			
	16. The student interact with - His classmates / or - His students			
	17. T creates a positive environment for speaking			
	18. Students more active and not shy to speak			
	19. Brainstorming strategy enhances communication skill			
	20. Brainstorming strategy is helpful for students to come up with ideas			
	21. Students satisfied on this strategy			

## ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث عن تأثير إستراتيجية "العصف الذهني" على تطوير مهارة الكتابة لدى تلاميذ السنة الثالثة من التعليم الثانوي. كما تهدف إلى الكشف عن الطريقة التي يستعمل بها الأساتذة هذه الإستراتيجية أثناء حصص التعبير الكتابي، و كيفية استعمالها في تطوير مهارات المتعلمين و دعم تشجيعهم للكتابة . ومن أجل تحقيق الأهداف المذكورة تم استعمال وسيلتين للبحث : أولاً، تم الاعتماد على استبيان وزع لأربعين أستاذاً للغة الانجليزية في مختلف ثانويات جيجل وثانياً، تم استعمال الملاحظة الصفية للأقسام النهائية في ثانويتي لعيني أحمد و بوهرين الشريف.في الاخير وبعد تحليل النتائج، تم استنتاج أن إستراتيجية "العصف الذهني" تلعب دوراً أساسياً في تحسين مهارة الكتابة لدى تلاميذ القسم النهائي للتعليم الثانوي إن استعملت بفعالية من طرف الأساتذة. وبناءاً على النتائج المتحصل عليها تم الإشارة إلى بعض التوجيهات البيداغوجية.

## **Résumé**

Cette étude a pour objectif d'examiner l'effet de la stratégie de « brainstorming » sur le développement des performances écrites des élèves. Le bute donc est de dévoiles la manière dont les enseignants utilisent cette stratégie lors des sessions d'écriture et comment leur utilisation aidera les étudiants à développer leurs compétences en expression écrite et maintenir leur motivation pour mieux écrire. Pour atteindre les objectifs soulignés, deux outils de recherche ont été adoptés: 1) un questionnaire adressé à 40 enseignants de différentes écoles secondaires de Jijel et 2) une observation en classe menée dans des classes de troisième année dans les écoles secondaires de Laabani Ahmed et Bouhrin Cherif du 21 avril au 28 avril 2019 (un total de six sessions).L'analyse du questionnaire des enseignants et de l'observation en classe peut déduire que la stratégie de brainstorming joue un rôle vital dans l'amélioration des performances d'écriture des élèves, si elle est utilisée parfaitement par les enseignants. Certaines recommandations pédagogiques sont mises en évidence sur la base des résultats obtenus.